

Minutes:

Committee Members Present: Glen Hutcheson, Yvonne Byrd, Dawn Little, Ericka Reil, Jodi Kelly, Will Eberle, Zachary Hughes, Cameron Niedermayer

Community Members Present: Rick DeAngelis, Gary Schy, Matthew Nunelley, Tammy Menard, Morgan Brown

Agenda Approved:

11:37am Public Comments

- Community Member Gary Schy- Thinks that there is a need for a permanent, communal living situation for folks experiencing homelessness. Gave the idea for a communal farm situation that is run by a nonprofit (not city or state) and that works with local organizations. Wanted to share his vision. Wants to rent an acre of land and thinks the cost will be minimal. Says that folks could work 20 hours of work or 200\$ a month of voluntary contributions. Discussed being an advocate and his work with folks on SSI. Volunteered if we ever want to create a task force. Contact info: 802-522-3118, vrmtldy@aol.com
- Zach wanted to respond about what agencies here are allowed to advocate
 - o Yvonne added Advocacy on the list of priorities
- Community Member Morgan Brown- wanted to remind us that there is a Memorial Coat Drive is this Saturday 9am-2pm in City Hall
- Community Member Rick DeAngelis – has submitted his name to be on this taskforce and hopes he's successful.
 - o Discussed the agency Groundworks in Brattleboro that helps folks advocate for themselves and financial independence

Review and Approve Minutes: Minutes approved 11:44am

Agenda Item #4: Consider in depth each of the following

issues:

- Dawn- I wanted to make sure we are spending time discussing what is most important. I think we can get rid of the 'a' and 'b' category in this week's agenda- since all of those identified issues will all apply for both sheltered and unsheltered folks
 - o There is an issue with warming space unavailability on some days and that effects the sheltered and unsheltered
- Community Member Rick DeAngelis - is 42 folks experiencing homelessness in Montpelier your count?
 - o Dawn- I and other street outreach teams have come up with this number. 42 does not include couch surfers
 - Will- this would be important to cross-check with Coordinated Entry
 - Yvonne- What's the contact information for that group?
 - Will- I will get it by next Wednesday
 - Ericka- last time I spoke with Coordinated Entry- they had 46 folks on their list from Montpelier
 - Dawn- then the number of homeless folks is bigger than we thought- because I know a lot of folks that have not signed up for Coordinated Entry

- Dawn can compare the coordinated entry list and then see who is not on the list that she may know. Dawn will go to the next Coordinated Entry meeting/ Housing Review Team
- o Dawn- If there are approximately 42 folks experiencing homelessness in Montpelier, and if Bethany only has space for 20ish, then there is half the population that is not being served regardless.
 - Dawn- Storage is still going to be an issue for sleeping bags etc.
 - Dawn- Another Way has laundry vouchers? Can we have some way for folks to dry clothes/sleeping bags for folks sleeping outside? We need some data around what is available or not for folks
- o Dawn: I also understood that this committee came out of a conflict between panhandlers and the business community- so are we tracking those folks even if they do not live here? Is our focus including panhandlers as well?
 - Will- who we should count needs to depend on who we want to serve. We should maybe count those who spend a majority of their time here in Montpelier
 - Will- Also, funding for services comes County-wide through the Barre region (Washington County)
- Glen- We should try to coordinate with Berlin and Barre about their services and their count of folks experiencing homelessness, since this issue does not stop at our borders. We will have to draw a line somewhere if we want a number to work with
 - o Glen- I would ask Dawn to use her discretion- and her knowledge to come up with a hard number.
 - Zach- I will work with Dawn to help her with this. But we should count those who spend most of their days in Montpelier- because we do contact those folks. We should count those.
 - Ericka- I would say that those who sleep in Barre may count in Barre.
- Community Member Gary Schy- regarding those identified warming spaces- those have a lot of resources- are they turning folks away?
- Community Member Matthew Nunelley, - Doesn't the number of the folks fluctuate? What's the point of the Count?
 - o Dawn- the number has remained about the same- this might not be consistent over the full year- but it's relatively stable
 - o Community Member Rick DeAngelis - last report I gave to Council in 2014/15 on homelessness had around the same number. I suggest looking at all three towns as well, as that also counts as part of the services continuum. There are other shelters in Barre etc.
 - o Yvonne- wouldn't it make sense to get a regional number and the Montpelier number?
 - Dawn- I think we need a Montpelier number.
- Will- I think it will be important to tie this to the Continuum of Care and Housing Taskforce- make sure the numbers align
- Community Member Tammy Menard- I have a list, that's broken down by town. I will work with Dawn.

