

CHITTENDEN COUNTY HOMELESS ALLIANCE (CCHA)

Strategic Planning Committee Minutes

September 18, 2019, 3:00 – 4:30, Champlain Housing Trust

Attendees:

- Steve Lunna, **SSVF@UVM**
- Val Russell, **CEDO**
- Lacey Smith, **BPD**
- Travis Poulin, **CVOEO-CAC**
- Jan Demers, **CVOEO**
- Jane Helmstetter, **AHS**
- Emily Higgins, **AHS DCF OEO**
- Margaret Bozik, **CHT**
- Kevin Pounds, **Anew Place**
- Stephen Marshall, **Homeless Community**
- Amy Carmolla, **United Way VT**
- Erica Da Costa, **CCHA**

DRAFT

- Please note that unless quote marks are used, all text attributed to a specific person is paraphrased.

PRELIMINARIES

Kevin Pounds & Anew Place are taking over operations of the warming shelter! This is great news. We hope everyone can support them in one way or another. **Here is Kevin's update on this:**

- We're gearing up in 6 weeks for what would normally take 6 months. Our goal is to have everything ready to submit Oct. 1st for a HOP grant and we're looking at a 2-week turnaround.
- We are essentially doubling our size in 2 months.
- We're taking anything the Health Center used for the space – it's being transferred to us. We're taking over the lease of the Turning Point Center.
- The state, the city, our board and our attorney are all on the same page.
- The big question is how are we going to staff it? We're going warp speed on interviews right now. At least 5 of the overnight staff are returning. We're interviewing for a shelter coordinator now. We're looking for intake/admin support.
- I went to someone who is a logistics person in the corporate world to help us fast track everything. They're taking Safe Harbor's systems/documents and marrying it with those of Anew Place and creating a new portal to put it online.
- We're waiting until we have a volunteer coordinator to start accepting volunteers.
- Anew Place puts a big emphasis on volunteer support. My biggest concern is that I know there are a lot of people who want to be involved but I don't want too much to come on too fast.
- Community partnerships are a big deal for us.
- We're trying to learn from past experience as much as possible. We want everyone's perspectives.

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS ABOUT THE WARMING SHELTER?

- **Jane/ AHS:** Do you know that UVM will take care of linens?
- **Stephen/ Lived Experience:** I've heard from people who want to have conversations happen between you and the people who use the shelter.
 - Kevin: Good idea but not until the Shelter Coordinator has been put in place. I don't want to make any promises at this point. I don't want to give this person too many tasks up front considering that they will have so much work facing them.
- **Jane/ AHS:** Managing the cleaning of the place has been challenging.
- **Kevin:** We're going to have some business community partners as well.

A DISCUSSION OF THE COLLABORATIVE APPLICATION led by Val Russell

- A final draft of the application must be posted by Sept. 25th.
- Three parts of the application.
 1. The planning grant
 2. The priority listing
 3. The narrative collaborative application.
- The first two are done. Everyone has been very helpful getting the narrative application done.
- A question for CVOEO: Is Jobs for Independence Program still running?
 - No, but the **Ican program** is a successor, however it's not run through CVOEO. It's a state program. Any single person receiving 3 Squares Vermont (homeless or not) and who also have a work requirement (which is most) can get support from **Ican**.
<https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/ICAN>
- A question about trainings: What mandatory trainings do we have on offer? Do we have equity & race training and FAIR HOUSING training?
 - The partners that make up the CoC have all of these mandatory trainings (but not the CoC itself). We need to avoid redundancy.
 - Also OEO has offered non-mandatory TRAUMA INFORMED training.
- We did hear back from STEPS and HOPE WORKS. We added how many calls, how many of those are homeless, how many of those are children and so forth.
- **Margaret/ CHT:** We're being pushed by HUD to say what we're doing about racial disparity in housing people experiencing homelessness, which is great. But at the same time HUD is refusing to enforce Fair Housing Laws and has redefined the disparate impact rule. I'd like to see this contradiction addressed in the application if possible.
 - [The following is new text added, after this meeting, to the CCHA website about this topic: "The proposed revisions to the disparate impact rule could fundamentally reshape federal fair housing enforcement. Disparate impact refers to practices or policies that have an adverse impact on certain classes of people without discriminating against them in explicit terms, such as a landlord that only accepts people with full-time jobs, which bars disabled veterans and other people with disabilities who may not be able to work full-time, even though they can afford the apartment, or a housing authority that distributes housing tax credits, which are used to build low-income housing, in a way that consolidates construction in mostly immigrant areas. The new rule would raise the

burden of proof for parties claiming discrimination and would provide special defenses for business practices that rely on statistics or algorithms, such as credit scoring, pricing, and automated underwriting systems. This would create a loophole for lenders and landlords using third-party vendors by shielding them from liability while making it more difficult to attribute the discrimination to the model or algorithm.”]

- **Stephen/ Lived Experience:** Can you explain the consequences of this contradiction.
 - **Margaret/ CHT:** When we looked at the data, it suggests there are clearly racial disparities in how people are becoming homeless, but not in how they are served once they become homeless. So if we want to make a difference we have to attack root causes of how people become homeless in the first place. One way to do this is, in jurisdictions that receive federal money, they’re supposed to affirmatively promote fair housing, meaning they are supposed to take proactive steps to make the housing market is not discriminatory and there’s a rule that laid out very specific actions that are supposed to be taken along these lines. For a time, there were teeth in these rules. Westchester, for example, was hit with large fines for not taking the required action. Now they’ve removed the teeth.
 - **Margaret/ CHT:** HUD wants to insist that you can’t bring your case unless you lay it all out in your initial complaint. It’s throwing decades of legal precedent of how you prove a discrimination case out the window.
 - **Jan Demers/ CVOEO:** Jess Hyman is now the director of Fair Housing at CVOEO and can chime in on this.
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A DISCUSSION OF THE COMMUNITY MEETING on 9/24

- Meghan from ICA and Margaret will be leading the discussion about racial disparity.
- Jane will lead the Shared Values discussion: we’ll revisit/ re-affirm the guiding principles on the Strategic Plan. The intention is that we all buy in to the work we do together / build trust. And to solicit suggestions. This might be especially interesting for members of the community who are new to CCHA.
 - And then let’s go to frontline staff as well, after the meeting. Let’s ask, “what would it look like if we were working in a way that feels trustworthy?”
- Logistics were discussed (large sheets of paper, sticky notes, print outs etc. – but the meeting is now passed as of the writing of these notes....)
- Stephen Marshall plans to discuss inclusivity, transparency and using constructive criticism / feedback.
- Election of officers, charter amendments and a new co-chair (the actual meeting on Sept 24th did not produce another co-chair, so Travis Poulin is our only Steering Committee chair).

FINAL NOTES

- Stephen: PIT COUNT training needs to start happening. In particular, training for the “outreach surveyors” for the PIT Count: how to go talk to people, how to find people, safety, etc.
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Next Meeting: Oct. 16, 2019

Please go to cchavt.org to find minutes archives and upcoming meetings.