



Tri-City Joint Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness
McConnell Center, Room 305
32 St. Thomas Street
Dover, NH
August 9, 2018
6:00 PM

MAYORS

Chairman
 Jeremy Hutchinson

Mayor Caroline McCarley
 Mayor Karen Weston
 Mayor Dana Hilliard

Vice Chair
 Marcia Gasses

Rochester Members

Elizabeth Atwood

 Rev. Eliza Buchakjian-Tweedy

 Jeremy Hutchinson

 T.J. Jean

Dover Members

Phyllis Woods

 Betsey Andrews Parker

 Andrew Howard

 Lena Nichols

Somersworth Members

Todd Marsh

 Laura Hogan

 Rick Michaud

 Dina Gagnon

Alternate:
 Lindsey Williams

Survival Shelter Sub-Task Group	Master Plan Sub-Task Group
Marcia Gasses	Betsey Andrews-Parker
Todd Marsh	Todd Marsh
Elizabeth Atwood	Lena Gagnon
Andrew Howard	Eliza Tweedy
	Phyllis Woods
	Dina Gagnon
	Laura Hogan
	Rich Michaud

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chairman Hutchinson called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM. Cassie Givara, Deputy City Clerk for the City of Rochester, took the roll call. All members were present except for TJ Jean and Elizabeth Atwood, who were absent.

2. Public Input

Don McCullough of the Tri-City Co-op, introduced Terra Stewart, a member of the local homeless community who would be interested in being a member of the Task Force.

Chairman Hutchinson indicated there would be more time at the end of the meeting if anyone else wanted to speak.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1 Tri-City Task Force Meeting July 12, 2018, *consideration for approval*

Vice Chair Gasses **MOVED** to approve the minutes from July 12, 2018. Phyllis Woods seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote.

4. Communications from the Mayors

Mayor Hilliard welcomed Terra Stewart to the meeting and indicated that the Mayors would meet with her following the public meeting to discuss her qualifications and

Mayor Hilliard said they the Mayors had a meeting that morning with the Commissioners from their communities and had a lengthy conversation in regards to the request for the Strafford Regional Planning Commission contract. The Commissioners indicated they would reach out the Chairman Hutchinson to offer guidance and support, although the form in which this support would be delivered is yet to be determined. The Chairman will need to meet with the Commissioners to discuss details in how they can help implement the Master Plan, but ultimately the development of the Master Plan will fall entirely on the Task force.

Mayor Weston reported that the Commissioners had met with the Emergency Management Team from Strafford County and asked for input that could be passed along to the Task force.

Mayor Hilliard reported that the regional fire Chiefs had met and will continue to meet in regards to the Regional Warming Shelter and what that will look like, including what benchmarks will trigger the opening of such a shelter and in what way emergency services would get involved. Mayor Hilliard stated that it would behoove the Task Force to have members present at the next conversation with the Commissioners and let this be the focus rather than splitting off in multiple

directions and duplicating effort which has already been covered by the Emergency Management Team. The Task Force needs to ensure they are using the resources wisely which are already available.

The Mayors stated that the Commissioners would issue some recommendations and suggested that Chairman Hutchinson get in touch with the Commissioner's office to set up a meeting with the Commissioners and members of the Task Force in regards to developing the Master Plan.

Betsey Andrews-Parker inquired if the Commissioners were just looking at emergency management in the case of severe cold, blizzards, etc. or if they were looking at long-term shelters? Mayor Hilliard stated that the Commissioners were looking at both emergency and long term plans. They are looking into managing temporary shelters for this upcoming winter as well as looking at more permanent structures in the region.

Ms. Andrews-Parker inquired if the conversations with the Commissioners would be completed prior to the start of the cold weather when shelters will be needed. Mayor Weston stated it had been made clear to the Commissioners that there was a need for action for this upcoming winter season.

Vice Chair Gasses spoke about her meeting with Emergency Services. The EMDs are more focused on critical housing on a county-wide level in the case of a natural disaster such as a hurricane, flood or extended cold. Their focus wasn't primarily on the homeless population. It was clarified that the care of the homeless community during these situations would be discussed via a meeting with Task Force members and the Commissioners.

