



Fidelity Committee
 of the
Tri-City Joint Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness
Somersworth Middle School, Media Room
Somersworth, NH 03878
November 14, 2019
6:00 PM

MAYORS

Mayor Caroline McCarley
 Mayor Karen Weston
 Mayor Dana Hilliard

Rochester Members

Jeremy Hutchinson
(Chairman)

Barbara Holstein

Dover Members

Charles Reynolds

Betsey Andrews Parker

Somersworth Members

Todd Marsh
(Vice Chair)

Dina Gagnon

Others Present: John Burns (SOS Recovery), Paige Farmer (Greater Seacoast Coalition to End Homelessness)

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chairman Hutchinson called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

2. Public Input (3-minute maximum and/or submit a statement)

John Burns, Director of SOS Recovery, addressed the Committee on Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) to address some concerns which had been expressed at the previous Fidelity Committee Meeting.

Mr. Burns gave an overview of the history of the LEAD program and how this pre-arrest diversion program works here in the Seacoast. He stressed both the cost savings of this type of programs as well as the effectiveness. Mr. Burns clarified that this program is not run by police departments, but rather with the support of law enforcement; although the police departments are involved it is not a great strain on

their staff time. Mr. Burns referenced peer-reviewed evidence and case studies showing the benefits of these programs.

Mr. Burns stated that all the cases accepted into the LEAD program are non-violent crimes, and those cases which do involve victims are diverted at the discretion and consent of the victim.

The Program is currently being run in Dover and Farmington using a \$75,000 grant received from the Open Society Foundation to fund technical support. Mr. Burns gave further details on the scope of the program and how it is funded and how cases are handled.

(see Addendum A – full statement from Mr. Burns)

Chairman Hutchinson requested the case studies referenced in Mr. Burns statement. Mr. Burns committed to share those studies.

Mayor McCarley inquired what Mr. Burns would need from Rochester as far as the LEAD program is concerned. Mr. Burns stated that the program would need the support of the Chief of Police; the only cost to the Police is their time in order to train in the program and attend the meetings.

3. Communications from the Mayors

Mayor Hilliard stated that the both he and Mayor McCarley would be reaching out to Bob Carrier, the Mayor Elect of Dover, to get him up to speed on the work of the Committee and get him involved moving forward.

Mayor Hilliard stated that Committee members are exploring grant opportunities for a cold weather shelter. Somersworth has a few potential options for locations, but nothing definitive.

Mayor McCarley said that Rochester was also looking into the potential of using vacant properties as shelter space and have been approaching landlords in this regard. Betsey Andrews Parker stated that there is \$500,000 available through CDBG funds to assist with the opening of a shelter, but finding a viable location is the issue.

There was a discussion in Committee regarding the County opening the emergency cold weather shelter at the Strafford County Complex and why it had not happened yet with the recent cold temperatures. It was stated that there is still no criteria or established guidelines for what will trigger the emergency cold weather shelter to open. It was stated that the Commissioners were “waiting to hear if there is a need” for the shelter to open.

4. Communications from the Chair

4.1 Nomination of Vice ~~Co~~-Chair

Betsey Andrews Parker **MOVED** to **AMEND** the phrasing on the agenda item to reflect the Committee is nominating a Vice Chair. Todd Marsh seconded the Motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote to amend the phrasing.

Barbara Holstein **MOVED** to **NOMINATE** Todd Marsh as the Fidelity Committee Vice Chairperson. Betsey Andrews Parker seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote.

5. Discussion: Strategy 3: "Increase Homeless Prevention, Rapid Rehousing, and Supportive Housing Programs"

Todd Marsh directed the Committee to information which he had provided on Supportive Housing. Mr. Marsh summarized the need for supportive housing and the experiences he has seen increasingly in the Rochester welfare department.

Mr. Marsh supplied a sample RFI (Request for Information) and RFP (Request for Proposal) for Supportive Housing services. He suggested the possibility of putting out a request for information first, and stated that often times those who respond to an RFI will submit proposals for the RFP. Mr. Marsh stated he could work on a press release relevant to what the Committee is seeking with these proposals.

Mr. Marsh emphasized the need for supportive housing, particularly for single homeless individuals without dependents either living on the street or couch surfing; and while this will not be a full solution, it is certainly needed.

