

MEETING MINUTES

Our City, Our Home Oversight Committee
June 9, 2023
Hearing Room 416, City Hall
3:36 PM – 5:01 PM

Committee Members

Nina Catalano
Michelle Cunningham-Denning
Julia D'Antonio
Jennifer Friedenbach
Bonnie Preston
Scott Walton
Shanell Williams

Members of the Our City, Our Home Oversight Committee attended this meeting in-person. The agenda, video recording, audio recording, and caption notes are posted at:
https://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=209.

Supporting materials including presentations and reports are posted at:
<https://sf.gov/meeting/june-9-2023/our-city-our-home-oversight-committee-special-meeting>

1) **Call to Order**

Vice Chair D'Antonio called the meeting to order at 3:36 PM.

Roll Call:

Member Catalano: Present
Member Cunningham-Denning: Absent
Vice Chair D'Antonio: Present
Member Friedenbach: Present
Member Preston: Arrived at 4:35
Member Walton: Absent (not called during roll call)
Chair Williams: Arrived at 4:45

The Committee did not have quorum when the meeting began at 3:36. The meeting began with public comment and informational presentations. The Committee achieved quorum at 4:45 with the arrival of Chair Williams.

Land Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge that we are on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone, who are the original inhabitants of the San Francisco Peninsula. As the indigenous stewards of this land and in accordance with their traditions, the Ramaytush Ohlone have never ceded, lost nor forgotten their responsibilities as the caretakers of this place, as well as for all peoples who reside in their traditional territory. As guests, we recognize that we benefit from living and working on their traditional homeland. We wish to pay our respects by acknowledging the ancestors, elders, and relatives of the Ramaytush Community and by affirming their sovereign rights as First Peoples.

2) Discussion / Possible Action Item

Presentation and discussion of the Mayor's proposed OCOH budget and the proposed ordinance to temporarily adjust OCOH service area appropriation thresholds to authorize the spending plan.

Gigi Whitley, Deputy Director of Finance and Administration with the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH), presented information about the Mayor's proposed OCOH Budget for FY23-24 and FY24-25 beginning with slide 1 in the [presentation deck link here](#). Ms. Whitley's presentation included information about how the Mayor's proposed budget differs from the proposal presented to the Committee by HSH in April 2023, and what new services the Mayor's budget proposed to be funded using the OCOH Fund.

Vice Chair D'Antonio opened the floor to public comment.

Anton of Larkin Street Youth Services gave a public comment. He shared that he arrived in San Francisco a year ago fleeing war and political persecution from the Russian government. He was alone, without money, and knew limited English. He said that he found support through Larkin Street Youth Services and is an example of how small assistance can change an entire life. He emphasized that it's important for government to invest in transitional housing instead of temporary shelters for the homeless because it not only gives homeless people a place to live but also provides support like medical services, job training, and help finding work. Anton asked that the Mayor put more resources into transitional housing to help solve homelessness and to create a city where everyone can live with dignity.

Marnie Regen of Larkin Street Youth Services, co-chair of HESPA, and chair of the TAY subcommittee of HESPA gave a public comment. She stated that on behalf of HESPA and TAY, they 100% oppose the reallocation of Prop C funds from the TAY and Family allocations. Ms. Regen expressed concern that it would not be a one-time reallocation but a permanent loss of funding and she believes the funds will be used to sustain the new priorities that are primarily in the adult system. She said that they do support shelter for adults, but it shouldn't come at the expense of TAY and families. Ms. Regen stated that if the proposed budget passes, it will leave about 150 youth housed and close to 1,000 will be on the streets. She stated that she is strongly asking the board not to approve this as it will be devastating to youth and families, reversing the steady decline in homeless youth that they've been making.

Charles Deffarges, Director of Policy at ECS, gave a public comment. Mr. Deffarges expressed ECS's strong opposition to the Mayor's proposed reallocation of OCOH funds away from family housing and towards shelter expansion and Rapid Rehousing for adults. He said that they support adult homelessness prevention and housing, but not at the cost of TAY and family housing. He said that the allocations with Prop C had been carefully planned over years of a community process and he believes the reallocation to be a subversion of both the voter's will and of the community's process.

Jamie Lang from Homeless Prenatal Program, Treatment on Demand Coalition, and a formerly chronically homeless voter of District 6 gave a public comment. She said that she does not trust the proposed budget or that the Mayor's Office has the best interest of the people accessing these resources. She stated that she does not support spending money on undignified living situations like cabins and congregate shelters or one-year long subsidies. She stated that OCOH has spent a lot of time working on allocating the funds, and that she thinks they should stick to the original plan that had been decided on. She reiterated that she does not support the Mayor's proposal to adjust the funds and asks that they vote no to keep families and youth safe.

