

Executive director, JD Klippenstein took over ACTIONN in 2017 and restructured the organization, shifting its focus to homelessness in Reno.



you go over your time. But the reason I did is that your voice here means more to me.”

The draft ordinance was unanimously approved in March, and the housing trust fund became policy. Then, a setback. The court system was vying to get some of the funding to build a new courthouse, and it wasn't clear if the original plan would be prioritized.

“When we first learned that the court system [was] vying for the money, we, at that time, were under the impression that they wanted to take the money away, [and] that was really frustrating,” Overli said.

The team convened and tried to map out their next course of action, all while reeling from what felt like a gut punch. The court system is very influential, and they were concerned about going directly against it.

However, it never did escalate to that. In fact, the court system was feeling the effects of the housing problem, with people having no homes to return to after being released from jail, and often returning back to jail.

After extensive discussion, both sides reached a compromise: a significant portion of the trust fund would go to affordable housing, another portion to building an infirmary in the jail which currently lacked one, and a third to building a public courthouse that prioritized low-income communities.

Although Overli still thinks their work at ACTIONN is at odds with the legal system and its emphasis on criminalization, she and the rest of the team were wholly behind the compromise in order to move things forward. It's all a part of the community organizing process—wins and losses and compromises.

The current structure has also provided even more momentum for the finalization of the policy, with the court system benefitting from the community support behind the affordable housing trust fund, while using their influence to make sure the funding becomes a reality.

Another meeting for the final ordinance that will actually finance the trust fund is

slated for September, and Klippenstein and Overli expect it to be fully actualized, with substantial financing to execute real projects.

The details are still a work in progress, but there are signs that the funding will come from the governmental services tax and could reach about \$10 million in its first year. Overli also confirmed that the plan is to continue to finance the fund for the next 25 years, in order to create a lasting impact.

In addition to the trust fund, ACTIONN also helped pass legislation that capped fees for late rent payments at 5 percent in order to reduce evictions.

The process of solving the housing problem in Reno has been painstaking, but it will be very rewarding for ACTIONN and a growing population currently disenfranchised from the right to shelter. □



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