Paige Farmer, Home For All, addressed the Committee regarding Medicaid. Ms. Farmer stated that Medicaid is in the process of funding supportive housing; though many organizations providing these social services are not familiar with Medicaid billing and do not have experience with the process. Ms. Farmer suggested this be explored so there could be an infrastructure developed and shared so that each individual agency does not need to have a Medicaid number or there could be a centralized group of organizations to which other agencies are submitting information. She suggested that this piece of the process is something in which the Cities could consider investing. The Cities could consider putting up funding or matching funding into something to develop infrastructure and offer training

Ms. Farmer spoke about identifying which services are providing these services which are billable to Medicaid and identify who will need to be able to carry out the billing. It can then be further determined if there are larger agencies which already have the infrastructure which can be expanded or of there can be a "pool" of agencies already using this system which can be utilized. It was compared to a service to which handles medical transcription and billing would be outsourced.

There was a discussion clarifying the Medicaid billing process and how not all billable services are covered by all providers and how the cases are divvied up based on which organizations can best serve the client's needs.

Ms. Andrews Parker asserted that the Public Housing Authorities in the Tri Cities which already provide permanent supportive housing solutions should get Medicaid billing numbers. This is a positive step the Cities could take and would allow reimbursement for some of the expenses. Ms. Andrews Parker also spoke about Tax Credit Projects and how they can tie into supportive housing.

Mr. Marsh addressed the potential of existing services expanding to allow space for opportunities for supportive housing which could then be reimbursable through Medicaid.

Ms. Farmer gave an update on the recent Charrette in Concord hosted by the NH Housing Finance Authority. Ms. Farmer stated there are funds available for brick and mortar projects; for building new or expanding current properties. She stated that although this money is available for projects, if the cost for the services the buildings house are not able to be recouped. It is now a matter of evaluating what is the best use of municipal resources to help out and fill in the gaps.

6. Discussion: Grant and Educational Opportunities

6.1 CSH Supportive Housing Institute – Deadline December 4

There was a discussion of putting together a team of members of the Fidelity Committee, contributors or municipal staff to apply for the Supportive Housing Institute as well as who would be best suited to meet the requirements of the application.

The commitment to the program was summarized; each team will need to commit to attending each meeting in Bedford, of which there are two per month for 6 months.

The Committee discussed the benefits of attending the institute and the valuable information and funding and grant opportunities which result.

Ms. Andrews Parker indicated she would reach out to form a team from the Tri-City Area and follow up with the Committee.

6.2 SAMHSA Grant for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals – Deadline December 16

Ms. Farmer addressed the Committee regarding this grant opportunity which would offer funding for assistance to homeless individuals experiencing Substance Abuse Disorder. The grant offers up to \$400,000 per year for a 5 year term. Ms. Farmer stated that the applicant is required to be registered with the NIH (National Institutes of Health) database as well as have integration with behavioral health and credentialed individuals overseeing a project director. The applicant would need to have all this infrastructure currently in place as there is not enough time prior to the deadline to start from the beginning to establish the necessary criteria. Ms. Farmer reported that, unfortunately, the organization which Home for All had identified as the best option was unable to take this on at the current time.

There was a discussion in Committee regarding the perception that perhaps the Committee and municipalities are not doing enough. It was stated that often when it comes to these grants opportunities, Municipalities are looking for shovel-ready projects with a viable location within transportation routes, in which the zoning and codes already allow for the project scope. Alternately, tax credit applications for supportive housing or low income housing only come up once a year with a limited window for application and other criteria needing to fall into place.

Ms. Andrews Parker suggested that as a piece to the Public Outreach and Education portion of the Master Plan, the Committee should map out the work which is already being done in the community to illustrate all the great things which are being done by varying organizations; who has which grants, what is coming in the future with grant applications, and which resources are currently available. It is not that the work is not being done, it just needs to be better broadcasted.

Mr. Burns spoke about thinking outside the box with grant funding and potentially looking outside the traditional approaches at least for the short term. Potentially these short term fixes could translate into longer term programs.

Ms. Andrews Parker stated that the Fidelity Committee could do a huge service by simply identifying the funds available and do the public engagement to source the programs and services which can utilize these available funds.

Chairman Hutchinson referenced the assertion from Allan Krans (Dover Housing Authority) at the previous meeting that there is a State statute which allows for Cities to use impact fees to help fund affordable/low income housing. Mr. Krans had stated he did not know of instances where this use had been applied in NH, but it was something the Cities could investigate. Chairman Hutchinson and Mayor McCarley reported that the decision on Impact Fees would be coming back before the Rochester Council in the upcoming months, and this was a use which could be looked into further.

7. Strategy for December, 2019 meeting

Ms. Andrews Parker suggested the December meeting be a workshop in which the Committee and contributors map out services currently available. She stated that if there was a clearer understanding of what was currently available and which programs were already funded and handling certain services as well as identifying funding sources and projects, the Committee would better know where there focus needed to be and would not duplicate work. This would also serve to inform the public and other organizations when they request information on what is needed and what gaps needed to be filled.

