

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

February 6, 2020 Champlain Housing Trust

Attendees:

- Lindsay Mesa, **Pathways Vermont**
- Phillip Snay, **Veterans Inc.**
- Liz Whitmore, **BHA**
- Laura Zeleger, **BHA**
- Tammy Santamore, **LUND**
- Ana Burke, **Steps to End Domestic Violence**
- LiMei Janik, **CHT**
- Katherine Long, **Senator Leahy's Office**
- Thifeen Deen, **Congressman Welch's Office**
- Persephone Naylor, **BTV Low Barrier Shelter**
- Bill Schrecker, **VHFA**
- Tracy Sweeney, **VA**
- Terri Kingeter, **community member**
- David Przepioski, **Former Canal Street Resident**
- Jan Demers, **CVOEO**
- Geoffrey Pippenger, **DCF**
- Elizabeth Kannard, **Safe Harbor**
- Sarah Russell, **CVOEO**
- Chris Brzovic, **CCHA/ CVOEO**
- Robyn Stattel, **Economic Services**
- Todd Rawlings, **CEDO**
- Kevin Pounds, **Anew Place**
- Will Towne, **Spectrum**
- Stephen Marshall, **Lived Experience**
- Jason Brill, **VA**
- Steve Lunna, **SSVF@UVM**
- Margaret Bozik, **CHT**
- Elaine Soto, **HC**
- Jane Helmstetter, **AHS**
- David McKay, **Community Member**
- Travis Poulin, **CVOEO/ CCA**
- Laura Wilson, **Cathedral Square**
- Tim Coleman, **COTS**
- Erin Armstrong, **UVMCC**
- Olivia Graffeo-Cohen, **Vermont Legal Aid**
- Sarah Phillips, **OEO**
- Erica Da Costa, **CCHA**

Links to documents & web pages in these minutes:

- [Veterans Summit.](#)
- [VA NOFA Grant Per Diem \(PDF\)](#)
- [VA Grant Per Diem \(web page\)](#)
- [Transition in Place \(TIP\) NOFA in the Federal Register](#)
- [Coordinated Entry January numbers and longer term trends](#)

PRELIMINARIES

- Margaret Bozik/ CHT: We are currently working on a new 36 unit project in Colchester at Severance Corners. Seven units will be set aside for those experiencing homelessness.
- Jason Brill/ V.A.: On Saturday March 7 at Northern University there will be a Veterans Summit. I will lead a breakout session on veteran homelessness. You can find a poster, the agenda, contribution opportunities and a link to registration [here](#).
- Stephen Marshall: On Homelessness Awareness Day, I proposed to the legislature that they require all towns to plan for safe parking and safe camping.
- Todd Rawlings/CEDO: Christine Dunbar Curtis will replace Val Russell at CEDO. We will soon be filling Marcy Esbjerg's position as well.
- Travis Poulin/ CVOEO : Tax season has begun through; just call 2-1-1. Also, on Feb 10th The Hunger Council will meet at 1:00 at the Burlington Electric Department's conference room, located at 585 Pine Street (it's their quarterly meeting) – it will feature a panel on food insecurity and homelessness.
- Laura Zeleger/ BHA: We have a new director of rental assistance: Liz Whitmore.
- Tammy Santamore/ LUND: Funding for transitional housing has been cut, so we're working with community partners to find new resources and also working with housing authorities throughout the state to make sure people can remain where they are. Our timeline is very short.
- Ana Burke/ STEPS: I'm the interim director for STEPS.
- Geoffrey Pippenger/ DCF: I am no longer General & Emergency Assistance Program Director. I am now Senior Advisor to the Commissioner.

SERVICE COORDINATION FOR THE MEDICALLY FRAGILE

- Jane Helmstetter/ AHS: I participate in weekly Adult LIT meetings (local inter-agency) and we have found ourselves regularly discussing medically fragile individuals. We do some brainstorming about what services are available and how they can connect to them. Most people in attendance work directly with these clients and it can function also like a support group for front line workers. We've decided there's a greater need to discuss specifically medically fragile people whose vulnerability is not adequately reflected in their assessments. So on Feb Tuesday 18th, we will have a meeting at 11:30 at the Turning Point Center to discuss those who are medically fragile. It seems there a lot of people interested in working with us on this.

HMIS UPDATE

- Geoffrey Pippenger: We're still ramping up to entering in HMIS. It's proving a little more challenging than anticipated. Hopefully we'll begin entering into HMIS by the beginning of March.

