

Hartford Ad Hoc Committee on Coronavirus Response Meeting Minutes

5/29/20 @ 4:00 PM | Via Zoom

Committee Attendance: Kristi Clemens (Chair), Sue Buckholz (Vice-Chair), Simon Dennis (Secretary), Becky Chollet, Barbara Farnsworth, Dan Fraser, Brannon Godfrey, Brett Mayfield, Martha McDaniel, Deborah Scribner, Scott Cooney, Becca White

Community Attendance: P.J. Skeeahan, Dr. Remington Nevin

Kristi Clemens called the meeting to order at 4:04, took attendance and asked for amendments to the agenda.

Martha McDaniel proposed withdrawing her previous suggestion to add a discussion of a Hartford Mask Emergency Order to the agenda. It was agreed we would do so.

Sue Buckholz moved to pass the Minutes of 5/15/20. Deb Scribner seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously without amendment.

Town Updates

Brannon Godfrey reported that the Governor updated his restrictions to allow social gatherings of up to 20 people. The Town put out a request for proposals on the Town Website for businesses regarding outdoor activities. This was done to get a better understanding of requests. The goal is to be able to accommodate the needs of Downtown Businesses who may not have space to reopen.

Scott Cooney reported that the 2nd round of testing and screening for asymptomatic individuals, tested 150 Thursday. And 200 and UVAC on Thursday. There will be more rounds on Tuesdays and Thursdays to come. Hartford EMS has been supporting these efforts.

Brett Mayfield reported that things seem to be going much better at the 6 hotels who are housing voucher residents. Libraries have been doing great work. ~ 200 new residents have come to visit. There was low compliance reported with the 14-day quarantine period for out-of-state residents.

Kristi asked about the follow up from Selectboard regarding the recommendations of the Report. Simon Dennis spoke about the HBRLF loan program which is still in play. And the \$3000 that was designated for mask purchases.

Volunteer Communications Coordinator. Brannon's recommendation is that such a coordinator should come from the HADCCR Committee and route communications through the Emergency Operators Center. Kristi clarified that messages could be generated by a designated volunteer, vetted by the EOC before being issued.

Subgroup Updates

Stop-the-Spread

Martha McDaniel reported that the Committee is pleased with the low rates of infection, but concerned with some of the behaviors that have been witnessed and reported. “We believe that mask wearing and physical distancing are important and this is why we had the discussion about a potential Emergency Mask Order. Due to the strong resistance from the Police Chief and Town Manager, we have decided to withdraw this proposal. But we remain concerned. Instead, the Subgroup is recommending an aggressive approach to communication, signage and mask provision. We don’t have enough of a volunteer-made supply to meet the demand. The Grant funding that has been applied for will be either slow or not-forthcoming.” Martha put forward the path of going forward with the purchase of masks using the \$3000 allocated by the Selectboard. Brannon said he would support making this move at this time, pending a selectboard motion to proceed without Grant Funding.

Economic Support Group

Brannon Godfrey reported that the Economic Group had discussed the \$400M of federal money. Those details are still being worked out, but the Chamber of Commerce is poised to get the information out to businesses about how to access these funds. The Chamber has done a great job communicating with businesses whether or not they are members. P.J. said the VT Chamber of Commerce has been putting pressure on the VT State Legislature to be aggressive in getting the money distributed. Becca White reported that the State Legislature voted to extend the TIF district funding deadline as of this morning. (Great news) P.J.: “The major takeaway from the Surveys that were distributed was that Businesses need cash pronto.”

Food Group

Barbara Farnsworth said that the Food Group had been joined with a different group focused on moving food to the Hotels. She gave a shout out to Lou’s Restaurant for raising money and supplying meals. Hotel vouchers had been extended to June 30th. There is an additional requirement for people receiving vouchers to contribute 30% of their income to housing.

Subgroup Reorganization

Kristi proposed that HADCCR reformulate to officially disband the “Medical Professionals Subgroup” and add two new Subgroups, these being a “Community Connections and Wellness Subgroup” and a “Communications Subgroup.”

Simon supported Kristi’s proposal, and suggested adding a Modeling Subgroup that could evaluate data which indicates spread within the context of different strategies for responding.

Becky suggested adding the wellbeing of individuals and families to either a new Subgroup or the existing group. Kristi suggested adding this back into the Economic Group. Brett supported this suggestion. Becky wondered if the Subgroup could take on new members. It was agreed that this could be beneficial.

Scott Cooney said he would be willing to participate in the Communication's Subgroup. Becky and Kristi agreed that they would join the Communications Subgroup as well. Becky said she could invite a particular volunteer. Barbara said that she could ask communications professionals and wondered if people should be part of both the Subgroup and the Committee as a whole. **After several rounds of discussion, it was agreed that we would let individuals choose whether they wished to be Committee Members or simply Subgroup Members.**

Brett and Brannon offered to join the "Community Connections and Wellness Subgroup." P.J. also said he would be willing. Someone from the Libraries or HCC could be good members. Barbara said she would let the HCC Board know about the request for a member.

Becky moved to ask the Selectboard to amend the HADCCR Charge to reflect three additional spaces and the agreed to Subgroup Structure. Martha Seconded. All were in favor and the Motion carried. Kristi said she would send along a revised Committee Charge to reflect the proposed amendments.

Public Comment

Mask Ordinance, Dr. Nevin asked for explanation regarding the Mask Ordinance and why it had been opposed. Brannon said that an enforceable ordinance puts the town in an adversarial position and advocated for more positive measures such as signage and providing masks. He also observed that such an ordinance would be difficult to enforce and that an ordinance that was not intending to be enforced watered down existing ordinances that were intending to be enforced.

Kristi moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:27. Sue seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Submitted by Simon Dennis, Committee Secretary