The Meeting will be a working meeting with all those present forming groups to workshop the services and resources available for particular strategies included in the Master Plan.

Mayor McCarley suggested sending out an email to the Committee distribution list soliciting a brief synopsis outlining the services offered by the organizations and non-profits in which these members are involved.

The meeting will take place on December 12, 2019 at 6:00 PM most like at CAP in Dover, with the definitive location to be announced in the upcoming week.

8. Other

Mr. Marsh related that he had seen an uptick in homeless singles without dependents looking for shelter. Mr. Marsh said that welfare is having an increasingly difficult time placing these individuals. There is no space to shelter these individuals, and for the time being some shelters and organizations have offered floor space just to get people out of the cold overnight. The local welfare departments are having to look outside their regular areas to get people sheltered.

There was a discussion in Committee regarding the Homeless Shelter of Strafford County and the barriers to placing homeless individuals at this locations; there are nightly fees and the facility is not an emergency or walk-in shelter. The facility requires that those sheltered there are committing to their program. It was stated that the shelter is not currently full, but it is difficult to get homeless individuals admitted.

Barbara Holstein reported that she had heard the Salvation Army was no longer serving food. Ms. Andrews Parker spoke about this type of information being related to the work of the upcoming workshop meeting; sourcing information on what services are needed and what is already being done so if organizations come forward wanting to help they can be directed toward the greatest need.

9. Closing Public Input

Ashley Desrochers, Strafford County Public Health Network, referenced the recent lead poisoning seminar which was hosted for landlords and homeowners. She spoke about the potential correlation between the lead paint issue and loss of housing or unsafe housing. Ms. Desrochers gave information on how to get involved with the committees relating to lead safety.

10. Adjournment

Betsey Andrews Parker **MOVED** to **ADJOURN** the Fidelity Committee meeting at 7:37 PM. Todd Marsh seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara
Deputy City Clerk, Rochester

Facts and the Importance of Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD)

Submitted by John Burns

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program started in Seattle in 2011 and now operates in 38 cities and towns with 22 more in the development or launch phase. The program is not run by the police it is a partnership that is ongoing which involves 15 agencies including corrections, probation and County Attorney's office who all are in support of along with Dover and Farmington Police.

Chief Toussaint was right, homelessness, poverty and substance use disorders should not be a police issue, they should be handled by case management where they can may have a shot at legitimate and useful evidence-based supports. This is why people are diverted to case management by outside agencies rather than handcuffs and jails which are far more expensive and well documented as ineffective.

We often hear we cannot arrest our way out of this then we hear directives that people need "accountability" of incarceration. Incarceration has never been an evidence-based approach to substance use disorder or homelessness. Programs such as LEAD have been through rigorous peer reviewed research that shows it is evidence based. Do we want people cycling through jails and our criminal justice system or do we want them to have an opportunity to get well?

Chief Toussaint mentioned victims. All diversions in LEAD are crimes without a victim with the exception of cases where there could be a theft, the only way those petty crimes can be diverted is with victim consent and agreement. Patrolmen have discretion to divert and then if there is a victim the victim has discretion. Violent crimes, sex crimes, domestic violence and DWI are not eligible. Police departments may be thin in some communities and that's why this is a sensible and pragmatic solution. Case management is handled by outside agencies, such as SOS, the program reduces recidivism and the extent of "police monitoring" is having a representative attending operations work group meetings which are held monthly for one hour to do a case review for both Dover and Farmington. There is also a quarterly policy work-group so all the infrastructure work is completed. The requirement is participants have a case management assessment within 2 weeks and so far we've had 14 diversions with 100% compliance. If they didn't do the assessment the charges would be pressed. That hasn't happened. Further we now have community contact referrals. We are hearing a lot about bail reform complaints. Those individuals are ideal for that as we can help work with them to get to court since it's hard when homeless to find transportation, hold onto paperwork and remember. People need help not a broken system.

This program has existed since 2011 and has had peer reviewed evidence based studies on it. That research showed in Seattle participants in LEAD were 58% less likely to be re-arrested and had a 38% decrease in nights unsheltered along with a 32% drop in emergency room visits then those not enrolled. That tells us less of a strain on thin police departments and less taxpayer dollars being spent on jails courts, drug courts and post arrest diversion programs. Another study showed up to \$2100 reduction per person in LEAD for start to finish case management. Whereas non-lead participant costs rose over \$5000 on average per individual during that time frame. The program is operating in 38 cities and towns It is recognized by both SAMHSA and the Dept of Justice and now being written into grants specifically. It's been implemented.