



*Where Life is Sweet*

# Faith-Based Advisory Committee

## Meeting Minutes of November 7, 2023

Present were James Lafolette, Terry Cummings, Chris Hankel, Dan Mahon, and Dean Hackett. Also present was Council representatives Rod Hardin and Jackie Linton, as well as City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong. The meeting was opened in prayer by Dean at 3:03pm.

### **Introduction of Newest Committee Member Dan Mahon**

Dan thanked FBAC members for their support of him serving on the Committee.

### **Stepping Stones Alliance Updates**

Executive Director Jesalyn Cole gave information (attached) regarding:

- Facility updates at the temporary Sleep Center and the permanent site with a grand opening and ribbon cutting planned for December 7<sup>th</sup>
- The permanent site will include: Stepping Stones Offices, a Sleep Center, Navigation Center, individual shelter units, restroom and shower facilities, and kitchen/eating space. Not all of these features will be available when the permanent site comes online, however, they are all being planned as future funding becomes available
- Dinner and breakfast are offered each day from volunteers; volunteers are always needed to bring in meals and to help with check-in and check-out each day
- This year, Stepping Stones will be open for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Eve and Day with holiday celebrations being planned
- Taxi services are no longer being used, as provided for individuals last year, instead Michael Atkinson is allowing Stepping Stones to use his company vans to transport individuals at no cost. Stepping Stones has received a grant to help purchase a transportation vehicle in the near future.
- Pickup and Dropoff locations in Hermiston and Umatilla
- Summer internships are available
- Willingness to give presentations at each church about Stepping Stones and what it is and is not and what current and future needs are

Jesalyn stated the most challenging issues Stepping Stones has been facing is outreach and communication. There's still a lot of misinformation regarding what Stepping Stones is and what it offers, as well as misinformation regarding the homelessness populations origins. There are ongoing efforts to pushout correct information to the community. Stepping Stones is a pilot project with grant funding; moving forward, the organization will need additional donations and funding for long-term project sustainability.

### **2024 Committee Service Goals Work Session**

The Committee spoke regarding the closing of Desert Rose Ministries. There was discussion regarding meals provided throughout the community, to include:

- About 30 breakfasts and lunches being served each day 4 times per week through Desert Rose Ministries. The belief that First Christian Church and Altrusa would usually provide food to Desert Rose Ministries
- 100-125 lunches being served at First Christian Church each Monday. This consists of the elderly, homeless, and individuals who are lonely, but not necessarily in need. About 10-12 people are needed to put this meal together.



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(Dean exited the meeting 3:42pm)

There was some discussion regarding the committee taking lead on this need. Dan stated he would be happy to continue working on this issue with deeper conversations through community partners and also to try to establish what resources are available and what resources are lacking.

There was some discussion regarding contacting Chartwells, the food contractor for the Hermiston School District, to see if it would be possible to have food donated each day from left over food that was not taken/eaten instead of being thrown out; and, finding out what the real food need is compared to those who just want a free meal.

### **Other**

Terry gave information regarding the Faith and First Responders event held in October and encouraged all to pray for first responders each day at 10:23 and gave out stickers as reminders (attached). The 10:23 time frame indicated the 10 code when first responders state they are "on scene".

### **Minutes**

Chris moved and Terry seconded to approve the September minutes. Motion carried unanimously. No meeting was held in October.

### **Next Meeting**

Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm in the Large Board Room on the 2nd Floor of City Hall.

### **Adjournment**

There was no other business and the meeting was adjourned in prayer at 4:09pm.

Our story  
**How it started**

The journey of Stepping Stones Alliance Center began years ago with the experience of a volunteer at the Hermiston Warming Station. The satisfaction of seeing the positive impact on others of a safe, secure shelter during cold winter months, led to the realization that for a larger portion of the year no such resource was available. Whatever the weather, cold or hot, wet or windy, the lack of shelter from the elements and any assurance of personal safety became a concern that could not be disregarded.

[www.stepping-stones-alliance.org](http://www.stepping-stones-alliance.org)

Executive Director

[executivedirector@stepping-stones-alliance.org](mailto:executivedirector@stepping-stones-alliance.org)  
(541) 371-1425

Navigation Director

[navigationdirector@stepping-stones-alliance.org](mailto:navigationdirector@stepping-stones-alliance.org)  
(541) 371-1463

Sleep Center Coordinator

[sleepcentercoordinator@stepping-stones-alliance.org](mailto:sleepcentercoordinator@stepping-stones-alliance.org)  
(541) 371-7084

**Donate**



**Stepping Stones Alliance LLC**

PO Box 395  
81535 Lind Road  
Hermiston, OR 97838  
(541) 561-3680



**To provide individuals with necessary Stepping Stones**

shelter, basic needs,  
and supports  
that can lead to stability  
for people  
in Umatilla County  
who are experiencing  
houselessness.

# The pathway to self-reliance

## Sleep Center

### Night to night shelter for those in need

- Exterior securely fenced and lighted
- Scheduled transportation to and from site
- Options for individuals and families
- Staffed during hours of operation
- Basic food and hygiene supplies

Pets are allowed at the Sleep Center if they are not dangerous, diseased, or aggressive toward persons or other animals. Pets are kept on leash, held by their owner, or confined in a kennel (provided by Sleep Center) when inside. Guests immediately clean up after their pets.

Stepping Stones is a low-barrier shelter; meaning that guests are accepted as they are, where they are; and are provided a warm, safe shelter. Stepping Stones follows best practices to offer shelter services in a way that minimizes barriers and increases access for all those experiencing homelessness.

## Navigation Center

### Needed services and access to resources available to "members" through Center staff, community partners and volunteers

- Participant goal and action plan support
- Counseling and recovery program access
- Technology resources for action plan work
- Common area for groups and community
- Scheduled transportation to and from site
- Self-sufficiency
- Assistance in obtaining IDs/birth certificates
- Workshops
- Connection to medical services
- Community reintegration

## Housing Center

### Transitional shelter units for participants engaged in personal action plan utilizing Navigation Center resources

- Small units for one-two adults, or parent/child
- Working or volunteering for shelter unit credit
- Utilizing onsite resources for future housing plan
- Shower unit available per schedule
- Outside covered common area
- Transportation to essential appointments and/or services
- Building community on and off site





**Jesalyn C. Cole**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

(541) 371-1425

[executivedirector@stepping-stones-alliance.org](mailto:executivedirector@stepping-stones-alliance.org)

PO Box 395  
Hermiston, OR 97838

