



Tri-City Joint Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness
City Hall, Council Chambers
1 Government Way
Somersworth, NH
September 13, 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 Tweedy

Jeremy Hutchinson

T.J. Jean

Dover Members

Phyllis Woods

Betsey Andrews Parker

Andrew Howard

Marcia Gasses

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	Dina Gagnon
Andrew Howard	Eliza Tweedy
	Phyllis Woods
	Lena Nichols
	Laura Hogan
	Rich Michaud

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chairman Hutchinson called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. Cassie Givara, Deputy City Clerk of Rochester, took the roll. The following members were present: Betsey Andrews Parker, Dina Gagnon, Todd Marsh, Rich Michaud, Eliza Tweedy, Lindsey Williams, Phyllis Woods, Terra Stewart, Elizabeth Atwood, Chairman Hutchinson, Vice Chair Gasses, Mayor Weston and Mayor Hilliard. The following members were absent: Mayor McCarley, Laura Hogan, Andrew Howard and TJ Jean.

2. Public Input

Chairman Hutchinson invited members of the public to address the committee.

Denise Ambrose spoke about the possibility of using some of the areas vacant and derelict buildings as potential housing for the homeless population.

Chairman Hutchinson closed public input at 6:08 PM and noted that there would be additional opportunity for public input at the end of the meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1 Tri-City Task Force Meeting August 9, 2018, **consideration for approval**

Ms. Givara noted that a revised set of minutes had been sent out prior to the meeting which clarified the member list of each subcommittee. Phyllis Woods indicated there was a redundant name listing in the Master Plan sub-Task Group listing. Chairman Hutchinson requested a motion to approve the August 9, 2018, minutes with the clerical error corrected.

Phyllis Woods **MOVED** to approve the August 9, 2018, revised minutes. Andrew Howard seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote.

4. Communications from the Mayors

Mayor Hilliard reported that there had been a productive meeting at the Community Action Partnership with Betsey Andrews-Parker. He stated that he is very optimistic and excited with the progress being made on the draft Master Plan developed by Ms. Andrews-Parker.

Mayor Weston and Mayor Hilliard both expressed that the original deadline of November 1, 2018, can be extended and additional time added. The quality of the final product and making sure it is done correctly is far more important than sticking to an established time frame. The

plan may also be completed in parts, with certain projects approved first and varying pieces being completed at different stages.

4.1 Appointment of Terra Stewart

Chairman Hutchinson welcomed Terra Stewart as the newly-appointed voting member of the Task Force.

Ms. Stewart stated that she looked forward to acting as an advocate for the homeless community and a liaison to the community to help locate available resources.

Ms. Stewart outlined her plan to clean up certain camp sites in Rochester where the homeless population congregate and to eventually move onto Somersworth and Dover for similar clean ups. Ms. Stewart stated that volunteers and supply donations would be necessary for the project to be more effective. Ms. Stewart reported that there had been an article published in Foster's detailing the cleanup plan as well as supplies needed. Anyone wishing to make donations or volunteer their time to this effort can contact Tri-City Co-op in Rochester at (603) 948-1043.

5. Communications from the Task Force Chairs

Chairman Hutchinson reported a news item in which he read that Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon, has established a Two-Billion Dollar fund to help fight homelessness nationwide. Chairman Hutchinson said he intended to draft a letter to reach out and potentially get the Task Force involved with this opportunity. Funding is the number 1 item which currently limits the Task Force, so acquiring some additional funding might take some of the pressure off and allow the process to move along more efficiently and quickly.

Chairman Hutchinson referenced the recent State Primary Election and the candidates from each party which would be advancing to the State General ballot in November. He stated that he is planning on inviting a few of the candidates to one of the upcoming Task Force meetings and welcoming comment on what their plan for the homelessness issue would be if they were to be elected. Alternately, having these candidates at a meeting would emphasize to them how important this issue is to the Tri-City area.

There was a brief discussion in Committee in regards to partisan politics and whether it may be problematic to invite politicians actively running for office to have a seat at the table or even the appearance that the Task Force is showing favor. Chairman Hutchinson stated that it is not known whether the candidates running for office even know the Task Force on Homelessness exists. He restated that the candidates would be invited to have a voice at the table, but rather would be invited to listen and participate in public input if they so desired. The distinction being that these people will potentially sit in a position which could directly affect the community the Task Force is trying to help.

