

Vermont Council to End Homelessness
Minutes
June 17, 2014
Baptist Fellowship Church, Randolph, VT

Attendees: Brooke Salls, GSH; Erhard Mahnke, VAHC; Travis Poulin, CCA/CVOEO; Emily Clever, Winston Prouty; Justin Henry, VCEH/VAHC; Chris Dalley, ESD-VT; Deborah Hall, RCHC/HPC; Kelli Cheney, GSH; Jeanne Montross, HOPE; Amber Chase, VT Network; Auburn Watersong, VT Network; Daniel Blankenship, VSHA; Katelyn Hanson, Safe Harbor/CHCB; Erin Ahearn, CHCB/Safe Harbor; Margaret Bozik, CHT; Lucie Fortier, BADIC; Mariah Murphy, NCSS; Brian Smith, DMH; Rebeka Lawrence-Gomez, Pathways VT; Linda Ryan, Samaritan House; Peggy Treamor, Samaritan House; Dawn Butterfield, CVCAC; Linda Anderson, CVCAC; Paul Dragon, VTOEO; Diana Eaton; Linda Mantbleau (sp?), LICF; Sandra Le Blanc, Newport Warming Shelter; Whitney Nichols; Sara Kobylenski, Upper Valley Haven; Kathy Metras, NEKCA; Kelly Greaves, ESD-DCF; Jan Rossier, NEKCA; Dixie Burns, United Ways 2-1-1; Chloe Learey, Winston Prouty; Pat Burke, SEVCA; Ira Fellows, The Home Team; Jane Helmstetter, AHS Field Services; Angus Chaney, AHS; Jonathan Farrell, COTS; Nicole Mosher, ESD-DCF; Nicole Mosher, ESD-DCF; Erin McSweeney, ESD-DCF; Doug Sinclair, Charter House Coalition; Jenni Demont, Springfield College, Human Services; Ramsey Papp, CVCAC; Lise Sparrow, BAICA; Susan Ainsworth-Daniels, CHT; Rev. Kim E. Kie, Hedding UMC/GSH; Pastor Ben Monk, Assembly of God/ Springfield Warming Shelter; Lizz Monk, Assembly of God/ Springfield Warming Shelter; Paul Cioffi, Assembly of God/ Springfield Warming Shelter; Rev. Susan B. Taylor, St. John's Episcopal Church/REECH; Rev. George Keeler, Springfield Warming Shelter; Lisa Pitcher, Our Place/Greater Falls Warming Shelter; Lynn Boyle, AHS

**Pat Burke gave a brief overview of the Warming Shelter Discussion happening immediately following the CoC meeting.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of April and May minutes

So approved.

Committee Reports:

Nominating Committee- Elections to be held at the July meeting

The following have agreed to serve in the following seats:

Kathy Metras and Sara Kobylenski as Co-Chairs

Dawn as Treasurer

Jan Rossier as Secretary

Any other nominations are welcomed.

Steering Committee:

In addition to board officers-

Pat Burke
Maryellen Mendyl
Josh Davis
Sarah Phillips
Brian Smith
Daniel Blankenship
Jeanne Montross

NOFA Committee:

Application out next month and we will have a two month window to complete.
A suggestion to save time would be to use this year's ranking results for the upcoming NOFA.

Delegates for the Consolidated Plan:

Brian Smith and Auburn Watersong volunteered to be delegates.

A recommendation was made for folks to become familiar with the consolidated plan. It can be reviewed on the website. There was a follow up recommendation from last month's meeting to invite Arthur Hamlin to attend the meeting to discuss the consolidated plan more thoroughly.

Standing Rules Review:

There is a need to review the rules, this should be done annually. Sarah Phillips, Daniel Blankenship and Jeanne Montross have agreed to take this task on. If anyone else is interested please let them know, or if you have suggestions get them to them.

VISTA update:

Justin reports that the search is still on for a replacement. If anyone knows of anyone who is looking for a position such as this please let them know about this opportunity.

New England Housing Network's visit to Washington:

While FY '14 seemed somewhat encouraging, FY 15 is more discouraging.
The Senate is recognizes that the budget needs work and has been trying to improve things but there is still work to be done.

- Concern regarding Section 8 vouchers and losing ground in this area
- 85% of HUD Budget is Rental Assistance—This phenomenon is squesing out other uses
- Homeless Assistance grants indicate a slight increase

Our delegation continues to advocate strongly.

HUD Secretary Donovan is moving to the Office of Management & Budgets which could be advantageous.

Main take away: Nobody does enough advocacy to demonstrate to Congress the benefits of all of these programs to their constituents.

We all need to get the delegates out to see and talk with the homeless folks and attend ribbon cuttings to new programs, etc. Awareness is key.

Treasurers Report:

Dawn wanted to thank folks for helping her get up to speed.

She wanted to point out that the group may need to think about revising their dues structure in an effort to generate additional funding for the group, as the budget seems to be losing ground from year to year.

The CoC has incurred costs that weren't budgeted such as space rental.

(Treasurer's report attached)

Linda made a motion that the CoC develop a different dues billing strategy giving consideration to individual agencies' ability to pay.

Brooke seconded the motion.

Motion passed by the coalition.

Auburn handed out a document entitled "Victims' Housing Rights" (Attached)

This document will begin to be distributed on the local level by local DV organizations.