Sherilyn Adams of Larkin Youth Services and HESPA, gave a public comment. She stated that she opposes the reallocation of the funding from TAY and families to adult services. She emphasized the need to sustain, maintain, and grow the number of beds that they have for young people and families. She explained that all of the beds in the TAY system are two-year, three-year, or indefinite time-frames because people stay in transitional housing for two years and therefore, the churn is slow. Once the beds are filled, incoming young people will have nowhere to go until someone leaves their unit or bed. The Rapid Rehousing slots that are currently allocated in the budget rely on private funds to serve as a match which are coming to a natural end as a part of a campaign. Ms. Adams said that there will be even less funding than they have now so, more young people will have to stay outside and the City will lose the incredible progress it's made in reducing youth homelessness. She said that she would vote against this for both families and for TAY.

Laura Gonzalez, the Executive Director of El Porvenir Organization, gave a public comment. She asked that the Mayor leave the Prop C funds as they are because there are a lot of families in need and children that need a place to stay while their parents are working. In order to have the parents improve the economy and have more opportunities, they need to have a permanent home to stay in. She shared that she had also been homeless before and having a shelter for a few months really helped. She explained that it was really hard to become homeless again when they came to take her and her baby daughter in the middle of the night from the hotel they had been temporarily placed in. She said that's why she's here to beg the Mayor reconsider the proposed budget.

A Spanish speaking woman named Janet gave a public comment. She explained that it is true that homeless families are here in San Francisco and they are in need and are looking for opportunities. She said there is a need to continue to make more opportunities for Latino families.

A man named Luis provided a public comment in sign language and Laura Gonzalez offered interpretation to Spanish. He thanked everyone for their attention and said that he was here to tell the Committee that little children need a place to go when their parents are working. He said that he thinks that it is very important that we pay attention to these families.

A Spanish speaking woman named Lucia Reyes gave a public comment. She said that she is El Salvadorian and that she came here on her own with her three children during the pandemic. She stated that she came here not because she wanted to be, but because of her situation. She said she was given a choice by the father of her children to leave or stay where she or one of her children could die. She said that she came here to ask for help for those families who are struggling for their children because she has slept on the streets before too and knows there are many single parents that need help.

Miguel Carrera with the Coalition of Homelessness provided public comment. He said that he is very upset with the way the Mayor is trying to use the money that's been allocated for families and youth. He asked that the Mayor does not rob the money that has already been allocated for the purposes they had already decided together. He said that he wants to continue to work together to unite all communities.

Member Friedenbach paused public comment briefly to apologize that there were no translation services but acknowledged that the three members present speak and understand Spanish. Member Catalano agreed and reiterated Member Friedenbach's comment to the public in Spanish.

Janaya Jones from Five Keys Adult Rapid Rehousing Program gave a public comment. She stated that she is here to advocate for the youth's side for Five Keys and her colleagues. She explained that growing up in San Francisco and watching the impact on youth that property increases has had

been devastating. Janaya stated that on any given day in San Francisco, nearly 1,100 youth are homeless, and more than half are African American. She said that nearly 1,000 new youth fall into homelessness each year and using the TAY housing funds as proposed will mean that only 15% of youth will receive housing resources while leaving 850 youth out in the cold. She added that she is a mother raising young children so she understands how devastating it is. She wants Mayor London Breed to know that they say “no” on this vote because it will impact the youth.

Liz, a budget intern at the Coalition of Homelessness, gave a public comment. She said that Mayor Breed should care that she’s robbing \$60 million from families and youth because finding housing is extremely difficult. She shared that the Coalition of Homelessness recently met a family who had been waiting 10 years for Section 8. The mother passed away just before she was approved, however the teenage daughter was able to secure the housing. Janaya said that families like herself, who waited over 11 years for housing, need to grow and have stability, and she stated that taking from the \$60 million will make it a lot more difficult for the future youth to do this.

Solange, member of CCDC and organizer with Coalition of Homelessness, provided public comment to ask the Mayor to rethink where she is relocating the money from Proposition C and to see if she can take it from alternative places.

Hope Kamer from Compass Family Services and Family sub-committee of HESPA gave a public comment. She stated that her provider colleagues and herself support over 8,000 homeless families in the City and are their safety net. She stated that they strongly oppose the Mayor’s proposal to relocate funds from homeless youth and families. She stated that last week in the Homeless and Behavioral Select Committee Hearing, Chair Supervisor Ronen falsely stated that the waitlist for family emergency shelter was at zero. Ms. Kamer stated that there are actually 87 families on the emergency shelter waitlist. She stated that the Mayor’s budget promotes an insidious narrative that because homeless families are harder to see, they do not exist. stated that these families do exist and that they are systematically unequipped to support them.