Mayor McCarley stated that it had become clear that the Task force had a sub-committee whose primary focus was a warming shelter; because there are emergency management services in place who deal with this already she didn't want to see the sub-committee doing unnecessary work or wasting their time. The Commissioners have gathered relevant data and have federal funds available which puts them in a good position to be able to help and advise the Task Force on how to move forward with the Master Plan.

Betsey Andrews-Parker and Todd Marsh volunteered to go along with Chairman Hutchinson and Vice Chair Gasses for the meeting with the Commissioners. There will be an agenda developed prior to the meeting to make the best use of the Commissioner's time and bring back positive results.

Todd Marsh asked if the Task Force was still looking at Strafford Regional Planning Commission as a facilitator for the Master Plan or if that was still undecided. Mayor Weston reported that the Dover City Council had tabled the Resolution for funds to contract with SRPC because they wanted to meet with the Commissioners first to see what kind of input they could gather. Mayor Hilliard said that the Somersworth City Council had also tabled the Resolution and he believes that at a future meeting the Resolution will be tabled indefinitely.

There was a brief discussion held on who would be writing the Master Plan. It was clarified that the Strafford County Commissioners would be offering guidance and support, but the actual developing and writing of the Master Plan would fall on the Tri-City Mayor's Task Force for Homelessness. It was discussed that there is experienced staff between the three cities who can be utilized in the writing of the plan.

5. Communications from the Task Force Chairs

Chairman Hutchinson expressed frustration at the slow progress the Task Force has been making due to red tape and new obstacles encountered each month. Chairman Hutchinson indicated he presumed the November 1, 2018 deadline for the Master Plan would likely be pushed back even further due to the contract with SRPC not moving forward. There has also been no communication from the Mayors in regards to the nominees from the homeless community which have been submitted.

Chairman Hutchinson indicated he has made some changes to the way the Task Force does business. At the top of each meeting, there will be a roll call to better establish which members were present, both for the minutes and those gathered at the meeting. There will also be a dedicated clerk taking the minutes at each meeting going forward.

6. Report of Data

Chairman Hutchinson introduced Jenn Csyz of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission to discuss some data she had gathered which may help the Task Force moving forward.

Ms. Csyz spoke about the variety of planning work they do in the region. She reported that one of the largest funding areas they handle is federal transportation programs. Part of this funding requires them to look at environmental justice and equity issues. SRPC has used some of this funding to pull basic information for the Task Force in regards to established homelessness plans in other local communities and some key data points in these areas such as unemployment rates, poverty levels and cost of housing.

Councilor Hutchinson stated that looking through the data provided, he sees that quite a few of the goals stated and the implementation action items are things that the Task Force has already discussed. A lot can be gleaned from these documents and integrated into what the Task Force has already started.

Todd Marsh, Somersworth, stressed that what is most important is the need to maximize prevention of homelessness and minimize death. The goal to end eliminate homelessness is dramatic, but aiming past the target is best in order to hit the target.

Chairman Hutchinson concurred that the goal of ending homelessness is lofty. Looking at the plans from other communities, some of the first items are preventing homelessness wherever possible; starting with affordable housing and moving people towards resources where there are gaps in services.

Laura Hogan stated that the data provided by SRPC contained some great objectives and goals, but there are not steps outlined in order to reach these objectives. Ms. Hogan stated that the Task Force should focus not just on the actual writing of the Master Plan, but on the “meat” of the plan and how to accomplish those objectives.

Phyllis Woods, felt that a plan for ending homelessness would be set up for failure because there is no way to end homelessness entirely. Ms. Woods felt it is more plausible to find ways to deal with homelessness as opposed to ending it entirely.

Chairman Hutchinson stated that the idea of ending homelessness is a goal worth working for, not a definitive end point. The phrasing “ending homelessness” or “Zero homelessness” is just semantics. The goal should be to work as hard as possible to reach the goal, not aim for a certain percentage because the issue is too great.

