



**Fidelity Committee  
of the  
Tri-City Joint Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness  
Remote Meeting Via Microsoft Teams  
January 14, 2021  
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  
(Vice Chairman)

Dina Gagnon

**Others Present.** Dave Carpenter, Dover Planning. Lindsey Williams, Dover Council. Tory Jennison, IDN. Ashley Desrochers, Public Health Network. Stephanie Savard, NH Coalition to End Homelessness. Ariel Hayes, Waypoint. Paige Farmer, Home For All.

**MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order**

Vice Chair Todd Marsh called the meeting to order at 6:04 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.

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, took the roll. All members were present except for Chairman Jeremy Hutchinson and Charlie Reynolds, who were excused. Additionally, Mayor Hilliard of Somersworth was present.

## **2. Public Input**

Ashley Desrochers invited all present to a lead poisoning prevention 101 training and said there would be communication forthcoming. Ms. Desrochers clarified that lower income children are most often affected by lead poisoning and, depending on the severity of the case, their families often have to move from their homes which can create housing insecurity for the children and their families.

Dave Carpenter, Dover Planning, said that the Dover planning department had received the letter sent out from the Fidelity Committee to the Tri City Mayors in regards to identifying barriers to affordable housing in zoning and planning. Mr. Carpenter said that Dover has compiled a list of things they have done in this respect over the years. He said they also went to the Planning Board this week to indicate that they would be working with the mover the winter on some further amendments to the ordinances to address some of the concerns raised in the Master Plan.

Paige Farmer, Home For All, reminded the group that they have been stewarding the Affordable Housing Incentive program for landlords and property owners to engage in affordable housing conversation. Ms. Farmer said they had a webinar scheduled for January 28<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM to focus on all the vouchers available in NH and ME and there will be a panel of experts to discuss this matter.

Ariel Hayes, Waypoint, introduced herself and stated that she is part of the runaway and homeless youth program. She stated that she would be the site coordinator for the drop-in center when it is opened.

Stephanie Savard, Director of NH Coalition to End Homelessness, introduced herself.

## **3. Communications from the Mayors**

Mayor Hilliard said that the Mayors have been pleased with the operations of both the Garrison Hotel Shelter as well as the Willand Drive center and said they have been helpful in alleviating homelessness in the tri-city area. He thanked and congratulated CAP, IDN, the center staffs, and all those stakeholders involved for their efforts and being an example of how things can be accomplished when communities collaborate.

Mayor Hilliard said that Somersworth will be hearing a presentation from SOS at the Joint Commission on the Recovery Friendly Workplace initiative and will be working toward compliance on both the City and School sides. Mayor Hilliard also stated that he has formed a mayoral task force on veteran's homelessness to come up with long term sustainable solutions for helping homeless veterans.

Mayor Hilliard also reported that the Somersworth planning department had received the correspondence from the Fidelity Committee referenced by Mr. Carpenter earlier. He said they are working on this and will bringing recommendations forward to City Council by June.

#### **4. Communications from the Chairs**

Vice Chair Marsh spoke about the goals and mission of the Fidelity Committee and the positive accomplishments the group has made to date; Vital Records fee waiver, Recovery Friendly Workplace, and the warming centers. He cautioned being deliberate and thoughtful with future initiatives in order to not overwhelm the governing bodies.

Vice Chair Marsh read a brief statement from Chair Hutchinson stating that he was drafting a letter to the tri-city mayors asking for a review of the ordinances as they relate to food safety in an effort to help the food insecure.

Vice Chair Marsh addressed the committee in regards to the planning and zoning review referenced by both Mr. Carpenter and Mayor Hilliard. He reported that there would be a press release forthcoming, but he first wanted to ensure that the three planning departments had the opportunity to receive the letter and start reviewing.

#### **5. Update: Willand Drive Warming Center**

Tory Jennison, IDN, gave an update on the recently opened warming center on Willand Drive in Somersworth. She said that there have been three individual activations of the shelter. She clarified that this shelter is a cooperative effort between the tri-cities through a contract with the City of Dover with the NH Housing Finance Authority using CDBG COVID money. This funding was used to get the center up and running and provide operational support in 2020. Connections for Health will take over the operational support for the remainder of the winter season in 2021.

Ms. Jennison reported that the center was officially opened on December 20<sup>th</sup> and remained operational for 11 consecutive nights. This first opening was not triggered by weather, but rather as a requirement of the grant. There was an earlier two day activation resultant from extreme cold weather prior to the warming center officially opening; with the three municipalities providing daytime staffing. Ms. Jennison said that during the first activation, the center saw 11 people on the

first night and 16 people on the second night. She gave an overview of the demographics utilizing the shelter for each of the three activations (*addendum A*).