Betsey Andrews-Parker suggested that rather than invite the candidates to a meeting, the Task Force could write a letter outlining what the Task Force is trying to accomplish and what they need. The letter would explain that the Task Force is developing a master plan and indicate that updates can be provided as well as contact information if the candidate wishes to receive more information.

The consensus of the committee was that a letter should be sent to the candidates as opposed to an open invitation for them to listen or speak at the upcoming meeting. Chairman Hutchinson stated he would draft a letter and bring it back to Committee for approval prior to sending it to the candidates.

Mayor Weston inquired if the grant request being submitted to Amazon CEO Bezos would be from Rochester specifically or from the Tri-City Task Force as a body. Chairman Hutchinson stated he would defer to those City staff in Rochester with experience with the grant writing process, but likely it would originate from the Task Force representing all three cities.

Julian Long, grant manager for the City of Rochester, offered assistance with the submission to Amazon.

Mayor Hilliard asked that the committee be kept informed of any candidates who respond to the letter from the Task Force or accept invitations to attend meetings.

Chairman Hutchinson asked for an update on the meeting with the Strafford County Commissioners.

Betsey Andrews-Parker reported that not everyone was able to meet, but they did have Tory Jennison at the meeting this evening representing the Commissioners. Ms. Jennison does emergency planning, population health, and was closely involved with the cold weather shelter. The idea moving forward is that Ms. Jennison will be available to assist the Task Force with her expertise and compiling relevant data to help develop the master plan. Ms. Jennison will also serve as a liaison between the Commissioners and the Task Force. When the Master Plan is further along, at that point members of the Task Force can meet directly with the Commissioners.

Mayor Weston read a statement from the Strafford County Commissioners endorsing Ms. Jennison's involvement with the Task Force.

6. Report of Data

Chairman Hutchinson referenced the chart of resources generated by the Greater Strafford Coalition to end homelessness which had appeared in the previous meeting minutes. A Rochester Councilor had inquired why the list of resources included data from Rockingham County.

Ms. Andrews-Parker stated that homelessness does not have a border. Resources outside of Strafford County are listed because these organizations often need to collaborate and share resources to help and house the homeless community. These organizations are all interconnected and inter-dependent.

Chairman Hutchinson stated he had received communication from a constituent about the possibility of developing a phone app for finding local resources, or alternately for volunteer opportunities and areas of need for those looking to assist.

Terra Stewart reported that she, along with the help of Tri City Co-Op, was developing a Facebook page as well as a website which would list available resources, have relevant articles and information, donation requests, and volunteer opportunities.

Todd Marsh stated that NH 211 has a website where people can search for resources and the Greater Seacoast Coalition for Ending Homelessness is developing a website.

Don McCullough told the Committee that SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) has a free app which deals with finding resources for mental health and substance use.

Elizabeth Atwood stated that Nhtreatment.org also has an app for assistance with substance use.

7. Report from Sub-Task Groups

Todd Marsh, Rochester Welfare Director, and Lena Nichols of Dover Welfare gave a presentation** detailing the mission of local welfare organizations, the services and resources they provide, and the benefits and concerns those in the field encounter.

***see addendum A*

Mr. Marsh and Ms. Nichols outlined some of the myths which are often cited when discussing problems with the welfare system:

- The assertion that recipients are living off the system. Mr. Marsh stated the majority of his clientele are gainfully employed but just do not make enough money to make ends meet.
- The idea that there is rampant abuse in the welfare system. Although Mr. Marsh stated there is occasional fraud encountered, it is not prevalent and City welfare does their due diligence in verifying any information given.
- That welfare recipients are given cash to spend however they please. The majority of assistance given is in the form of vouchers.

Mr. Marsh detailed how welfare organizations in the area collaborate not only with each other, but with other agencies to provide assistance. Ms. Nichols stated it is important to be aware of all programs and resources available because welfare isn't always able to help in every situation. The SHARE fund is one such local organization providing assistance during emergencies or hardships.

Ms. Nichols discussed the Community Care Team which is a gathering of personnel from multiple support organizations to discuss specific cases and brainstorm possible assistance solutions. Ms. Andrews-Parker clarified that the Community Care Team was a medical model assisting those who are medically fragile. It is not an opportunity for average welfare cases.

