

# Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

March 7, 2019, 9 -11 AM

### MINUTES

#### Attendees:

- Margaret Bozik, **CHT**
- Lacey Smith, **BPD**
- Lauren Wilson, **CSC**
- Rebecca Laurence-Gomez, **Pathways**
- Jessica Radford, **VT Legal Aid**
- Daniel Blakenship, **VSHA**
- Nicole Kubon, **COTS**
- Bill Schrecker, **COTS**
- Travis Poulin, **CVOEO**
- Dylan Foote, **STEPS**
- MaryEllen Mendl, Vermont, 211/ **UW/HMG**
- Sarah Phillips, **VT OEO**
- Caitlin Ettengorough, **ICA**
- Meghan Morrow Raftery, **ICA**
- Meg MacAuslan, **CVOEO**
- Chris Brzovic, **CCHA**
- Sarah Russell, **BHA**
- Stephanie Bixby, **BHA**
- Val Russell, **CEO**
- Kevin Pounds, **ANew Place**
- Jason Brill, **VA**
- Stephen Marshall, **Homeless Community**
- Kim Colville, **VCIL**
- Amy Carmola, **UWNWVT**
- Geoffrey Pipenger, **DCE/ ESD**
- Andrea Tieso, **VHFA**
- Jill Ridge, **Vermont Legal Aid**
- Erica Da Costa, **CCHA**

PLEASE NOTE: Unless quote marks are used, text attributed to a specific person is paraphrased.

### PRELIMINARIES

- There's an event in Johnson: Veteran's Summit and Stand Down and Northern Vermont University. Jason Brill is doing a breakout section.

- We have a funding request in with United Way and the prospects are favorable [since the meeting, we have, in fact, received funding from United Way].
- **REGENERATION RESOURCES** is the name of the consultant that was selected (Greg Hessel). We have a meeting scheduled with him for early April. We already had one meeting. A report will be produced in June or July.
- There is a stipulation that if you are on the Steering Committee you also participate in one subcommittee but we welcome NON-Steering committee members to participate as well. We're sending **the spreadsheet** around that lists description of subcommittees and who is technically participating. **Please review and update.**

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## ***HOP GRANT REPORTS***

Nicole Kubon & Bill Schrecker offer a presentation about COTS. (See handout on next page)

### **PREVENTION SERVICES:**

- The **COTS Housing Resource Center (HRC)** provides one-time financial grants to qualified households to help with back rent, mortgage payments, utility arrears, utility deposits, short-term subsidies, and moving assistance including security deposits.
- We help people get into financial management classes & we navigate relationships with landlords.
- Once we've identified barriers – we refer them to our housing specialist, we take people to showings, navigate relationships with landlord, help them with a security deposit.
- We provide ongoing housing supports for a year – monthly check-ins for the first three months, then at six months then at a year.
- **SUCCESS STORY:** A young mother – fleeing DV with her 2 y.o. daughter. We were able to connect her to mental health services & stable housing, her child into childcare. She registered in an LNA training program. She graduated and how has had 2 promotions.
- **SUCCESS STORY:** A new American family: Dad was working full time but not enough to cover rent. There was no subsidy available. We restructured our HOP funds, to provide ongoing subsidy – 3 or 4 months of TOTAL rent but distributed in a gradual way. They were able to get a tax credit unit. They entered a repayment program with CHT for one missed payment.
- **SUCCESS STORY:** A man who preferred living in his car, had to send his car to the repair shop which meant he ended up in shelter for 2 nights, during which time we connected him to a Housing Navigator and this led eventually to him getting a subsidized unit at Cathedral Square.
- 15 to 20 percent of people who leave shelter do NOT get permanent housing.
- We continue to work with people after they exit family shelter. Often they do end up housed, but not in the 6 months.

**QUESTION:** What's the biggest barrier to housing?

**RESPONSE:** In the family shelter, it's childcare. We have a dedicated child care person who works on this. On the single adult side, it's consistent engagement. In prevention, it's lack of subsidy.