Sara Shortt with HomeRise gave public comment. Ms. Shortt said that as permanent supportive housing providers who help with TAY, family, and adult housing, it feels painful to see communities pitted against one another. She said that TAY and family resources have historically had less funding than standard adult housing. She stated that the OCOH Oversight Committee and organizers of Prop C understood this need in their recommendations. She stated that the Mayor’s proposal is problematic, offensive to voters, and harmful to folks on the street. Ms. Shortt added a final statement referencing Banko Brown.

A woman speaking Spanish gave public comment. She said it is very important that families have a place for their children to go while they are working and that after the pandemic it has become even more difficult. She said that these families need help for their children so that they can continue moving forward.

Christin Evans from the Homelessness Oversight Commission provided remote public comment. Ms. Evans stated that the Homelessness Oversight Commission did not have a properly noticed meeting this month and was not able to take a vote on the proposed reallocation. She said that she has concerns which she voiced in the Commission’s hearing. Ms. Evans said that sheltering is more expensive than housing in the long run. She stated that the goal with Prop C is to work upstream to end chronic homelessness which includes prioritizing families and youth. Ms. Evans stated that the odds of experiencing homelessness as an adult are higher if the person experienced homelessness as a child and that it is short-sighted to reprioritize the adult cabin shelters. She stated that there was a commitment to the voters on how Prop C funds would be used and she does not support having to explain to voters why they were spent differently than initially agreed upon.

A Spanish speaking woman named Juanita gave public comment. She asked that the funds be left as they are because children need a place to stay outside of school and other programs. She said that it is already so expensive to pay rent and working one job provides barely enough to pay for rent. She stated that children are the future and that they need these funds. Juanita stated that drugs are also a big problem on the streets and for children to have a future in this country, they need the proper help and places to be watched while their parents are at work.

Eliana Binder, Policy Manager for Glide, called-in to provide public comment. She stated that she opposes the reallocation because it is short sighted to shift funding from families and youth. She stated that the divestment will further exacerbate the family providers who are struggling to provide services, shelter, and housing to those who need it. She stated that families are often undercounted in the PIT count as they are hidden sleeping in cars, SROs, and couches. She stated that the City has a history of underinvesting in homeless families and this is what Prop C was intended to address. She asked that the OCOH Oversight Committee's original recommendation be respected.

Karin Adams from Homeless Youth Alliance called-in and gave a public comment. Ms. Adams echoed the other commenter's opposition of the Mayor's reallocation of historically underfunded TAY and youth funds to support undignified emergency shelter solutions. She stated that families are often undercounted and not prioritized in the City's plans. She said that to support keeping families intact and prevent these children from become homeless TAY and adults, the funds must be found outside of OCOH funds.

Vice Chair D'Antonio closed public comment and invited discussion from the Committee. Member Bonnie Preston joined the meeting at 4:35.

Member Friedenbach asked Deputy Director Gigi Whitley from HSH for clarification regarding the Family Shelter line item that increased by \$820,000 in the Mayor's proposed budget.

Deputy Director Whitley acknowledged the typo in the rollup for the Family Shelter line item. She said it should include both the expanded hours for the Buena Vista Horace Mann Family Shelter and at the Hospitality House Adult Shelter.

Member Catalano stated that the department's strategic plan is focused on strengthening current infrastructure while intentionally putting off expansion of shelter capacity to future years. She asked what has changed to be able to reappropriate the budget into programs such as Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and the TAY Bridge Housing project. She also asked how the new budget proposals can incorporate sub-population specific planning that has yet to be gathered for TAY and families.

Deputy Director Whitley agreed that the original first year of the strategic plan, or fiscal year 2023-24, focused on planning and capacity building. She stated that the Mayor's proposed budget is still in line with the strategic plan since much of the Rapid Rehousing and additional housing expansion will occur in the second year, fiscal year 2024-25.

Deputy Director Whitley also noted that the strategic plan calls for 820 additional slots of prevention to start in the next fiscal year and the Mayor's proposed budget is in line with this. She stated that the emergency rental assistance will also help to limit a growth in homelessness that would otherwise impact providers.

Deputy Director Whitley added that regarding shelters, the Buena Vista and Horace Mann site expansions are based off requests from providers. She noted that the Vehicular Assistance Program

is a pilot that would otherwise expire and the cabins in District 10 and the Mission acquisitions are still on pace to open in October. She explained that with the winding down of the Pier 94 Trailer Program there is a need to replace capacity.