VA NOFA UPDATE led by Tracy Sweeney of the VA

Tracy Sweeney/ VA (Tracy.sweeney@va.gov):

- GPD (Grant Per Diem) is a federally funded program that pays for case management of homeless veterans. There are five models in the NOFA right now.

1. BRIDGE for those currently in shelter or homeless.
 2. LOW BARRIER
 3. CLINICAL
 4. SERVICE INTENSIVE
 5. HOSPITAL-TO-HOME
- A full description of the models listed above can be found [HERE](#).
 - Deadline: March 2nd.
 - There is also a TIP (Transition in Place) model that is not included in the five models listed above and a NOFA for this will emerge soon.
 - Following this Steering Committee Meeting, Tracy sent the following email regarding TIP: “On February 18, 2020, VA's Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program published a Transition in Place (TIP) NOFA in the [Federal Register](#) . This NOFA provides funding opportunities for eligible organizations to provide transitional housing beds through the TIP model. This NOFA is competitive and interested applicants are urged to closely review the NOFA and associated technical assistance materials provided on the GPD website at <https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/GPD.asp>. *Technical assistance products include a pre-recorded webinar that will inform applicants, VA staff, Continuums of Care and other stakeholders about the NOFA, how to apply and the reviews the TIP model.*
 - Awards are for services to begin October 1, 2020. Current awards for all TIP grantees expire on September 30, 2020. Applicants wishing to continue receiving per diem funds after this date would need to successfully apply under the FY 2020 NOFA. The NOFA is open to current grantees as well new applicants. The application deadline is **April 22, 2020 by 4pm eastern.**”
 - What we're seeing internally through the SSVF program and the VA is that we need:
 1. Low barrier housing
 2. Housing for the aged
 - At the regional level, we've talked about doing a Safe Haven program in Vermont – if anyone is interested, please talk to us about it.
 - Since the deadline is so close, March 2nd, this is more about what can we do in the future.
 - Chris Brzovic/ CVOEO: Can you speak to the need in Chittenden County? We currently have 7 veterans on the list. Would veterans from across the state move to Chittenden if we did a project in Chittenden?
 - Tracy Sweeney: We have veterans in other parts of the state who want to live here. We have two in Northfield who can't get on the list here in Chittenden.
 - Jason Brill/ VA: I took a look at portions of neighboring counties – particularly Washington, Windham North, and Windsor – ran a few numbers and made some general assumptions to come up with the following rough estimates for Chittenden for two models (Low Barrier and Bridge):
 - 12 veterans might need Low Barrier housing.
 - 21 veterans might need Bridge housing.
 - And, though not for this particular NOFA, about 13 for TIP.
- Canal Street are currently funded for 16 beds. Two veterans are staying there now and have a clear exit plan. And Canal Street is not taking any further referrals. There are 51 veterans currently scattered around the state experiencing homelessness.

- Laura Zeleger/ BHA: We struggle with VASH vouchers because of a lack of services available. Is there a way to bring together these two streams of funding?
 - Tracy Sweeney: You can't cross-fund. I know there's a greater need. Our caseloads are full.
 - Steve Lunna/ SSVF: If we had Bridge housing, we could place people in Bridge housing while we looked for permanent housing.
- Margaret Bozik/ CHT: I don't know that CHT can gear up on the service side to create a proposal by March 2nd. But we'd be happy to be a real estate partner if someone is interested. Also, it appears that Low Barrier housing requires 24/7 staffing – is that correct?
 - Yes.
- A few other items to note about the RFP: We have lost all of our family and female beds in Vermont. There also have to be a minimum of 5 beds in your proposal. And you can combine models and populations meaning people who are not veterans can be included in that 5 beds.
- Laura Zeleger/ BHA: Regarding Transition-in-Place model – would the service dollars be included?
 - Tracy Sweeney: It's for the services, yes.
- Stephen Marshall: I met a couple who were a vets who didn't feel that they would be successful getting help or services. Is there any funding for street outreach?
 - Tracy Sweeney: We don't have street outreach in particular so we collaborate with other services, like Howard's Street Outreach.
 - Tim Coleman: Anyone can be sent to COTS Day Station.
 - Anyone who's a vet can be connected with Jason.