Mr. Marsh concluded that there is no wrong door for seeking assistance. Through welfare and collaboration with neighboring resources, those seeking help can be connected with assistance regardless of where they start.

8. Master Plan Writing Proposal Document Review

Betsey Andrews-Parker gave a Power Point presentation outlining her draft version of the Master Plan** and detailing seven primary strategies contained therein. Ms. Andrews-Parker explained that each of these strategies would be presented as succinct summary pages containing the particular issue being addressed, potential solutions as well as the potential challenges which may be encountered, cost estimates, funding sources and other relevant information.

***see addendum B for draft proposal*

Ms. Andrews-Parker stated that this draft proposal is just a preliminary version, a work in progress. It would have an introduction explaining what the committee hops to accomplish, the members, the methodology explaining how the Task Force arrived at their mission.

Data as provided through Ms. Jennison will be integrated into the plan as concrete factual information to back up the work being done. Data points include but are not limited to number of homeless shelter encampments, number of homeless served in kitchens, children in schools, absences from schools, free and reduced lunch recipients and Medicaid.

Strategies may need to be added, removed, changed or combined depending on need.

Ms. Andrews-Parker stated that the plan is aggressive, but plausible, and she is optimistic that it can be accomplished. If the Task Force approves the draft master plan, she suggested choosing two or three of the strategies which the Task Force deems most pressing and forming subcommittees to focus on these strategies.

The newly formed work groups can meet between now and the next Task Force meeting and work to further the strategies with a provided template. They will then present to the Task

Force at the October meeting. This same process will be followed to flesh out other strategies at future meetings. In December, there may be a more complete draft master plan forming, at which point it can be sent to a public hearing and charrette and finally tweaking and cleaning up the plan to be submitted to the municipalities by January 2019.

Chairman Hutchinson **MOVED** to **ADOPT** the draft Master Plan. Terra Stewart seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote.

There was a lengthy discussion in Committee regarding which strategies would be the first tackled and which members would like to be involved.

Ms. Jennison inquired if the Master Plan is crafting expectation that the strategies are things that municipalities have control over. Some of the items may involve changing ordinances or funding from Cities. With some agencies potentially involved not having a representative on the Task Force, it can be difficult to plan on their behalf. Ms. Andrews-Parker stated that the Cities can't be depended on to do this. There is not enough money. It's a collective project, a partnership between Cities and resources.

Strategy #1: A seasonal cold weather shelter. Ms. Andrews-Parker clarified that this is not an emergency shelter, it is not with the fire chiefs. It is a long-term cold weather shelter which doesn't necessarily mean creating a new facility. Rather, it may entail increasing capacity on an existing shelter.

Members of the Seasonal Cold Weather Strategy work group: Group lead Marcia Gasses, Todd Marsh, Phyllis Woods, Elizabeth Atwood, Don McCullough, Lena Nichols and Barbara Holstein.

Strategy #4: Substance Use work group. Supporting efforts to decrease substance use disorder and increase prevention.

Members of Substance Use Work Group: Group Lead Elizabeth Atwood, Eliza Tweedy, Barbara Holstein, and Jeremy Hutchinson.

Terra Stewart discussed access to showers, laundry and hygiene as a major roadblock for the homeless community in getting a job and staying healthy. Ms. Stewart detailed some options for support in these areas and talked about the work she would be doing on this issue.

Todd Marsh reported that the extreme cold weather subcommittee met on August 13, 2018, at the Salvation Army and they are moving forward with Plans for the Salvation Army to be the extreme cold weather shelter. There may be parallel plans for emergency management to open a shelter as well, but this a separate option. The cold weather subcommittee will meet again at the Salvation Army on October 15, 2018.

9. Other

Chairman Hutchinson requested that the next Task Group meeting be rescheduled to October 18, 2018. The next meeting will take place at the City Hall Annex in Rochester.

Terra Stewart stated that the cleanup she is organizing is focused on the homeless community taking accountability for their own sites, but that outside help would be welcomed. Ms. Stewart agreed to develop a summary statement on what is needed to be added to the next Task Force agenda with any applicable action items.