Deputy Director Whitley stated that from the department's perspective, they are still honoring the strategic plan. She explained that the \$60 million in one-time funds will serve as a down payment that will add immediate, needed capacity. She stated that the revenue allocations are not being permanently altered and there is still room within the TAY and family funds for the future prioritization of these areas. She stated that because there is revenue volatility, the department does not feel it is in a position where it can leave one-time funds on the table. She said that the department is sensitive to the concerns of the community but is also in a very challenging budget environment where there are unfortunate tradeoffs.

Chair Williams joined the meeting at 4:45.

Vice Chair D'Antonio stated that she opposes the proposed change because the City should continue in the progress made in reducing homelessness in families and youth. She said that there are some components of the proposal she would be interested at looking at for the following fiscal year.

Member Friedenbach expressed concern with the lack of parity in youth, family, and adult homeless populations in part because families are often hidden in the City's counts. She discussed the permanent damage that can occur to children that experience homelessness and the need for the administration to find funding for reducing these numbers. She stated that the strategy behind Prop C is to do acquisitions every year over several years until Prop C is steady and able to pay for operations of the expanded capacity. She stated that the Committee still has time to carefully plan the best way to use the resources that have not yet been programmed.

Secretary Hom acknowledged the arrival of Chair Williams and took roll call.

Roll Call:

Member Catalano: Present
Member Cunningham-Denning: Absent
Vice Chair D'Antonio: Present
Member Friedenbach: Present
Chair Williams: Present
Member Preston: Present

The meeting reached quorum.

Chair Williams thanked Member Preston for joining the Committee as well as Deputy Director Whitley for the presentation. Chair Williams discussed the time and effort that the Committee put into crafting a robust strategic plan and asked whether there was a way for the reserve funds to be replenished down the line to allow them to stay on course with the strategic plan. Chair Williams emphasized the need for targeted upstream efforts and the need for collaboration rather than a top-down approach. She stated that the City should stick to the plan, acknowledge the voters' wishes, and not pit communities against one another. Chair Williams stated that she knows the City is in tough budget times but wants to continue collaborating and not be adversarial.

Member Friedenbach asked Deputy Director Whitley how much is in the OCOH Fund reserve and if it was enough to cover the \$20 million that would be used for the Mayor's budget proposal next year.

Deputy Director Whitley said she did not know exactly how much but agreed to follow up on the amount.

Member Friedenbach made a motion to recommend that the funding for Family and Youth Housing is not reduced and that the Mayor's Office find alternate General Fund sources for the proposed programs.

Roll Call:

Member Catalano: Yes
Member Cunningham-Denning: Absent
Vice Chair D'Antonio: Yes
Member Friedenbach: Yes
Chair Williams: Yes
Member Preston: Yes

The motion passed.

Member Friedenbach made a motion and accepted a friendly amendment by Member Catalano, to recommend the Mayor's Office maintain the focus of the Family and Youth Housing funding on creating permanent exits from homelessness. The recommendation identified the following options for the use of the OCOH Fund based on the Feedback heard through public comment and through the needs OCOH Needs Assessment:

- The Committee recommends the \$3.4 million the Mayor's budget proposes be used to fund 350 Adult Rapid Rehousing in FY23-24 be used instead to fund new Family Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool and the TAY Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool slots.
- The Committee recommends the \$8.1 million the Mayor's budget proposes be used to fund additional Homelessness Prevention slots be used instead to fund a new Youth Shallow Subsidy program.
- The Committee recommends the \$960,000 the Mayor's budget proposes to be used to fund Problem Solving for Latine Youth be carved out of existing Problem Solving appropriations in the Mayor's budget.
- The Committee recommends the Mayor's Office identify General Fund dollars to fund the Shelter & Hygiene programs proposed in the Mayor's budget.

Vice Chair D'Antonio seconded the motion.

Member Preston asked for future clarification on the specificities of the OCOH budget and Deputy Director Whitley agreed that due to limited time, this could be done in a future meeting.

Secretary Hom took roll call for the motion.

Roll Call:

Member Catalano: Yes
Member Cunningham-Denning: Absent
Vice Chair D'Antonio: Yes
Member Friedenbach: Yes
Chair Williams: Yes
Member Preston: Yes

The motion passed.

3) Future agenda items, with possible action by the Committee in response to this item

Chair Williams tabled this item.

4) Adjourn

Chair Williams requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Vice Chair D'Antonio moved to adjourn the meeting. Member Friedenbach seconded the motion to adjourn.

Roll Call:

Member Catalano: Yes
Member Cunningham-Denning: Absent
Vice Chair D'Antonio: Yes
Member Friedenbach: Yes
Chair Williams: Yes
Member Preston: Yes

The meeting adjourned at 5:01PM.

Committee staff and members can be reached at OCOH.CON@sfgov.org