

Homelessness Task Force
November 13, 2019
APPROVED 11/20/2019

Members Present

Glen Hutcheson
Dawn Little
Will Eberle
Ericka
Zachary Hughes
Jodi Kelly
Cameron
Yvonne
Ken Russell
Travis

Guests Present

Betsy Parah
Janell Perry, Another Way
Matthew Nunnely
Bob Theriault

Agenda

Dawn emphasizes urgency of warming shelters

Agenda approved

Public Comments

Matthew Nunnely planning holiday events as opportunity to collect donations for the homeless.

Handwarmers? Socks.

Will: Coordinate with Darn Tough? 5,000 pairs

Janell: we are almost out of Darn Tough donated socks

Sat. Dec. 21, 4-6 at Grange, sing along

Previous Saturday, carolling downtown

Janell Perry, in place of Sunny, her boss

Re: donations, have helped facilitate donations

How can I be of help

Another Way doesn't have official storage space
Church goodie bags, how to distribute?
Willing to help with distribution

Jodi: is there a designated fund if people want to donate?

Dawn: Give them a Walmart card

Yvonne checking with Cameron whether City could administer that. Cameron can look into it.

Put on next week's agenda

Check with a bank: Zachery, Jodi Northfield

Will: Downstreet is partner in Washington County to distribute Direct Service Dollar Grant, Vermont Agency of Human Services

Currently the funding agent of last resort. Contact Will – AHS Field Director for Washington County -- to do due diligence to make sure there aren't other options.

Minutes

11/07/19 approved

Report

Rick comment via Yvonne:

Report looks manageable

Like questions from federal Interagency Council on Homelessness

One thing not mentioned: encouraged cooperation of towns of central Vermont

City operated rental insurance, subsidies, and risk management pools better done by the state.
Opposed to inclusion in the plan.

Review of Draft Plan

Acute needs

Ken: in oral presentation to Council, frame smaller picture with big picture.

Will: Risk Mitigation Pool, in response to Rick's opposition: There isn't currently a risk mitigation pool in Washington County.

Program used to exist. AHS budget has gone down, and community partner budgets have gone down, funds not granted by the state.

Agree that robust regional approach would be great.

Given that Rick is not here to discuss with Will, the group agrees to have these issues be part of the to-do list for now.

Continue to explore promising strategies to engage with private sector landlords.

More support for people coming out of jail, out of rehab, people having trouble accessing existing resources. Only more intensive support. Street outreach as well.

Jodi: would like to see that our long-term goals have direction towards mental health counseling that is more effective and accessible, towards positive outcome.

Ericka: more training for landlords training on Fair Housing Law

Travis: underlying issues of homelessness and why. Empowering folks, self-advocacy, self-determination.

Yvonne: Social worker in the police department?

Ericka: a peer worker, someone who has been homeless.

Dawn: spotty availability of current services

Street outreach, meet people where they are

Not on 9-5 offices, limited access

Cameron reads updated language based on the discussion. Will be included in next draft of report.

Will: better outcomes by expanding access to peer support, building capacity to access, with volunteers. Crisis line.

Group acknowledges support of changes recorded by Cameron with thumbs up.

Then Glen: more heavily emphasize expanding Good Samaritan shelter into the Spring, including in subsequent years. Cameron to incorporate that and bring it more to the top of the document.

Betsy: regarding Bethany June meeting on continuing shelter.

Council Meeting Preparation

Wednesday: Dawn, Ken, Zach, Cameron

Presenting group to discuss next week.

Lockers

Cameron: to business community, Police Dept. consider it a public safety issue, conflicts with police operations.

National Life want to install a community cupboard, amend plans to include wooden lockers.

Ken listed request on Front Porch Forum.

Warming Spaces

Dawn: churches opening for lunches but not afternoon, evening or overnight
Afternoon need is greatest.

Zach talked to Judi at Good Samaritan.

Susana Greifen, non-guests are not allowed at 5-8 dinners, church resources are already stretched thin

Need both warming space and food.

To Betsy, might churches open doors for folks to just stay warm.
Travis and Rob Chapman

Good Samaritan coordinated warming space system with churches. Funding not available.

Ken reported on a phone call with Rick regarding limit at Bethany shelter. Origin of limit is unknown. Fire chief was unaware. Rob Farrell looking into that.

Rick will have Rob review list of banned people at Bethany.

Rick said Sunny of Another Way can work with Dawn Little to review banned list at AW.

Will: 46 people on the do-not-house list for Good Samaritan for Barre and Montpelier.

Rob Theriault:

Independent board to consider of situation of those who are banned. An appeals board.

We are not a regulatory body, not here to tell our business partners how to run their operations.

Glen: to work with Rick regarding warming spaces 5-8 PM

Those people not sheltered at Bethany, about half the population, do not have access to shelter.

Dawn to speak to the gaps in warming spaces etc.

Agenda for next time will be similar to this week's given that most of these issues are ongoing.

Minutes submitted by Ken Russell.