

Ad Hoc Committee on Homelessness

October 9, 2019

Hartford Town Hall - Room 312

In attendance: Michael Redmond – Upper Valley Haven, Whitney Hussong- Hartford PD SW, Dan Fraser - Selectboard, Michelle Kersey – Twin Pines, Scott P Fletcher– Resident, Noel Bryant– Board of Education, Mike Chamness - UV Gear

Members: Mike Chamness, Scott Fletcher, Michelle Kersey, Michael Redmond, Jesse Vazzano, Renee Weeks, Joie Finley

Ex Officio: Whitney Hussong, Sgt Karl Ebbinghausen, Tom DeBalsi, Lori Hirshfield, Noel Bryant

Selectboard Liaison: Dan Fraser

1. Call to order/Introductions - The meeting was called to order at 8:08 am.

Joie Finley's resignation from the committee was recognized. Kersey put her name forward as a replacement. Her nomination was moved and seconded and unanimously approved.

There were brief introductions. Chamness announced that if community members impacted by homelessness came to the meeting, time would be made to hear from them.

2. Minutes - A motion was made to accept the minutes from the 9/18/19 meeting. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

3. Subgroup Reports:

a. Data: Kersey reported that the subcommittee has started compiling data

b. Resources/Stakeholders/Partners: Kersey reported that a google doc has been started with a list of resources. The doc will be shared with all committee members to add to the list

c. Process & Goals: Fletcher reported that he and Lori Hirshfield had met and discussed using HUDs 4 point framework for preventing homelessness. The subgroup proposes that the committee develop a vision statement. There are samples on the Vermont Committee to End Homelessness website.

d. Issues & Concerns: Chamness reported that the group met and began developing a list of needs and issues

Fraser shared thoughts about potential resources including the shower in town hall, the Main Street Museum, approaching Scotland House about temporary housing, and looking into Brookside Nursing Home.

4. New Business:

Weeks shared that the state may be giving up the VT General Assistance Housing Emergency Program in July, 2020, distributing funds directly to communities to manage. Weekend and after hours coverage is being discontinued.

Ebbinghausen and staff from the Haven will be surveying the homeless community on October 10.

The group discussed possible low cost, quick to implement programs, and possible locations including the Bugbee Center and the Hartland Church. The Upper Valley Interfaith Project was recognized as a resource.

Weeks explained that the Haven's seasonal shelter is a low-barrier shelter with 15 beds. It is fully staffed with volunteer support. She discussed the need for a year-round low-barrier shelter with a greater capacity, and recommended COTS in Burlington as a model.

The committee discussed the cost of homelessness services to the school and town and whether the town should instead invest money in a permanent shelter. Bryant shared that the district spends \$14,000 on transportation and \$1,000 on supplies, schools spend additional funds on counselors and school backpack programs. Redmond indicated that the Haven can provide costs to run its programs - state funding covers a small amount, but the majority of costs are funded by charity.

The committee formed an additional subgroup to research funding sources - Fraser, Fletcher, and Weeks volunteered

The group discussed creating a format for the report:

- Input information gathered by subcommittees into HUD's 4 point framework
- consolidate the information in each area into short-term, long-term, and permanent subcategories
- determine what exists, what doesn't, barriers, and recommendations
- determine the scope of the problem - extent of camping, emergency shelter use, and housing insecurity
- how does this play out in other core towns?

Redmond suggested that evaluation of the larger need for affordable housing and possible solutions is a different scope of work to be addressed by another committee

Special populations will require additional resources and costs

Creating a short, easy roadmap for the selectboard is important. Providing a long wish list would be too much information

Lebanon's committee is releasing data on Friday 10/11. Chamness will touch base with Karen Zook about Lebanon data.

Mapping out a timeline for the committee's work will be placed on the next meeting's agenda.