Mayor Weston spoke about the City of Dover clean up day

Don McCullough spoke about the state of NH RSA 165 stating that a City's public welfare SHALL provide support for those unable to support themselves. He asserted that it is a City's responsibility to care for those in need. He also spoke about City ordinances which don't allow camping on City-owned property.

10. Adjournment

Chairman Hutchinson **ADJOURNED** the meeting at 8:33 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara
Deputy City Clerk, Rochester

Local Welfare

Accessible-Aware-Accountable

The general assistance program is one of New Hampshire's oldest statutes, having its origin in the English Poor Laws passed in 1601. The statute reads as follows:

RSA 165:1: Whenever a person in any town is poor and unable to support himself, he shall be relieved and maintained by the overseers of public welfare of such town

- RSA 165:1 Interpreted by years of case law
- Baker-Chaput v. Cammett, 406 F. Supp. 1134 (D.N.H. 1976)
 - Mandate for local welfare guidelines *“Absolute discretion is a ruthless master.”*
- Often confused with The Department of Health and Human Services (State Welfare)
 - Categorical assistance/non-emergency
 - Categorical assistance- application process online.
 - Temporary Aid To Needy Families (cash assistance.)
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formally food stamps.)
 - Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled (Cash and Medicaid.)
 - Other non-immediate emergency programs.
- Local Welfare Emergency Assistance Provided
 - Rent (to prevent eviction or assist with first month’s rent into new housing.)
 - Electric (to prevent disconnect or reconnect.)
 - Heating (emergency heating assistance during the winter months.)
 - Prescriptions
 - Dental (normally limited to extractions due to infections/abscess.)
 - Transportation
 - Emergency Housing (homeless shelters/motels.)
 - Emergency Food (if food cannot be obtained from a meal center or food pantry.)
- Homeless Prevention/Assistance
 - Rental assistance eviction prevention.
 - First month’s rental assistance for new housing with confirmed ability to maintain.
 - Coordinates homeless shelter assistance with “Coordinated Entry” and shelters.
 - Assists families with motels if confirmed necessary. Families are normally expected to accept homeless shelter option when available.
 - Navigators to other services for additional assistance.
 - Case management/coaching, including budget assistance, employment search strategies and resume reviews/assistance.
- Determinations of Assistance

- The Art of Local Welfare.
 - Trust, but verify practice.
 - Assessment intake, appointment and same day decision.
 - Allowable budget, including receipts, bank account statements and proof of income. Proofs can be postponed to meet immediate emergency. Limited assistance is normally provided until proofs are provided.
 - Expectations to avail to other forms of assistance.
 - Case management is provided to minimize recidivism and a savings to taxpayers.
 - Guidelines are the general guide, but the total situation often determines the approach and result.
- Benefits
 - Known and accessible location within the community (many people seeking assistance walk to local welfare offices, including toward the end of day.)
 - Increased knowledge of residents seeking assistance.
 - Knowledge and relationships with local landlords and other vendors. Relationships assist with negotiations.
 - Knowledge and relationships with community service programs.
 - The welfare budget cannot run out of money. Needed funds must be appropriated if needed.
 - Accountable to both the law and the municipality appropriating the funds.
 - Municipality is accountable to their own housing market.
 - Tri City area welfare managers are very experienced in local welfare management and have been recognized for their efforts by the NH Bureau of Homeless and Housing.
- Concerns
 - Small communities with part time Welfare Managers with limited experience.
 - Small communities with accessible locations, but limited hours of availability.
 - Town Selectpersons “Welfare Boards” making decisions without the applicant present or unintentionally intimidating applicants in a board setting.
 - Due to fiscal management dynamics, the “humanitarian purpose” of local welfare can be lost to a cost savings focus.
- Efforts to Concerns
 - Professional peer support is practiced by experienced local welfare managers to assist those with less experience.
 - Monthly seacoast area local welfare meetings, including the smaller towns of Rollinsford, Barrington, Northwood, Farmington, Milton, Middleton and Wakefield. Managers share resource information and gauge approaches to challenging cases.
 - The New Hampshire Local Welfare Association meets quarterly and provides trainings, including an annual general “Local Welfare 101” workshop.

- **Myths**

- **Local Welfare Works in “silos”**

- The Tri City area local welfare departments communicate frequently with area supports and each other.

