



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: March 20, 2024

SUBJECT: Public Hearing, Discussion, and Possible Action on Wilson Ave Housing Program

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Direct staff as determined by the Board.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Deschutes County applied for and was selected to receive a state grant based on Governor Kotek's 2023 Emergency Order on Housing, which created funding for areas where there were high rates of unhoused individuals and deficiencies in the housing continuum. On December 20th, 2023, Deschutes County purchased a triplex at 640 SE Wilson Ave in Bend. The program is operational and placed its first resident in the house on January 5, 2024. All tenants living in the triplex at the time of purchase have found alternative housing.

This property provides interim and long-term housing for 40 to 50 men each year who are involved with the justice system and would otherwise experience acute homelessness. The County is partnering with a housing provider – Free On The Outside – that has more than 15 years of experience providing housing for justice-involved individuals. This is a managed residential property, with a live-in housing manager. All residents are required to comply with the conditions of their court mandated supervision and agree to and conduct themselves safely as good neighbors, in accordance with house rules.

All residents are referred through Deschutes County Adult Parole & Probation and have an assigned Parole & Probation Officer, who will have frequent presence at the home. The Parole & Probation Officer works with Free On The Outside to ensure the home operates as intended, contributes positively to the neighborhood and increases public safety for our community.

Parole & Probation developed program referral criteria and a screening process designed with consideration for the impact of the program on the neighborhood. Listed below is the process:

- Candidates are formally screened by Parole & Probation staff for safety and readiness to participate. A person will not be considered for placement if the

screening process indicates they are not likely to be successful in following program rules, supervision conditions, or conducting themselves safely as good neighbors.

- The screening assesses the totality of the individual's circumstances including the reason they are on supervision, level of remorse and readiness to improve their lives, current compliance with supervision, past performance on supervision, and their readiness to agree to and abide by house rules.
- Candidates additionally need to demonstrate readiness for or evidence that they are already in treatment, seeking employment or are employed, and are actively pursuing recovery from substances.
- Once participating, Parole & Probation Officers provide high levels of monitoring and support to individuals, which include home visits, office visits, phone calls to treatment providers or employers, responding to community members and ultimately can result in quick action to return an individual to court or to jail for program violations.

Attached are Frequently Asked Questions related to the program. The FAQs are posted on the Community Justice Department's webpage.

Community members have contacted the County and the Board with a variety of recommendations, ranging from modifying program requirements to closing the program. Attached is a summary list of these recommendations. At the public hearing on March 20, 2024, community members will have an opportunity to publicly comment on the program. Verbal public comment at the meeting will be limited, but will likely be between 1-3 minutes, based on the number of speakers. Interested parties are also encouraged to submit written comments prior to the meeting by email board@deschutes.org.

At the conclusion of the public hearing, the Board may deliberate and make decisions related to the program (maintain the program as is or modify the program) or the Board may schedule deliberations for a future Board meeting.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

TBD

ATTENDANCE:

Erik Kropp, Deputy County Administrator
Deevy Holcomb, Community Justice Director