Ms. Jennison said that one of the positive things which resulted from these activations is the 8:30 AM “huddle call” where, with client permission, they are able to reach out to local welfare agencies, CAP, shelters and social service agencies. They share the clients’ intentions for the day which is beneficial to the agencies to know what numbers to expect, how to assist, and to save up front on assessment times because they have already been given a summary of who the client is and what services they need.

Ms. Jennison said there has not been any need for law enforcement, although Somersworth police has been supportive and stopped by to check in. There have been a few clients transported to the hospital for medical or behavioral health concerns.

There was over \$7000 spent through local restaurant partners during the 10 days activation for breakfasts and dinner meals. She reported that there are shower and laundry facilities on site, and the center will provide transportation as needed.

Ms. Jennison spoke about the decrease in volunteers due to COVID. She stated that although they have conducted 7 trainings and trained over 50 people, there are currently only 10 people who are able to volunteer due to COVID concerns. She encouraged

Vice Chair Marsh asked if there is anything the warming center needs or will need in the future. Ms. Jennison stated that there is a donation list being put together. Currently through Fire Chief Klose, Rochester has become the water supplier for the center. The biggest need is human resources for both volunteers and paid staff.

## **6. Regional data/statistics**

Betsey Andrews Parker gave an update on the Garrison Hotel shelter. Day center has seen 101 individuals come through. She gave a breakdown of the areas from which these people come, the length of stays, and the total cost for sheltering these individuals. She summarized the demographics seen at the shelter, the total number of referrals which have gone out, and the numbers of individuals who have been barred from the shelter.

Ms. Andrews Parker reported that the program had to be shut down on Wednesday and Thursday due to a couple individuals testing positive for COVID who had spent a good deal of time at the day program. She stated that COVID continues to be an ongoing issue in the center and shelter environments. There have been 5 COVID positive clients which have been sent from the shelter to the Dube center and staff members have tested positive and had to be pulled as well. She emphasized the great importance for the shelter staff and staff of social service agencies dealing with the homeless to be considered for the COVID vaccine if these programs are to remain open. This demographic is currently not included in the first tiers of vaccinations. She encouraged those involved with vaccine clinics to reach out to her agency and others if there were extra doses which could be used for these social service professionals.

Ms. Andrews Parker reported that the Quarantine Center for the State of NH is going to be opening an overflow center at the Garrison Hotel in a separate wing due to the increase in COVID positive cases.

Vice Chair Marsh inquired how the vaccination plan for those scheduled to receive the COVID vaccination could be altered to include these populations in need of the vaccination who are not currently on the list. Ms. Desrochers stated that there have been some changes made. Just today there was a change made to the age requirements. She stated that the vaccination roll out schedule could change as well. Currently the second dose is being held at the federal level and it is not being sent until the individuals receiving the first dose are due for the second. This could change to allow a larger amount of people to be vaccinated with the doses available. Ms. Desrochers said that the goal currently is to try to utilize all the doses available without wasting or discarding any, and she agreed that these high risk staff members should be receiving the vaccines which are available.

Ms. Savard reported that in the information released today, it was stated in vaccination phase 1B they said that they were including disproportionately impacted populations which are typically disconnected from healthcare. Ms. Savard said she interpreted this classification as the homeless population; if the shelter residents are going to be scheduled for vaccination, then it could be justified for staff that this is a congregate setting, allowing them to be vaccinated as well.

Dave Balian, Dover Welfare, stated that Dover welfare has never shut down and in fact they are seeing clients face to face. Other local welfare agencies are working in a similar manner, and he emphasized that these professionals should be considered for COVID vaccination as well due to their exposure risk.

#### **7.     Update: Tri-City joint housing rights resolution**

This agenda item was tabled until the next meeting in order for Chair Hutchinson and Councilor Paradis to speak on the matter.

#### **8.     Continued Review of Master Plan**

No further discussion. It was decided in committee that there is already quite bit on everyone's plates with both the winter season and COVID restrictions. Between the shelter, warming centers, and upcoming initiatives and proposals from the Master Plan which have already been set in motion, there is no need to add additional projects. Mayor Hilliard again emphasized that it is important not to overwhelm the Councils and rather to take pride in what has been accomplished thus far.

#### **9.     Other**

No Discussion.

#### **10.    Closing Public Input**

Mayor Hilliard encouraged the committee to be proud of the wonderful work that they have accomplished and stated that this committee is a model of how collaboration between the governments can help to tackle such a massive social issue.

**11. Adjournment**

Vice Chair Marsh **ADJOURNED** the Fidelity Committee meeting at 6:59 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara  
Deputy City Clerk, Rochester