- Community Member Rick DeAngelis- I want to know more about Coordinated Entry. What about in the inclement weather season and the shelters are full. Would this be the path to get a hotel voucher?
 - Will- You don't have to be on the list to get those vouchers- you can call 211 for that service.
- Zach- I also want to point out that there will be a Point in Time (PIT) count in January
- Community Member Morgan Brown- just because someone doesn't want supportive services, they still might be willing to accept support (like sleeping bags, housing, etc.). Thinks it's better to focus on housing then services.
- **Discussion on Warming Spaces:**
 - Yvonne- what are the gaps and resources?
 - Will- I think this is linked to the number of folks experiencing homelessness that we have. If we know how many there are going to need to be served vs. the capacity of the shelters this is easier to identify
 - Will- I think also Libraries are also de facto warming shelters
 - Another Way Hours:
 - 9-5pm during the week
 - 9-7 Fridays
 - 9-1pm on the Weekends.
 - Community Member Rick DeAngelis – Another Way is likely to open later on the weekends in partnership with Good Samaritan to make sure that there is no gap between Bethany Church services and Another Way closing for the day
 - Cameron- Can folks explain how the other local churches operate as warming stations?
 - Dawn- regarding churches and warming stations- Good Samaritan usually facilitates those conversations
 - Community Member Tammy Menard - usually when the churches are open for lunch- they try to open in the mornings so they can be a warming- usually when they are done with lunch (9-1/2pm) for each day
 - Glen- it seems clear to me that no matter what the numbers are , there are gaps in when warming spaces are open, and maybe too many folks to be in our established shelters
 - Glen- This comes back to what we need to ask Council for- and part of our proposal. How are we going to address this need? This is where I would like to focus. What is the degree of need? Is it gym sized or just one more church?
 - Will- I think we are talking about types of support, there is a continuum of behavior and who can address those issues. There are some folks- there is a small population of those with difficult behaviors who cannot go to shelters etc. There is a notion around what can we do to expand existing resources but also address those who are not touched by that. Beacon apt. in Burlington- low barrier shelters or housing. The more acute the behavior- the more money and support we'd need.
 - Zach- we don't all have the training to address these acute cases

- Glen- there is a hard time in this meeting for us to stay specific. We need indoor space that folks can go to in the winter. I know there are complexities around this topic, but I just want to talk about this spaces that we have available,
 - Yvonne- we should identify the exact gaps
 - Dawn- Weekends/Sundays specifically
 - Saturday and Sunday afternoons- gap for everyone- then every night for folks not in the overflow shelter
 - Sunday also doesn't have bus service- so there is not an option to travel to open spaces
 - So, folks in the shelter will be covered shortly except for the weekends
 - Saturday/Sundays, and holidays are hard for folks.
 - Those not using Another Way- then the evenings and nights are hard for folks who cannot get into the shelter
 - Will discussed coordinated entry regarding acute needs and how it helps
 - Yvonne- Dawn, would you be able to identify those in your list who have medical issues or are barred from Another Way or the Shelter?
 - Dawn- we can look at this.
 - Community Member Rick DeAngelis - I'm concerned about approaching this in a haphazard way. Last year our shelter was not used to its full capacity. We need to look at the system and give it a high-level
 - Yvonne- is it possible to use this feedback from folks not using it to make it more user friendly.
 - Rick- yes- everyone is trying their best- but we can look at this whole system.
 - Community Member Tammy Menard- if Good Sam's overflow shelter was not used to its capacity- then it is because [a specific person] was running it. And he throws everyone out.
 - Yvonne- Rick, can you look at these identified barriers- how do you take that back?
 - Community Member Rick DeAngelis - sure, but we need to look at the system as a whole. What practice and policy are creating barriers?
 - Yvonne- how do we make sure we address this systemically so you run at max capacity
- **Discussion on Charting Resources:**
 - Community Member Rick DeAngelis- let's make a huge chart of all the available services through this community? By week day- show what is open
 - Will and Ericka will work on creating a draft version of this document.
 - Yvonne- we should make this list for specifically for places you can go and be warm.
 - Ericka- before we agree to this- I think I have this type of list already and it exists for Washington County
 - We can use this chart to see where the gaps are in our warming spaces.
 - Will- we can then cross reference for people in the community (the homeless) who can let us know if these spaces are being utilized
 - Dawn- this would also be used to make folks aware of each other's services. Barre's

churches are doing a good job. We can share it with Good Sam, Another Way, 211 etc.

- o Glen- I want a large, printable, calendar style chart of services that are available for this group.
 - I also hear that folks need to be looped in, but we need this chart as soon as possible. This can be a living document.
 - Ericka- I will work with that ASAP- I will find it. I will work with Will on it to be done by next week.
 - Jodi- Is it possible there is a list for meals?
 - Ericka- Yes, it does, and I have it on my list to get.
- o Community Member Morgan Brown- Don't forget to contact the Montpelier Clergy Association
- **Next Week's Agenda Topic Ideas:**
 - o Numbers (PIT count for now)
 - o Chart of Services
 - o What we didn't cover from this week's agenda
 - o Ericka- emergency health care needs, can we move it up?
 - o Will- Inventory of the rental units available in the community? Not just subsidized.
 - Cameron will look around for this
 - Community Member Rick DeAngelis - non subsidized units- we use craigslist on the private side.
 - Number of the rentals and the costs?
- **Additional Discussion:**
 - o Will- We still need to have a discussion on how to address those who are notable or amenable to being in formal sheltering
 - Dawn- I will try to get that info- my guess is this number is around 50% of our population of folks experiencing homelessness.
 - Zach- I have at least one person who doesn't know that are even receiving services.
 - o Will- I want to see what the accurate sense of the number of folks, and then making sure that we are offering enough services that folks feel like there is a real choice or options they would want
 - o Glen- is there an update on the shelter opening date/
 - Community Member Rick DeAngelis- no I do not have that date yet. Rob has been sick- so I will get you an update ASAP.
 - o Community Member Matthew Nunelley,- I would look into making an advocacy group- maybe we can have training? Make connections and relationships- how do we go out in the community with this information?
 - Cameron- I like this idea to have a training or hosting and encouraging the community to act as advocates
 - Jodi- in our last business meeting- we talked about the homeless issue and it was a learning opportunity for the business community.
 - I like the idea of some kind of workshop, to discuss resources
 - Dawn- how do we address some of the common misconceptions around homeless folks and even panhandling. This training could be around breaking a stigma around homelessness
- **Adjournment: 1:02pm**