

# GOVERNANCE BOARD MEETING MINUTES



**Date:** 5/1/25

**Started:** 9:00 AM

**Facilitator:** Nicole Stewart

**Location:** NCWorks Career Center

## In Attendance

Eric Braun, Doris Bullock, Chad Essick, Stephen Gruver, Ashley Lommers-Johnson, Ann Oshel, Imogen Rodenhiser, Kayla Rosenberg-Strampe, Onia Royster, Nicole Stewart, Emila Sutton, Nicole Wilson, Johnnie Thomas, Derwin Willoughby, Michele Woodson, Meredith Yuckman

## Absent

Wayne Beatty (excused), Quentin Miles (unexcused), Rebekah Shamberger (excused), Pat Sturdivant (excused)

## April Meeting Minutes - Vote

Eric Braun motioned to approve the April meeting minutes.

Doris Bullock seconded the motion.

**Approved:** Eric Braun, Doris Bullock, Chad Essick, Ashley Lommers-Johnson, Ann Oshel, Imogen Rodenhiser, Kayla Rosenberg-Strampe, Onia Royster, Nicole Stewart, Emila Sutton, Johnnie Thomas, Derwin Willoughby, Meredith Yuckman

*Not approved:* None

*Abstained:* None

## Board Updates

Meredith Yuckman: As Chair of the Nominations Committee, Meredith announced Stephen Gruver's formal resignation from the Board due to his new role with Wake County. Per the Charter, as Wake County is the Lead Agency, its employees cannot hold a voting seat on the Board.

To retain Stephen's expertise while complying with the Charter, the Nominations Committee voted to include Stephen as an ex-officio, non-voting member in his role as Past Chair. He will continue to participate fully on committees, which is allowed for staff of the Lead Agency.

Stephen Gruver: Stephen shared that he has transitioned to a new position with Wake County as the Homeless and Prevention Service Division Director. While he is sad to step away from his voting seat, he is eager to continue contributing in a non-voting capacity and to support the community in his new role.

## Board Seat Replacement Discussion

Stephen previously held the seat representing an emergency shelter provider. Given ongoing developments in emergency shelter services, the Nominations Committee will open a call for nominations to fill this seat with someone currently working in an emergency shelter role.

- The nomination will be sent out via the next CoC e-blast. Board members are encouraged to suggest candidates directly.
- The selected nominee would serve the remainder of Stephen's term (6 months) and an additional 1-year term.

## Committee Work Plan Approval: Funding Review Committee (FRC)

The FRC work plan is distinct from others due to its specific and consistent responsibilities:

- **Chairs:** Lisa Rowe (Triangle Literacy Council) and Nicole Stewart
- **Work Plan Focus:**
  - Review policies and scorecards for ESG and NOFO applications
  - Score and recommend funding allocations
  - Begin exploring additional funding sources with the treasurer

### Vote to Approve the FRC Annual Work Plan:

Johnnie Thomas motioned to approve the FRC Annual Work Plan

Chad Essick seconded the motion.

Approved: Eric Braun, Doris Bullock, Chad Essick, Ashley Lommers-Johnson, Ann Oshel, Imogen Rodenhiser, Kayla Rosenberg-Strampe, Onia Royster, Nicole Stewart, Emila Sutton, Nicole Wilson, Johnnie Thomas, Derwin Willoughby, Meredith Yuckman

*Not approved: None*

*Abstained: None*

## Lead Agency Updates

### 1. Budget and Staffing Updates:

- County Manager will present the proposed FY26 budget on Monday afternoon
- Proposal includes funding for 6–10 staff positions with a phased hiring plan:
- Initial focus on HMIS and Coordinated Entry staffing.
- Erin Flynn is now onboarded as CoC Coordinator (started April 14).

## **2. Funding Applications:**

- Wake County CoC Lead will apply for funding through the Joint Homeless and Housing RFP (City/County collaboration).
- Application will cover HMIS activities only (not ESG Emergency Shelter funds).
- HMIS funding previously held by the City will be transitioned through this RFP.

Eric: Do we have a specific amount we are planning to request for HMIS in this application?

Eileen: It will be consistent with previous years around \$74,000.

## **3. CoC Awards and Planning:**

- No new updates from the HUD field office since last meeting.
- Staff hiring will begin as soon as funding is approved, even before July 1 if possible.
- Job descriptions are ready; announcements will be shared through the CoC network.

## **Discussion on Housing First and Evolving Language**

Emila: The city is moving away from strict "Housing First" language toward "Housing Plus": housing with supportive services which is true Housing First

Ann: Need for public and political education: Housing First includes wraparound support, not just providing housing.

- Suggested new terms: “Housing-Focused” or “Housing Plus Services.”

Eileen: System remains committed to the philosophy, though federal enforcement (e.g., HUD) has softened.

## **Ashley: Project-Based Vouchers & Service-Enriched Housing**

The Raleigh Housing Authority will leverage project-based vouchers to incentivize service-enriched housing. An RFP will be released, and more are planned, totaling up to 400 units. These efforts support long-term, permanent housing with integrated services.

## **Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Overview**

Three major reports were discussed today, with the PIT count being the most complex and time sensitive. The PIT (or Point-In-Time) is a federally required annual count of people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January.

The HUD portal for submission has not opened yet. These results are preliminary and may require edits. The Board of Commissioners will receive the report next week, followed by a press release. The count will be tied into broader messaging about the system's investments.

The PIT snapshot does not fully reflect progress made since January. For example, Kings Ridge opened soon after the count, and many participants from the "Bringing Neighbors Home" pilot were housed in late January. Coordinated Entry matches to rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing have also increased.

