



**Fidelity Committee
of the
Tri-City Joint Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness
Meeting Conducted Remotely
September 17, 2020
6:00 PM**

MAYORS

Mayor Caroline McCarley
Mayor Robert Carrier
Mayor Dana Hilliard

Rochester Members

Jeremy Hutchinson
(chairman)

Barbara Holstein

Dover Members

Charles Reynolds

Betsey Andrews Parker

Somersworth Members

Todd Marsh

Dina Gagnon

Others Present: Paige Farmer, Home For All. Tory Jennison, IDN.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chairman Hutchinson called the remote meeting to order at 6:03 PM and read the following preamble:

Good Evening, as Chairperson of the Fidelity Committee, I am declaring that an emergency exists and I am invoking the provisions of RSA 91-A:2, III (b). Federal, state, and local officials have determined that gatherings of 10 or more people pose a substantial risk to our community in its continuing efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. In concurring with their determination, I also find that this meeting is imperative to the continued operation of City government and services, which are vital to public safety and confidence during this emergency. As such, this meeting will be conducted without a quorum of this body physically present in the same location.

At this time, I also welcome members of the public accessing this meeting remotely. Even though this meeting is being conducted in a unique manner under unusual circumstances, the usual rules of conduct and decorum apply. Any person found to be disrupting this meeting will be asked to cease the disruption. Should the disruptive behavior continue thereafter, that person will be removed from this meeting. The public can call-in to the below number using the conference code.

1-857-444-0744 conference code: 689461

(Please note: In order to notify the meeting host that you would like to speak, press 5* to be recognized and unmuted)

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their name also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

Cassie Givara, Deputy City Clerk of Rochester, called the roll. The following members were present: Chairman Jeremy Hutchinson, Barbara Holstein, Vice Chair Todd Marsh, and Betsey Andrews Parker. Mayor Caroline McCarley, Mayor Bob Carrier and Mayor Dana Hilliard were also present. Charlie Reynolds and Dina Gagnon were absent.

2. Public Input

Paige Farmer, Home For All, reported that their organization recently received a grant from the United Way and, with this funding, will be launching an Affordable Housing Incentive program in October. This will offer financial incentives to try to encourage landlords and private rental properties owners to get creative in keeping rents affordable and accepting housing vouchers. Ms. Farmer stated that currently this is a pilot program designed to bring individuals and families already in place at their partner shelter into permanent housing. Ms. Farmer stated that she would provide more information to the committee on the proposal.

3. Communications from the Mayors

Mayor Hilliard reported that the Mayors and cities have been diligently working with the County to source a location for a seasonal shelter. He stated that there would be an official announcement coming in regards to a location which has been agreed upon. The details will be finalized within the next 48-72 hours and an official announcement will be made. Mayor Hilliard said he believes this location will meet the needs of the cities for the upcoming winter as well as accommodating the wrap-around services. Mayor McCarley added that she felt this was a good opportunity for the cities to learn how a permanent shelter could work moving forward and to gain experience.

Mayor McCarley reported that she had received a call from David Tilley, the regional administrator for HUD, inquiring what the Fidelity Committee was working on checking if there was anything HUD could do to be involved. HUD has been working within the state to move towards zero homelessness for veterans; in Nashua they are at almost 100% success in eliminating homelessness for veterans. Mr. Tilley wanted to see if the Fidelity Committee would be interested in encouraging the Tri-Cities to take on the challenge of eliminating homelessness for veterans. Mayor McCarley stated that HUD is willing to come in and discuss their work with the committee and assist with the process. Chairman Hutchinson committed to taking on this proposal and contacting Mr. Tilley to start the process. The topic will be discussed at the October Fidelity Committee meeting.

Mayor McCarley said that Rochester is engaging with landlords both locally and statewide through the landlords association to determine what landlords are seeing and dealing with as the COVID eviction moratorium comes to an end. She stated that they are making an effort to stay ahead of any potential evictions and avoiding tenant homelessness. Mayor McCarley stated that there is a meeting occurring within the next week and she stated she would report back to the committee next month with any findings.

Mayor Carrier expressed excitement over the upcoming announcement of a seasonal shelter. He reported that he had been in active discussions on the potential use of properties in Dover for temporary shelters, which hopefully will not need to be utilized if the seasonal shelter comes to fruition. Mayor McCarley clarified that the announcement would not be for a long-term, permanent fix and that the cities and the committee should continue working towards a more permanent solution for future years.

Mayor Hilliard expressed that the establishment of this seasonal shelter is in no small part due to the cooperative relationship which has been built between the 3 cities and the hard work carried out by the committee as well as the creation of the master plan.

4. Communications from the Chairs

Vice Chair Marsh reported on a virtual meeting he attended, held by the NH Welfare Association. He stated that the sense was that organizations are doing a good collaborative job at preventing homelessness; the challenge is that there is currently an increase in those experiencing homelessness and an increase in individuals living in homeless encampments. He spoke about the ongoing efforts of the committee and organizations to continue to combat this issue.

Chairman Hutchinson spoke about the current situation with COVID and speculated that the committee would continue to meet remotely for the foreseeable future in order to stay safe and model good public health during the pandemic.

5. Update: Seasonal Shelter/Warming Center plan

Betsey Andrews Parker stated that the upcoming announcement from the mayors would mean that there would not be a continued need for warming shelters rotating through the 3 cities as has happened in the previous two winters. Chairman Hutchinson suggested that the committee continue to maintain and research back-up plans. Ms. Andrews Parker briefly discussed the Plan B of a day shelter if the seasonal shelter plan fell through.

Ms. Andrews Parker spoke about the enormous amount of work and effort over the past several months which went into getting this seasonal shelter established; while there may have been a public perception that not enough was happening, there was significant work being done behind the scenes to get to this point. Mayor Hilliard agreed and stated that in government there is a reason things sometimes need to move slowly; to examine every angle and ensure that the plan is sustainable.

6. Continued Review of Master Plan**6.1 Recovery Friendly Workplace recommendation for Tri-City Councils**

Chairman Hutchinson stated that he has drafted some language to be formalized, sent to the Tri City mayors, and then presented to their respective councils. Mayor Hilliard reported that he will be bringing this proposal forward to Somersworth's joint commission of the City Council and School Board. They intend to come up with a collective plan to bring this forward unilaterally to both the School department and the City Council. Chairman Hutchinson committed to developing a formal recommendation to go to each of the three councils.

7. Other

No discussion.

8. Closing Public Input

Tory Jennison, IDN, thanked all involved for the time, energy and effort they have put into making the seasonal shelter a reality.

9. Adjournment

Chairman Hutchinson **ADJOURNED** the meeting at 6:36 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara, Deputy City Clerk, Rochester