



**Fidelity Committee
of the
Tri-City Joint Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness
Remote Meeting Via Microsoft Teams
March 11, 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. Julian Long, Rochester Economic Development. Stephanie Savard, NH Coalition to End Homelessness.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Todd Marsh called the meeting to order at 6:02 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. Dina Gagnon was not present at the time of the roll call but did arrive shortly thereafter. Additionally, Mayor Hilliard of Somersworth, Mayor Carrier of Dover, and Mayor McCarley of Rochester were all present.

2. Public Input

There was no written or voicemail correspondence received and no one was present on the conference line to speak.

3. Communications from the Mayors

Mayor McCarley spoke on behalf of all of the Tri-City Mayors to thank CAP, SOS, and the numerous volunteers for their hard work, donations, and dedication with the operations of the Willand warming center. Mayor McCarley indicated that at the end of March, the Mayors would be reviewing the function of the center and the use of the property to determine what worked and what can be changed in order to plan for the next steps.

Mayor Hilliard reported that he had been surprised at the lack of criticism and negativity in Somersworth in regards to the warming center opening within the community. He stated that the center had been met with support and pride from residents.

Mayor Carrier agreed that CAP and the support staff at the warming center has been terrific and thanked them for their hard work and efforts. He stated that he looked forward to working with the other Mayors to determine a plan for the center's future and ensure it continues to serve the vulnerable population.

4. Communications from the Chairs

Vice Chair Marsh echoed the Mayors' sentiment regarding the Willand warming center. He expressed that many of the patrons of the center are in very difficult places in life and would not have been accepted at other shelters; in this way, the warming center has been life-saving for so

many who might otherwise be tenting in encampments in the harsh weather. He thanked CAP and SOS for their efforts with the warming Center as well as the Garrison Hotel Shelter

Betsey Andrews Parker stated that the Willand Warming center will be closing on March 31st and the Garrison Hotel Shelter will be closing on April 15th.

5. **Update: Warming Center and Garrison Shelter**

Betsey Andrews Parker thanked her staff as well as the volunteers who have made it possible to continue the operations of the Garrison Shelter as well as the Willand warming center.

6. **Regional data/statistics**

Betsey Andrews Parker shared statistics on the demographics of those reporting to the Garrison Shelter from December through present time. The data shows that the shelter has housed not only those from throughout NH's communities, but from several other neighboring states and, in the case of one patron, from as far away as Georgia. She estimated that for the 2,599 people served in this time period* (*number is individual bed nights utilized as opposed to individual people) they have spent \$129,950 to feed and shelter this population. Ms. Andrews Parker spoke about the complicated data being collected for the day programs and Garrison Shelter due to the involvement of Medicaid and referrals, which is being done in partnership with IDN. She stated that they have been meeting with the IDN weekly to ensure continuity with clients. Ms. Andrews Parker reported that the Healthcare for Homeless van is still operating every Wednesday at CAP. She gave an overview of the vaccine clinics that have occurred for the homeless population and the shelters staffs. She spoke about the proposal being researched in regards to delivering the single dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine for use in homeless encampments.

Ms. Andrews Parker spoke about the discussions for future sheltering and the number of patrons which could be expected nightly if it was consolidated to only one shelter. She briefly discussed those who had been banned, either temporarily or permanently, from one or both shelters/centers and spoke about the reality of there being folks who are very difficult if not impossible to shelter.

7. **Update: Planning Department(s) recommendation request**

Vice Chair Marsh clarified that the request submitted to the Tri-City planning departments had not asked for a response until the end of June. However, Dave Carpenter, Dover Planner, reported that the Dover Planning Department had come up with a list of items which they were working on putting into layman's terms for the committee and will be submitting it by June. Vice Chair Marsh stated he had further communications with Michelle Mears, Somersworth Director of Planning, to clarify the objective of the request. There have been no communications with Rochester planning department regarding the request.

8. Continued Review of Master Plan

It was briefly discussed that the committee already has several proposals and Master Plan actions in process or on the back burner; with the current work being done along with COVID, adding additional proposals at the current time would not be advisable.

9. Other

Ms. Andrews Parker announced that the NH Emergency rental assistance program opens up at noon on Monday, April 15th. She reported that there are already 167 people from Strafford County who are waiting to apply. This money is CARES Act funds, and there are income limitations on this round of funding as opposed to the past round. Ms. Andrews Parker spoke about the types of utilities and services for which this funding would be eligible, including tenant-at-will agreements for those residing in motels as well as the allowance of landlords to apply on behalf of their tenants.

Mayor McCarley emphasized the need for ongoing communication and cooperation with the local landlords associations to ensure everyone is aware of what services are available to help prevent issues and evictions. Ms. Andrews Parker reported that they have experienced a large increase in landlords participating in their programs. She spoke about the issue of certain landlords not accepting vouchers or assistance programs; however with this funding, the participants will be able to receive the funds directly with self-attestation and a waiver to pay for eligible services.

Ms. Andrews Parker stated that CAP has heard anecdotally that local welfare has experienced a decrease in requests for assistance. The same sentiment has been expressed by other social service agencies; that they are not having as many requests for assistance. She surmised this decrease is in large part to all the CARES fund programs. She suggested looking at this data in an upcoming meeting to see how this type of assistance affects local housing and service programs.

Vice Chair Marsh confirmed that local welfare has been anticipating an increase in requests for services throughout COVID, but they have not experienced

10. Closing Public Input

Stephanie Savard, NH Coalition to End Homelessness, inquired about the seasons-end closing of the warming centers and shelters and asked how it is potentially being done differently this year and where the patrons were being sent. Betsey Andrews Parker responded that this is CAPs first time running such a shelter, so they have no basis for comparison. However, they have leased space in their building to establish a new day program as well as requesting more ESG (Emergency Solutions Grant) State money and rapid rehousing and they have added 4 staff members who will be working with the homeless community on housing. She stated they would also be working with the communities to plan for the next winter season and how it will be handled. Ms. Andrews Parker stated that the Homeless Center of Strafford County is slated to open a new facility in October of 2021 and will be offering 40 beds. Although this will not be enough for all the local homeless population, it will be another option for regional sheltering.

11. Adjournment

Betsey Andrews Parker **MOVED** to **ADJOURN** the Fidelity Committee meeting at 6:36 PM. Todd Marsh seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara
Deputy City Clerk, Rochester