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## 2018 COTS Summary - HOP Funded Programs

### Waystation Singles Shelter

- Serve 36 individuals at a time, 28 for men and 8 for women at one site / separate spaces
- 275 unduplicated individuals served in 2018 (12,317 bed nights)
- Average length of stay ~ 50 days
- Utilization Rate 94% and 74 nights at max capacity

### Family Shelter

- Serve 15 families at a time across 2 shelter sites; eligible to stay for up to 6 months
- 51 families served in 2018
  - In those 51 households, 82 children and 66 adults stayed at Family Shelter.
    - Of the 82 children, 40 (49%) are under the age of 5
    - 64 (78%) are elementary school age or younger, 10 and under
  - 15 families (29%) are two-parent household; 36 (71%) are single-parent households
- Growing waitlist – consistently have twice the demand than capacity (15 families)
  - Minimum weekly wait list figure (2018) = 16 families waiting, double the family shelter capacity
  - Max weekly wait list figure (2018) = 29 families waiting for shelter, nearly 200% above capacity
- Average length of stay of 145 days ~ 4.5 to 5 months

### Housing Resource Center

- Financial assistance includes: back rent, back debt, utilities debt, utilities deposits, moving & storage costs, short & medium-term rental assistance (Homeless & Prevention Households)
- Supportive services (housing navigation) provided to all shelter guests include: housing case management, systems advocacy, employment assistance, life skills training, transportation, housing search & placement support, housing stabilization support, money management training, follow up supportive services
  - Housing navigation support continues after exit from shelter for as long as client remains engaged with Housing Navigator
  - HRC also manages the Family Supportive Housing program in Chittenden County in collaboration with Howard Center's FCB clinical support services
- Served 85 homeless households & 227 households at-risk of homelessness in FY18
- 89% of homeless households & 86% of at-risk households assisted remained stably housed at 90-days

Dylan Foote offered a presentation on **Steps to End Domestic Violence:**

**Safehome**

- 216 Distinct households housed for a total of 11,269 bednights
- 147 Single person households
- 69 Families
- 113 Children

**Confidentially Located Shelter (16 Beds, 6 Rooms)**

- 33 Distinct households housed for a total of 4,152 bednights
- 17 Single person households
- 16 Families
- 23 Children

[To see the entire report, click here.](#)

**QUESTION:** What are the main barriers to stable housing people face?

**RESPONSE:** Transportation is a really big one, in addition to: credit repair, childcare, and affordable housing.

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## ***HOUSING ACCESS REPORTS***

Margaret Bozik offered a presentation about **CHT (Champlain Housing Trust)**

- Subsidy, services, housing stock are the 3 things it takes to reduce homelessness. Nonprofit housing plays and outsized role in the supply side: in one year, Champlain Housing Trust, COTS and Cathedral Square collectively made 135 apartments available.
- **SUCCESES:**
  - Offering people choice – we have scattered options but also units dedicated to formerly homeless and they have the choice to transfer to a different unit if the first doesn't work out.
  - Beacon and Belair projects brought 24 units online with subsidy and services courtesy of BHA, the hospital and the CHC.
  - Partnership with BHA who provides subsidy and services for 62 scatter sites we make available – including 25 that will be coming online this year. CHT pays for that with a 3 dollar per unit, per month charge to our operating property budget which translates to 60K a year. It helps to support the retention team.
- **CHALLENGES:**
  - Mismatch between demand (studios) and availability (2 bedrooms).
  - Vacancy loss we incur when we're waiting.

- **SUCCESES ON THE RETENTION SIDE** (this is about our entire portfolio and not just the formerly homeless):
  - People who accept help with back rent: 71 percent eliminated or reduced their back rent.
  - **SUCCESS STORY:** When a tenant is suddenly and permanently disabled, she was able to move to project based subsidy.
- **CHALLENGES:** It was an unusual year last year. We had 8 tenants who left with HUGE balances (10s of thousands). Five of those had supportive services. But one of those five was rehoused with CHT because he had a stable history before the crisis hit. For everyone else, their chance of getting housing in the future is seriously impaired.

