

# **Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)**

## **STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

May 2, 2019, 9 -11 AM

### **MINUTES**

#### **Attendees:**

- Elaine Soto, **Howard Center**
- Jason Brill, **Veterans Affairs**
- Meghan Morrow Raftery, **ICA**
- Brian Smith, **DMH**
- Nicole Kubon, **COTS**
- Travis Poulin, **CVOEO**
- Dylan Foote, **STEPS to End Domestic Violence**
- Will Towne, **Spectrum**
- Melissa Farr, **COTS**
- Renada Walters, **Veterans Inc.**
- Rebeka Lawrence Gomez, **Pathways Vermont**
- Sarah Russell, **Burlington Housing Authority**
- Erin Ahearn, **CHCB**
- Stephen Marshall, **Lived Experience**
- Lacey Smith, **BPD**
- Val Russell, **CEDO**
- James Richmond, **VT 211**
- Chris Brzovic, **CCHA/CVOEO**
- Jan Demers, **CVOEO**
- Linda Amate, **CVOEO**
- Kim Colville, **VCIL**
- Janet Green, **BHA**
- Allyson Laackman, **BHA**
- Geoffrey Pippenger, **DCF/ESD**
- Steve Lunna, **SSVF @ UVM**
- Katie Jackling, **Anew Place**
- Meg MacAulan, **CVOEO**
- Sarah Phillips, **VT OEO**
- Lindsay Morse, **UVM MC**
- Andrea Tieso, **VHFA**
- Chelsea Wells, **Family Programs VTNG**
- Margaret Bozik, **CHT**
- Jessica Radbord, **VT Legal Aid**

- Jane Helmstetter, **AHS**
- Erica Da Costa, **CCHA**

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

## **A DISCUSSION OF THE HOUSING OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATIONS**

- The HOP grant application is out and due on May 17 – [this FAQ has been sent around](#) .
- The following is a list of who is applying (and present at this meeting), how much they are requesting and what it's for:
  - ICA: We are applying for the HMIS dollars, \$65K for the entire state.
  - BHA: We are applying for, among other things, homeless prevention, Rapid Rehousing, retention, and our request is \$145K for two years.
  - Community Health Centers of Burlington: We are applying for the low barrier shelter for \$282K.
  - COTS: We are applying for housing navigation, the waystation, and family shelter for approximately \$380K.
  - SPECTRUM: We are applying for \$20K per year shelter operations grant and also a renewal of \$195K for essential services for shelter function.
  - CVOEO: We are applying for \$702K and this includes the client benefit dollars.
  - STEPS: We're currently trying to determine how we're going to pursue HOP funding.

All HOP grantees have presented their projects more fully to the Steering Committee in the last six months.

- **MAY 17 deadline**
- SEND APPLICATIONS TO MARGARET OR TRAVIS SO THEY CAN SIGN OFF.

## **A DISCUSSION OF THE STATUS OF PSH SUBSIDY**

- BHA presented about their use of PSH rental assistance dollars:
  - We're going to be sending back approximately 190K this year. 80 percent is being returned because we can't use them.
  - The primary reason is because of the lack of supportive services which are required. And acquiring services is beyond our control.
  - Reasons that we don't have access to support services include the fact that they are prescribed and they have extremely onerous documentation requirements. We just don't have enough capacity.
  - Also, there's very few administrative dollars that BHA can apply to managing these grants.

- We asked CCHA to reduce the amount we applied for – which didn’t happen last year or the year before – and we ask you again to reduce the amount requested. These dollars are very challenging to administer, even when we end up sending most of them back.
- We are required to find a match for service dollars of 25 percent of the rental subsidy.
- We also got 45 new vouchers through our mainstream HCV (Housing Choice Voucher) program – specifically, Non-Elderly Disabled vouchers 🟡 which will actually target the vast majority of this population without the labor intensive documentation.
- QUESTION: What are the eligibility requirements for these PSH dollars?
  - RESPONSE: Chronic homelessness – it has a slightly lower barrier than regular HCV voucher. Of the 49 people we’re serving now, only two would not be served through HCV.
- The definition of chronic homeless has become extraordinary challenging.
- QUESTION: What are disqualifying factors for the NED vouchers (non-elderly disabled)
  - RESPONSE: Owing money to public housing, sex offender, meth lab. The money issue can be fixed. The other two cannot.
- OPEN QUESTION: Chris Brzovic asks, Might there be capacity for a smaller PSH grant for those can’t access the HCV program right away? Because for those people who are waiting on our list, five of them are ineligible for mainstream assistance.
- We have a funder’s collaborative. Let’s keep that in mind with regards to funding services.
- Pathways currently has capacity for another 10 clients.
- CHCB currently has 23 people ready to go.
- We also have 20 people on the master-list who are document ready.
- MARGARET: I suggest we go to the congressional delegation and have a conversation about the definition of “chronic” homelessness and the extremely burdensome and unclear documentation requirements. Also, we’re going to see a reduction in funding in the next HUD round, so that will be a reduction in the PSH dollars.
- CHRIS BRZOVIC: Next steps should also include doing a needs analysis – will have those numbers by the next meeting. We have 90 people on our master-list right now and we want to do an analysis of what their needs are.
- STEPHEN MARSHALL: We need a system for those who are not yet chronically homeless but will likely become chronic in the future --- planning for documentation needs in the future.