- **“Double Dipping” in different communities**

- With the exception of first month’s rent potentially into other communities, local welfare assists its own residents within its own community. Residency is confirmed by address applicant is seeking rental assistance with and utility bills. Somersworth does not pay a Rochester resident’s electric bill and Rochester does not pay a Dover resident’s rent.
- Transients within the tri city area exist, but most residents assisted are rooted within the communities they are seeking assisted with. Rochester residents rarely move to Dover unless rent is subsidized. The homeless single population without children can be transient and live throughout the area, but tend to settle in Rochester due to services, including SOS, the Salvation Army and the Tri City Co-op, which is peer support for mostly homeless single individuals.

Tri City Homeless Commission to End Homelessness
Master Plan

Adopted by:
Tri City Commission on DATE
City of Dover on DATE
City of Rochester on DATE
City of Somersworth on DATE

DRAFT

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DRAFT

1. INTRODUCTION

How started
History
Mission
Goal

2. STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

List members and affiliations

City of Dover	City of Rochester	City of Somersworth

3. METHODOLOGY

Dates commission met, resources examined, record of minutes, outline of meetings (where, when, public input), public review of draft, final adoption by commission, etc.

4. WHY ARE PEOPLE HOMELESS IN THE TRI CITY?

Reasons for homelessness

DATA

Point in time counts
Shelter nights
Police/arrests
Camps
Soup Kitchens
Children in Schools
Transitional Housing
Day programs

5. COSTS TO THE COMMUNITY

Costs of Homelessness for Selected Community Agencies. Some suggested agencies/municipal departments include: Municipal Services- Fire, police, welfare, schools, Hospitals, health care, Justice System, Social Services

Agency	Basis for Measurement	Estimated Cost
Fire	96 calls for service for homeless persons = 1.34% of total call volume of 7,182 requests for service. With an annual Fire Department budget of \$12,456,624, the cost of services for homeless persons is \$166,504.	

Police		
Welfare		
Hospitals	Loss revenue from ambulance transport costs that are written off. Write offs for homeless patients amounted to \$63,122 for 2012.	
Health Care		
Justice System		
Social Services		

6. STRATEGIES

The Tri City Commission to End Homelessness has developed XX strategies to help the region begin the implementation process to eliminate homelessness. The following strategies outline the actions recommended, timeline, what issue is being addressed, collaboration and possible funding.

- Strategy #1- Create Seasonal Cold Weather Shelter
- Strategy #2- Support Access to transportation
- Strategy #3- Enhance access to quality healthcare, mental health and education
- Strategy #4- Support efforts to decrease Substance Use Disorder and increase prevention
- Strategy #5- Create Affordable Housing
- Strategy #6- Increase Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Programs
- Strategy #7- Public Health and Safety Ordinances

Strategy #1 –

Narrative:			
Recommended Actions by Priority	Tentative Starting Implementation Timeline*	Challenge to Implementation	Success Measurement*
<i>Challenges being addressed</i>			
<i>Possible Collaborating Entities</i>		<i>Possible Funding Sources</i>	

6. CONCLUSION

Summary of document

Appendix A

Housing for Homeless People in Tri City Region

Emergency Shelter

Organization	Program	Beds	Type

Transitional Housing

Organization	Program	Beds	Type

Permanent Supportive Housing

Organization	Program	Beds	Type

S=single individuals, M=males, F=females, C=households with children.

*There are additional bed for other populations such as domestic violence victims and persons with AIDS.

Appendix B

Listing of Agencies serving homeless

- TRI CITY SERVICE AGENCIES
- SHELTERS/HOUSING
- PREVENTION
- EMPLOYMENT
- SOUP KITCHENS, PANTRIES & CLOTHING
- HOUSING AUTHORITIES & OTHER HOUSING

2-1-1 NH Telephone Information and Referral - 2-1-1 is a telephone number that connects callers, at no cost, to information about critical health and human services available in their community. 2-1-1 NH is an initiative led by United Ways of New Hampshire, in partnership with Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH), and the State of New Hampshire. Residents in New Hampshire can contact 2-1-1 NH toll-free by dialing 2-1-1 in state or 1-866-444-4211 from out of state.

Appendix C