[To find the Housing Access Report for CHT, click here.](#)

## Laura Wilson offered a report on **CATHEDRAL SQUARE**

- 3 Cathedral Square (downtown high-rise managed by Kristi Lyon) has 60 units that are not assisted living and 24 or 25 people in those units are formerly homeless. We have a lot of staff time; for those 60 units we have 50 hours of on-site SASH coordination. We also have someone who works 25 hours (through Howard) trying to manage the community. We also have 40 assisted living. We have 24 hour staffing. It's a large and intense effort.
- **SUCCESS STORIES:**
  - A formerly homeless family were in non-payment in the 8 to 9 thousand dollar range. We tried to engage them very hard for a long time and in the 11<sup>th</sup> hour we finally got their daughter to talk to them and they're still living there today. Our job is to NOT evict people. In this case, it took all hands on deck.
  - 14 units came online at Allenbrook (memory care). We moved in two people from UVMHC – one who had been living at the hospital since August and who NO ONE else would take. And it's working.
  - A man came in from a local agency; he pays his bills, knows to ask questions. There was a conflict between him and one of his guests. He apologized and hasn't happened again.
  - We have 23 residents out of 110 who are designated formerly homeless. 12 present us with ongoing challenges. Two people have high cognitive challenges & physical but they're engaging with the staff and wellness services. Engagement is a success.
- **CHALLENGES:** Smoking, language barrier, communications in general, big increase in complaints from residents over the last 6 months, marijuana. We are a HUD building, so we can't have any drugs. Guests are another big challenge. A son or daughter will take advantage, argue, create noise late at night. Mental health issues have increased significantly in the next 5 years.

[To find the Housing Access Report for Cathedral Square, please click here.](#)

## Sarah Russell offered a report on **Burlington Housing Authority (BHA)**

(from Sarah's handout):

### Burlington Housing Authority Housing and Rental Assistance for Homeless Households

The Burlington Housing Authority (BHA) provides rental assistance and housing, serving over 2500 low- or extremely low-income households across Chittenden County. BHA utilizes both its Rental Assistance ("Section 8") Program and Multi-Family Program ("managed properties") to respond to the need for housing for the homelessness.

#### **Rental Assistance Programs:**

BHA has several rental assistance programs through which resources may be targeted at homeless households, which include:

- **Five Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers**
  - Rental assistance matched with supportive services for homeless veterans
- **Approximately 60 vouchers for CoC Programs**
  - Rental assistance matched with supportive services for chronically homeless
- **Three-hundred and eight-five (385) Family Unification Vouchers**
  - Rental assistance for DCF-approved and eligible families<sup>1</sup> and eligible youth<sup>2</sup> who lack adequate housing including:
    - Living in substandard or dilapidated housing, or
    - Homeless
    - Imminent danger of losing their housing, or
    - Displaced by domestic violence, or
    - Living in an overcrowded unit, or
    - Living in housing not accessible to its disabled child(ren) or to the youth due to the nature of the disability

<sup>1</sup>Eligible Family: a family for whom the lack of adequate housing is the primary factor in the imminent placement of the family's child(ren) in out-of-home care (foster care) or in the delay of discharge of the child(ren) to the family from out-of-home care (foster care)

<sup>2</sup>Eligible Youth: a youth between the ages of 18-24 who left foster care at age 16 or older and who lacks adequate housing

BHA's Rental Assistance program also administers project-based rental subsidies for its RAD properties (formerly Public Housing) which include 343 units for families, seniors, and adults with disabilities.

In managing its rental assistance programs, BHA utilizes local preferences, as set forth in its Administrative Plan. These discretionary preferences are a means for adjusting the chronological placement on the waitlist for certain applicants, to expedite award of rental assistance through its Mainstream rental assistance program (non-elderly-disabled/NED) and its RAD project-based voucher program.