Sarah Phillips of OEO presented about GA Restructure

- Travis Poulin/ CVOEO: This is not really a restructure of the entire GA program, but of the emergency shelter/ temporary housing portion of the program only. It might be better termed a "Restructure of Service Provision to People Experiencing Homelessness."

There is a proposal to eliminate the GA proposal as we have known it. We are looking at how to respond as a community and as a CoC. We need to create a workgroup. The timeline is very tight. We propose to ask the legislature to move the deadline back. This is not an official vote, but just a straw poll (see straw poll on page 6 of these minutes).

PLEASE NOTE: Unless quote marks are used, speech attributed to any particular person is paraphrased.

- Sarah Phillips/ OEO: We've been having a lot of conversations around the state over many months, asking what it would look like if we ended the GA Emergency Housing Motel Voucher program as it currently exists and instead invested that money in community-based actions for emergency housing. What does that transition look like? How do we plan? What are the mechanisms? What are the concerns? So the administration is moving forward with plans to do this. We issued a budget memo to everyone including the legislature. Next week we plan to issue another memo about community allocations for the first year. We know this upcoming

year will be a transition year. In year one, the CoC will designate a provider meaning an agency to place people in motels and pay for it.

This will NOT be administered under GA rules. Those rules disappear. This will now be administered under the HOP Grant rules. In addition, DCF will be working closely with communities around the state to provide tools, planning support and find gaps and fill those in. We don't want to continue to rely on motels to meet the majority of our emergency housing need. A community-based model gives us the opportunity to make important changes.

We have a webinar to discuss some details: Wed, Feb 12th at 12:30.

On April 8th, we plan to bring teams together from around the state (you'll be invited to send 4 or 5 people from your CoC) to help set up a workgroup. The state-wide workgroup would be meeting twice a month.

Please communicate with us and let us know your thoughts and feelings.

- Jane Helmstetter/ AHS: It's a real opportunity.
- Geoffrey Pippenger/ DCF: Please communicate. What we're proposing here is not the GA program. It's community response to emergency housing.
- Sarah Phillips: We are committed to Harbor Place as an ongoing part of the solution. Some of our DV agencies have been able to take on motel overflow and they provide a good model.
- Margaret Bozik/ CHT: The state has pointed out the problems that genuinely need remedies: eligibility and time restrictions are arbitrary, for example. If there were local planning involved, we could adjust these things to something that fits Chittenden County.

I also think that last year there were over 2500 households in this program. Logistically we need more than 3 months to figure this out. What is our eligibility going to look like? Are we going to need a new location? It's unrealistic to think we can do this in 3 months.

- Tim Coleman/ COTS: Plus we need feedback from the experts.
- Olivia Graffeo-Cohen/ Legal Aid: We're supportive of having more time to figure this out. We have big concerns about removing the state level GA piece entirely because it could result in significant gaps.
- Sarah Russell/ CVOEO: In the memo you sent out, there was statement about coordination of shelter openings. We need time to coordinate systems.
- Tim Coleman/ COTS: This year the communication has been exceptional but we're pushed to the brink. There are a lot more medically fragile people.
- Will Towne/ SPECTRUM: We do have good communication, but it's very casual right now – it's due to personal relationships. If things expand, we'll have to have a structured system.
- Laura Zeleger/ BHA: Time is of the essence here. Also, what happens when that grant runs out?
 - Sarah Phillips: We have a lot of levers we can pull.
- Geoffrey Pippenger/ DCF: We want to do this in partnership with communities.
- Stephen Marshall: Will there be funds for planning?
 - Sarah Phillips: No.

- STRAW POLL: DO YOU WANT MORE TIME TO WORK ON THIS PROJECT?
 - EVERYONE (except 2 abstentions): YES
- Sarah Phillips: This is the legislature’s decision.
- Margaret Bozik/ CHT: There are committees in the legislature looking at this; shoot me an email if you want to know which ones.
- Geoffrey Pippinger/ DCF: As an aside, there is currently a filing to rescind the emergency housing rules (the current G.A. rules) – but that is just a technical piece. If we want to hit the July 1st transition period, we need that in place.
- Tim Coleman/ COTS: I’ve been around a long time and there are always a lot of big, grand plans and then reality hits.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Coordinated Entry

- **January numbers from our master-list:**
 - **8 veterans**
 - **82 chronic individuals (a significant drop)**
 - **127 single adults**
 - **13 youth**
 - **43 families (including DV)**
- Some of the outflow number don’t include DV numbers.
- After 90 days of zero contact with any part of the system, people are moved to inactive.
- PLEASE SEE THE COMPLETE NUMBERS, including length of time from ID to housing [HERE](#).
- Margaret Bozik/ CHT: Length of time for families stands out.
 - Chris Brzovic: Yes, it’s an anomaly. One family had a very long wait.
- Chris Brzovic: We had a large spike in OUTFLOW when Lauretide came on line.