Betsey Andrews-Parker stated that there are many groups doing great work for the homeless community, there are resources out there. But the power to make change lies with the Cities themselves; making sure zoning allows for transitional housing and low-income housing, and incentivizing development. Ms. Andrews-Parker stated there are ways to make impacts, such as Nashua’s focus on ending veteran homelessness which has virtually eliminated the issue. She expressed the Task Force needs to focus less on “how-tos” and more on policy, changes and recommendation. If the policies are in place, existing warming shelters and organizations can move forward when the need arises. She stressed the need for zoning changes to make it easier for these organizations to be able to move people into housing, allow Medication Assisted Treatment Housing, and allow treatment centers.

Ms. Andrews-Parker distributed a resource list from Paige Farmer the Seacoast Coalition to End Homelessness outlining local agencies and the services they offer (addendum A)

Vice Chair Gasses suggested that at future meetings, there should be a focus on a particular topic such as housing.

7. Report of Scope of Agencies

None

8. Report from Sub-Task Groups

Survival Shelter Sub Committee:

Todd Marsh reported that the Survival Shelter subcommittee met on July 26th and they feel that traction is being made. The subcommittee was aware of the two paralleled paths being made between Emergency Management and alternative sites such as Salvation Army. Mr. Marsh stated that he felt they were transitioning well from what was a reactionary response last winter to a more planned, methodical response this year. Mr. Marsh stated that he was confident they would have a plan in place for the upcoming cold weather. He is meeting with a representative from the Salvation Army on Monday August 13th at 11:00 AM.

Councilor Hutchinson requested a single page summary of the warming shelter plan as soon as one was available.

Vice Chair Gasses spoke about her meeting with Emergency Management. The trigger for opening the warming shelter in Rochester last year was the snow storm, due to the fact that the cold weather alone wasn't enough to qualify for FEMA funding or reimbursement. This was the primary focus of Emergency Management's discussion with the Commissioners; regardless of whether the cold snap was FEMA funded or not, it was still a life threatening event. There needs to be a discussion about the logistics of opening a survival shelter, such as the temperature, how many people will need to be housed, and if it is okay to have a smaller "back up shelter. There also needs to be a policy in place which states where the funding will come from for City staff and personnel assisting at the survival shelters. While there are federal standards and guidelines in place for natural disasters such as hurricanes and tornadoes, there are no specific federal declaration for a cold spell.

Chairman Hutchinson reported that he had been in contact with Senator Hassan's office and there was discussion of funding in the form of Sustainability Grant funds or a Start-Up Grant which will be explored further.

There was a brief discussion held in committee regarding single homeless residents being the most difficult to place in a shelter and the difficulty finding shelter for those with substance misuse issues or medical issues. Todd Marsh reported that families are typically more willing to accept help and shelter due to the children. Mr. Marsh stated that it is becoming more and more challenging to locate hotel/motel space to house families. The focus is currently for a low barrier survival shelter.

Master Plan Sub Committee:

Betsey Andrews-Parker reported the subcommittee will formulate a new plan of action due to the Councils of the three Cities opting to not move forward with the SRPC contract. They will have an update at the next meeting after meeting with the Commissioners and determining what kind of support and guidance they will offer. The subcommittee will also need appoint of contact from each city for the actual developing and writing of the Master Plan.

Chairman Hutchinson suggested that the subcommittees work on presentations for the Mayors and their respective councils to start laying out the plan and the steps the Task Force is putting into place to reach their goals. Once the presentation is tweaked and completed, it can be delivered to the Councils and hopefully help garner support for the Master Plan and update the Cities on the progress being made.

9. Assignment of New Sub-Task Groups

There was a discussion held to clarify which Task Force members were on which subcommittee for the sake of clarity in the minutes, the public, and for the members themselves.

**The definitive list of each subcommittee is on the cover page of these minutes, Page 1.*

There was also clarification on how the minutes would be distributed and posted on each City's website. Cassie Givara, Deputy City Clerk of Rochester, will send the completed minutes to the clerks of Dover and Somersworth to be posted as soon as they are available.

10. Master Plan Writing Proposal Document Review

10.1 Update: Strafford Regional Planning Commission Contract

Councilor Hutchinson stated that there was no need to delve any further into the discussion of the Master Plan through SRPC since the Cities would not be moving forward with the contract. The Chair invited Jenn Csysz to attend any future meetings and welcomed her input and expertise.