*Across all of BHA's rental assistance programs, it provided subsidies to 261 households, including 64 or 25% to families and individuals entering housing from homelessness between October 2017 - September 2018.*

### **Multi-Family Program:**

BHA reports certain information to the State of Vermont regarding leasing of its 247 Multi-Family units, which have project-based rental subsidies. *Since the State's 15% homeless mandate went into effect in 2016, BHA has leased 38 or 15.4% of its unit to previously homeless households during FY16 and FY17.* When compared to the number of total turnovers (91) during the same time period, 42% of BHA's multi-family lease-ups were with previously homeless families.

- CHALLENGES: We don't find out about the need for retention until people have very large debts. Family reunification. Scarcity of subsidy. Recycling of the same people in and out of housing. How do we instill this value of "upstream prevention."

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### **Jonathan Farrell offered a report on COTS**

- We have 71 permanent units spread over 5 locations. We have SRO units, efficiencies, family units.
- 80 percent of our tenants have been experiencing homelessness
- Unit turnover: about 14 during the report period. Four evictions (all at the WILSON HOTEL).
- WILSON is a place where we can take high risk tenancies.
- We refer most people to CVOEO.
- We try to help support people over the long term.

#### **SUCSESSESS:**

- There's a client who has been living at St. Johns Hall for 18 years.
- Once we launch 95 North (a half market rate building), it will be 100 percent homeless preference.

CHALLENGES: Family housing.

[Click here to find the COTS Temporary Shelter Fiscal Year 2018 Report](#)

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#### ***A FEW GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:***

- There's a huge unmet need for flexible retention services. **Let's come back to a discussion of retention services.**
- The gap between the service provider and the SASH provider gets very complicated for people.

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#### ***PIT COUNT debrief:***

- Charlie Baker will start working with us to expand the count to other towns. We will get a further PIT COUNT report in the next Steering Committee meeting.

## ***VOTE TO APPROVE:***

(A) THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

(B) THE AMMENDED ROI

(C) AMMENDING THE C.E. POLICIES TO CONSOLIDATE THE PSH COMMITTEE WITH THE COMMUNITY HOUSING REVIEW COMMITTEE

- One slight amendment suggested on the partnership agreement: “US Dept of V.A.” should be stated explicitly (to distinguish it from the state V.A.) and should be named a referral partner.

**VOTE: all in favor: 15**

**None opposed**

**I abstained.**

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## ***A DISCUSSION OF MERGING BoS with CHITTENDEN’S CoC***

- The question is: should we be governed by the statewide steering committee?
- We currently share a database and a systems administrator.
- Our C.E. system is DIFFERENT from BoS. however.
- Note: Coalition to End Homelessness = the CoC for BoS
- **Just for clarity: we are thinking about a single HUD-recognized CoC rather than a blending of the two CoCs.**
- One issue that combining would solve: you cannot access shelter plus care in a few communities at all. There are dead spaces in Chittenden County (but not anywhere else in the state).
- You get extra HUD bonus point if you combine. Let’s ask for HUD T.A. about the details of a merger. [Click here to find the HUD guide on merging.](#)
- We would have to follow the statewide charter and the statewide polices and procedures. We need to think about how much autonomy we want to give up.
- Are we open to inviting HUD tech? can some of us go also sit on the BoS meetings?

**QUESTION:** Why would we give it up? What are the benefits to Chittenden County?

**RESPONSE:** Administering grants. (VSHA does not serve in Chittenden and it’s only because they don’t want the burden of serving both.)

### **NEXT STEPS:**

- Inquiring about HUD T.A. (BoS has no objections).
- We can have a vote on this next month (but we need help knowing exactly what we’re voting on).
- The third Tuesday of every month there’s a VCEH meeting, 10 to noon. Who can be a rep for our group?
- There exists a guide for people who want to merge. Let’s look at it.

### **NEXT MEETING: 4/4**

To find meeting & event dates and minutes for previous meetings, please go to [cchavt.org](http://cchavt.org)