## **Definitions and Context**

The PIT count uses HUD definitions, excluding individuals who are doubled up or couch surfing. Categories include unsheltered individuals (e.g., in cars, encampments), those in shelters (emergency, transitional, safe havens), and chronically homeless persons (disabled and homeless for 12 months continuously or over multiple episodes totaling 12 months in 3 years). Unaccompanied individuals and youth aged 18–24 are also defined subpopulations.

## **Methodology: Unsheltered and Sheltered Counts**

A "known location" strategy was used, leveraging outreach teams' knowledge of encampments and unsheltered individuals. Surveys were conducted on January 22 and the days immediately following, using trained volunteers. 145 volunteers from 36 organizations participated. Survey kits and comfort items were provided, coordinated through the Green Chair Project.

Sheltered counts were gathered via HMIS rosters and non-HMIS providers (e.g., Interact). De-duplication was performed across datasets, with only about 15 duplicates identified.

## **Preliminary PIT Results**

- Total Count: 1,258 individuals experiencing homelessness
  - Unsheltered: 287
  - This represents a 26.8% increase from 2024

Although the increase appears significant, it's believed to reflect improved methodology and alignment with best practices. Prior counts were likely underestimates. The cold weather likely contributed to increased shelter use.

There were 61 veterans counted during the 2025 PIT count. This reflects an increase over previous years and is believed to be more accurate based on input from the housing department and the veteran finding list in Coordinated Entry. Most veterans were male, single adults, and staying in emergency shelters.

In 2025, 75% of all persons counted identified as a race/ethnicity other than white alone, compared to 42% of the general Wake County population. Black or African American individuals continue to be disproportionately represented.

The average age of all adults was 46, with a median of 36 for heads of family households. Youth aged 18–24 made up 5% of the count, with one unaccompanied minor identified. The senior population is also increasing

Emila: an anecdote was shared of housing an 81-year-old with congestive heart failure.

Eileen: By gender, 61% of those counted were men and 37% were women. Among men, 73% were sheltered, compared to 97% of women, a reflection of more transitional housing and a Safe Haven program available for women. Three transgender and one non-binary individual were unsheltered on the night of the count.

The PIT is a useful benchmark, but undercounts persist. With improvements to the coordinated entry system and a more accurate by-name list, monthly inflow/outflow data will offer more real-time insights. The increase in numbers this year likely reflects better methodology, not just increased homelessness.

There's a growing need for more coordinated unsheltered homelessness response, including stronger engagement in areas outside Raleigh and investments in year-round drop-in shelter. The higher count this year correlates with greater shelter availability.

The team is finalizing the PIT for submission, which also contributes to the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) HUD publishes a year later. Additional breakdowns such as disabling conditions (e.g., serious mental illness, substance use) and time homeless — will be included in the full report expected next week.

There's a common misconception that homeless individuals can easily access services or benefits. However, for women outside childbearing age and without children, access to food stamps and support is limited. Clarifying this in public messaging could help combat stigma. Tracking income and employment is a known data gap and a future area for system improvement, with implications for HUD funding.

## Housing Inventory Count (HIC) and System Performance Measures

The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) tracks available beds and units. It includes emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and Safe Haven programs. The 2025 HIC shows 995 emergency shelter beds for individuals and 181 beds (51 units) for families totaling 1,176 beds. However, this includes seasonal and overflow capacity such as white flag church shelters, which aren't always active. Naming inconsistencies in HMIS (e.g., program titles) also complicate analysis and require cleanup.

Transitional housing includes 35 beds for unaccompanied individuals and 77 beds (29 units) for families, totaling 112 transitional beds. For context, 712 unaccompanied individuals were counted as sheltered on the night of the PIT count more than the number of beds listed in the system, highlighting a discrepancy between PIT night activations and regular inventory.

Stephen: This inventory includes only programs participating in HMIS. Providers like Raleigh Rescue Mission, which do not participate in HMIS or do not dedicate beds to Category 1 homelessness, are not captured unless they submitted data independently.

Eileen: InterAct, which does serve Category 1 homeless populations, is included.

Permanent housing includes 754 beds for unaccompanied individuals and 450 for families. HUD defines Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) as permanent housing with services. "Other Permanent Housing" refers to housing that falls outside PSH or Rapid Rehousing (RRH) definitions. RRH provides rental assistance and services, but only for a time-limited period.

There are caveats: for PSH, the reported utilization rate is only 63%. If accurate, this is concerning; if inaccurate, it signals data quality issues. Kingsbridge was not yet open on PIT night and therefore not included, but is expected to increase the count in future updates. Similarly, EHV through local housing authorities have not been fully captured yet.

System Performance Measures (SPMs) were submitted to HUD on April 10, 2025. FY23 data was also resubmitted with minor improvements after data quality improvements. The average length of

shelter stays dropped by 2 days to 56, but the average time homeless before housing was 524 days a substantial gap.

Return to homelessness within two years was approximately 19%. For FY24, 1,483 unduplicated individuals accessed the system (emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing) a rise from FY23. However, duplicate client records and lack of HMIS user training may affect accuracy.

Notably, 784 people were recorded as newly experiencing homelessness with no previous record in HMIS. This reflects the growing scale of housing instability in the region.

Stephen: Successful exits to permanent housing were 69% for individuals exiting from street outreach, the highest in recent memory. This is largely due to the Emila's team and the City of Raleigh's efforts to increase exits from encampments.

Nicole W: Could there be a scheduled time for us to dive into the data more in depth?

Eileen: We can definitely schedule a time for membership and a voluntary work session of the board to dive in for an analysis.

Nicole: If there are no questions we will adjourn.

Adjourned: 10:25 AM

## Next Meeting

**Date and Time:** June 5, 2025; 9:00-10:30am

**Location:** NC Works Career Center; 1830 Tillery Place, Suite B, Raleigh, NC