11. Other

Betsey Andrews-Parker requested a list of members of the Master Plan subcommittee so after the meeting with the Commissioners they can start pulling something together. Vice Chair Gasses stated that her understanding was that the subcommittees wouldn't be so distinct and separate that other members can't contribute. Chairman Hutchinson stated that this was the case, but having a listing makes it easier to have points of contact for each subcommittee and to make it more clear for everyone involved.

Laura Hogan stated that it seemed like the Survival Shelter subcommittee was a definitive group with a specific task. The Master Plan subcommittee, on the other hand, was less clear. The Task Force as a whole is essentially a Master Plan committee. Ms. Hogan suggested it might be beneficial to break down the Master Plan sub group into groups to deal with more specific issues, such as housing or zoning.

Chairman Hutchinson stated that after meeting with the commissioners,

Betsey Andrews-Parker suggested that after the meeting with the Commissioners, she will work with the Greater Seacoast Coalition to End Homelessness. Based on this meeting, they

can come to the next Task Force meeting with a shell of a Master Plan as well as an agenda for a facilitated discussion. This can be

The next Task Force meeting will be on September 13, 2018 at 6:00 PM in Somersworth City Hall.

Chairman Hutchinson opened the floor for public comment at 7:20 PM.

Don McCullough, Dover resident Tri-City Co-op, encouraged the committee to make their goal zero homelessness. "We accomplish in proportion to what we attempt." Rather than looking at the goal as unattainable, they can accomplish dealing with homelessness as it occurs.

Paige Farmer of the Greater Seacoast Coalition to End Homelessness started that her organization was holding an event on September 25, 2018 at Tuscan Kitchen in Portsmouth. This event is for rental property owners and landlords in regards to housing voucher programs.

12. Adjournment

Chairman Hutchinson **ADJOURNED** the meeting at 7:23 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara
Deputy City Clerk, Rochester

Data Refresh

	Available Services		
	Rockingham	Strafford	Kittery/Eliot
	Housing/Shelter	Housing assistance/rent	Finance education
	Health/Medical Services	Mental healthcare	SA
	Escaping abuse	Employment/vocational	Legal
	Independent living/life	Family supports	Food
	Transportation	Peer support	Childcare
	Crisis Intervention	Social Activities	Advocacy
	Assessment & Referral	In office follow up	In home follow up
Salvation Army	x	x	x
Seacoast Family Promise	x		x
St. Vincent DePaul	x		x
New Generation	x		x
AIDS Response Seacoast	x	x	x
Cross Roads House	x	x	x
Rockingham Community Action	x		x
Haven NH	x	x	x
Community Action-Strafford		x	x
Families in Transition		x	x
My Friend's Place		x	x
Fair Tide			x
Homeless Center-Strafford County		x	x
Lydia's House of Hope		x	x
End 68 Hours of Hunger	x	x	x
Rockingham Meals on Wheels	x		
Great Bay Services	x	x	x
Housing Partnership	x	x	x
Great Bay Kid's Company	x		
Village Pre School	x		
Kingston Children's Center	x		
Lamprey Healthcare	x		
Chase Home for Children	x		x
Families First Health & Support	x	x	x
Gather	x	x	x
Portsmouth Adult Ed.	x		
Seacoast Mental Health Center	x		x
Connections Peer Support	x		x
Southeastern NH Services	x	x	x
Safe Harbor	x	x	x
Ready Rides Transport		x	
Community Partners		x	
Dover Adult Learning Center		x	
Dover Children's Center		x	
Dover Children's Home		x	
Dover Food Pantry		x	
Seymour Osman Community Ctr.		x	
Cornucopia Food Pantry		x	
Kingston Food Pantry		x	
Cornerstone VNA		x	
Gerry's Food Pantry		x	
Rochester Childcare Center		x	
Strafford Family Justice Ctr.		x	
Tri-City Consumer Action		x	
Victims, Inc.		x	
Somersworth Early Learning		x	
Strafford Meals on Wheels		x	
Count	24	32	12