We decided to prioritize chronic individuals who don’t need PSH. There are a significant number on our list who need PSH. We’re going to hit a floor of driving these numbers down unless we expand our PSH capacity – which is urgent.

We are approaching functional zero for Veterans and it’s been great to collaborate with Jason and the Veterans Committee.

- Will Towne/ Spectrum: The decrease in the youth numbers is due to smaller wait lists and data cleanup.
- Chris Brzovic: Referral Form Outcome Data (see below)

Referral form outcome data

Sept – Dec 2019

	Client Active	Client Declined Services	Unable to Contact Client	Client Already Working w/ Another Provider	Client No Showed or Disengaged	Client ineligible - has housing / not at imminent risk	Client ineligible - Out of County	Client Referred to Another Provider	No Outcome Recorded	Total
Count	71	7	91	94	31	44	4	29	46	417
Percentage	17%	2%	22%	23%	1%	11%	1%	7%	11%	100%

- 17 percent are actively working with CVOEO Housing Navigation.
- 23 percent are working with COTS or SPECTRUM or STEPS or another agency.
- About roughly 50 percent are working with a provider.
- 22 percent were unable to be contacted.
 - Travis Poulin: We have many ways of trying to contact people and we try at least 3 times during different times of the day.
 - What about texting?
 - There's a service (textnow) that sends texts directly to your desktop. Let's look into this.

Strategic Planning

- We've been working on a Consumer Survey (asking why people lost their housing and what they think might have helped). Right now we're doing beta testing of the survey. We'll incorporate this into our assessment process, including entry into HMIS. This will help us with prevention and retention strategies.
- Consultant Recommendations: Two thirds were directed at the Coordinated Entry committee. Most of the others were directed at the Steering Committee and of these, Strategic Planning has taken a few of these on.
- Travis, Chris and I will be meeting with United Way to speak with them about what we got out of it and the results.

PIT Committee

- Travis Poulin/ CVOEO: We did some great outreach. Gave care packages out to everyone we surveyed. (We still have blankets at CVOEO if anyone needs them.) I want to create a model/ curriculum to follow in the future.
- Stephen Marshall: I learned in the last year that we have a lot of people living in cars, not engaged in the system. They are reluctant to say where. This is year-round work. We want to build teams for the future, especially in the outlying towns.

NOFA

- Todd Rawlings/ CEDO: We got some information from HUD about the next funding cycle. I did reach out to Marcy and Val to ask about what we need to do to be ready for the HUD application.

VETERANS

- Steve Lunna/ SSVF: We will be applying not only to Community Solutions to certify our “functional zero homelessness for veterans” status but also to USICH (US Interagency Council on Homelessness) using the Federal Benchmark Generation Tool.

In addition, we have both mayors signed onto the [Mayors Challenge](#) (Chittenden and Winooski). We are on the verge of functional zero.

- Jason Brill: We had 20 plus veterans who were homeless a year ago and today we have 8. This was not luck. We’ve done a lot with veteran-specific partners as well as non-veteran specific partners. We do regular data scrubbing. We do case conferencing on a state-wide basis. Case conferencing and our work with CHRC has been crucial.

UDATES FROM SHELTERS

- Kevin Pounds/ Low Barrier Shelter: We need staff. We need 2 to 3 people.
- Will Towne/ Spectrum: We also need staff, especially substitute staff. We’ve had a very quiet year. No incidents. No waitlists. Last year we had such high numbers that it’s been surprising.
- Tim Coleman/ COTS: We also need staff and substitutes. This year has been better. My hat is off to Kevin, Heather, and the people at warming shelter. We enjoy the ability to communicate with them and try to use all of our space. Physical disability and age are a real challenge for us and for the low barrier shelter.
- Jane Helmstetter/ AHS: Thus far, we have not had to use the extreme weather pop-up shelter.

Next Meeting: March 5

Please find minutes archive, upcoming events, etc. at cchavt.org

Please send corrections to edacosta@vhfa.org