## **A DISCUSSION/ DEBATE OF THE MERGER QUESTION (MERCING WITH *Balance of State*)**

- Kevin Pound would normally lead this conversation but he was unable to attend today.
- We’re going to vote on accepting the Strategic Planning Committee’s recommendation to NOT pursue merger at this time, while continuing to pursue ways to collaborate.
- The general consensus at the Strategic Planning Committee is that everyone is over-stretched as it is and it would be a very heavy lift to get a merger off the ground – at least at this time, when we have other important work to do.

- COUNTERPOINT: Pathways notes that it would be a limited group that would be involved in implementing/ pursuing T.A. on the merger issue.
- COUNTERPOINT: There might be a lot of capacity to be gained as well. Pursuing the T.A. could make us better informed about what the timeline might look like.
- COUNTERPOINT: We would be taking energy away from the Coordinated Entry process. We want to continue on that.
- One more point: Let's discuss at a later date some kind of follow-up for 1. Data-sharing and 2. Attending BoS meetings.
- Also Coordinated Entry plans to work on a referral process between the BoS and the CCHA.
- **MOTION: ADOPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE NOT TO PURSUE A MERGER AT THIS TIME, BUT INSTEAD, WORK TO FIND WAYS OF COLLABORATING**
  - All those in favor of the motion: 10 yes
  - Against: 4
  - Abstention: 3

## **COORDINATED ENTRY UPDATE**

- CHRIS BRZOVIC.: We're working on data dive. We have higher numbers of homeless on our master-list & are trying to understand why and also what they need.
- Community Solutions are going to be coming to June 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> and meeting with the Built for Zero team. They would also like to meet with a broader group.

## **ICA presentation on the Point in Time Count**

ICA submitted its PIT data and HIC data on April 29.

[Please click here for a PDF of the presentation.](#)

- A few highlights:
  - TOTAL of homeless households: 245 (persons 309).
  - Veterans homelessness has gone down.
  - Chronic went up.
  - Mental health went up.
  - Substance abuse went up.
  - HIV went up.
  - Fleeing DV went WAY up.
  - Overall numbers went down but unsheltered numbers went up quite a bit.
- 35 unsheltered (which is the majority of unsheltered) were reported as DV – so we need to find out why they're not in shelters or motels. We've seen decrease in family homelessness. We're in striking distance of functional zero for families.

- VCIL: We were approached by schools in Colchester regarding reaching out to families who are impoverished or homeless. Let's not forget to go out to the outer suburbs.
    - RESPONSE: When the schools say "homeless" but they don't necessarily use our definition of "homeless."
  - MARGARET: We will be issuing a Chittenden County press release for our PIT data
  - VETERAN'S AFFAIRS: We currently have only 17 people on our actively list. This means we will be able to make an application by the end of the year to UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS for recognition that we've achieved a functioning process for quickly identifying and housing veterans.
  - Warming shelters for youth are 45 percent more than last year (Spectrum).
  - If you want to see gender race ethnicity and other data, Margaret will pass it around.
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### ***A DISCUSSION LET BY STEPHEN MARSHALL ABOUT OUTREACH EFFORTS TO THE TOWNS***

- PIT committee got in touch with regional planning commission. We met with town managers and Charlie Baker over lunch. We wanted to discuss getting services in the outlying towns.
  - One question that came up was around liability.
  - Heather Bush suggested there needs to be a certified trainer.
  - But we can do outreach without certified trainers.
  - [Link to article Stephen wrote about this.](#)
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### ***A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE UPCOMING COMMUNITY MEETING***

- May 29
- Let's decide on:
  - Focus
  - Audience
  - Time of day:
    - **7:45 will be coffee and food and the meeting will be 8 to 9.**
  - Place:
    - IDEAS: Burlington Electric Department, community center at the old north end. (McClure center), St. Joe's.
- The PIT press release might be an invitation to the meeting.
- We can present the PIT data, compare it to the master list data, invite suggestions. And revisit our priorities: streamlining access and housing retention. We might add: responding to data trends.
- The best use of the time is letting the public know about what we're doing and how we do it.
- We want to build in time for inquiry.
- Invite VBSR, Chamber, Landlords association and town managers – let's broaden our vision of stakeholders.

- STRONG FACILITATION will be important. And thoughtful questions for the community.
- Let's record this meeting; ask Channel 17.

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## ***A Discussion led by Stephen Marshall about the City of Burlington Encampment Policies***

- On August 28 of 2017, the city of Burlington reviewed its policies with respect to the homeless community. One of the questions raised was “how are camps closed?” A policy was generated based on this discussion that currently exists but needs more input, especially from the homeless themselves because it has the potential to be abused.
- Last spring, for example, someone's camp was deemed abandoned even though the person was not gone – he just wasn't there temporarily. It was dismantled.
- **May 22 or 23<sup>rd</sup> are the dates for a Salvation Army hall meeting to discuss this.**
  - Question: Are service providers welcome?
    - Response: Yes, though this is for the homeless community to speak.
- The assistant city attorney has said that the current policy is not necessarily modifiable right now because there is litigation going on right now. Lawsuit is with the ACLU.
- MARGARET: Are there provisions for notice?
  - LACEY: Yes, definitely. Unless there is construction or significant security risk, notice of several weeks is given. That's the policy. The litigation is in response to an incident that happened outside of the policy.

**Next meeting: 6/6**

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