Chris distributed the GA/EA Temp Housing Data for 8/13-5/14 (Attached)

July Agenda Items

By-law discussion

Elections

Committee reports

Arthur Hamelin-Guest speaker re: consolidated plan

Meeting Adjourned 11:00

Warming Shelter Discussion

Warming shelters represented:

Upper Valley Haven

Springfield

Middlebury

Brattleboro

Greater Falls

Barre-(didn't open this past winter)

Question: What age range do you serve?

Adults

Question: What months are you open?

This varied-some are from January til April, some November til April.

Recommendation would be to open in late fall.

Question: Staffing pattern?

The ideal pattern is to have two folks covering at a time, one man/one woman. Suggested that time should be split so there are two shifts each night.

Question: Do you serve food?

Most serve dinner or some sort of meal, some did breakfast some did not. This meal was provided in different ways. One shelter had an arrangement with a local community meal site to provide boxed meals for the shelter folks. Some have cooking facilities on site.

Question: Would you be considered a low barrier shelter?

It seemed that all would consider themselves a low barrier shelter.

Question: What do you do in your communities for folks if the shelter closes before the local service agencies open?

One shelter is on a bus route and folks get taken to the local plaza that includes a McDonalds and folks are welcome to come in and sit as long as they are respectful.

One shelter had an arrangement with a local bagel shop and provided a coupon for a bagel and a cup of coffee for their folks.

One center gives a post card with available meal site info on one side and public spaces such as libraries on the other side.

Brattleboro has a day shelter.

White River has case managers on duty at the regular shelter.

Springfield teams with the Family Center for day services

**There is a need for additional support from the Social Service agencies..need to share knowledge of what is out there.... Better communication.

Question: What type of site did you use for your shelter?

Some are in churches, one is in space that also includes a long-term shelter.

Question: Volunteers vs paid staff?

There is value in bringing in community volunteers as it helps put a face to homelessness in the community strengthening awareness regarding what leads folks to this situation.

Some volunteers are former residents and want to “pay-it-forward”.

Also looked for folks who work the third shift for their job as they are used to being awake at this time of day.

Question: How has the referral process been in relation to the GA temp housing program?

It was slow getting referrals moving from ESD to the warming shelters but improved as the winter progressed.

Question: How do folks access the continuum of services?

It's important for intakes to be done and referrals made to existing service providers so the trail to permanent housing can begin.

Question: What do you do when folks misbehave? Secondly, if asked to leave what is the process for re-entry?

Depending on the offense, they may be asked to leave, if they refuse law enforcement will be contacted.

It seemed that no one had a set policy regarding how long someone is out before allowed to return.

All agree that the consequences for behavior should be discussed upon entering the shelter.

**shelters need to develop a communication strategy when someone is asked to leave one shelter due to bad behavior so they can be on alert. However it was noted that it has happened that someone didn't do well in one location and was fine at another site.

At least one shelter had a "do not admit" list.

NOTE: at a couple of shelters law enforcement make regular appearances, grabbing a cup of coffee and checking in.

Question: Do you have paid staff/volunteer stipends?

This varied-some have base funding and volunteers, some pay a coordinator and volunteer stipends.

Question: Did you meet with any resistance with your community?

One area really struggled but the others didn't.

Recommendation is to get key folks on board right from the beginning. Law enforcement, ambulance services, hospitals, select boards, local press etc so they have some ownership in the project. Education is key.

Communicate with potential neighbors, invite them to your open house.

Question: What do you do about bed bugs?

Every resident is given a plastic tote to keep their belongings in or plastic bag. Each site has their own process.

Question: How did you choose your location?

Location is key. Some are in downtown central areas and that works best. Sites that are farther out of town recommended that a central location is better.

Question: Are you dealing with locals or transplants?

Brattleboro-90% are local

Middlebury-60% local 40% outside(this could be referring to Rutland area)

Springfield-Mostly local

Upper Valley Haven-47 of 52 were local. The 5 that were transient we gone in one or two nights

Greater Falls-95% local

Question: What did you do about bedding, linens etc?

Residents are provided with bedding and towels. One shelter gives folks a sleeping bag. Some shelters ask that folks launder the bedding monthly and some weekly.

One shelter uses a laundry service.

It was noted that it is a must to have plenty of dry socks available. Also foot spray was a strong recommendation.

Question: How did you get your start up supplies such as cots etc.?

Red Cross in some areas has cots available

Cots from Christian organizations

Local Donations-folks like to donate to concrete causes

Hotels/Motels donate cots and bedding

Military grade cots can be accessed

Some stumbling stones:

Folks showing up needing medications

Suggestion-each region has a Salvation Army contact who can give up to a \$50 voucher for medication

Once identified as uninsured connect them with a Health Connects navigator to get them signed up for Medicaid

Sharing success stories a must- Need to get these stories in front of our legislative delegation---make UTube videos, invite them to tour the facility, invite them to meet with folks who have transitioned successfully....

There are several regions looking into developing warming shelters in their areas. It was noted that Montpelier has a "system of care" happening without a roof.

Angus-

Focus on: Health and Safety

Quality

Steps beyond warming shelter

Be thoughtful about the language we use with regard to wet shelter/low barrier shelter and warming/overflow shelter
Angus has a list of existing warming shelters and contact info

Paul-

OEO could provide technical assistance
There may be money to help with volunteer coordination
Wants to see a clear need in the region
Good planning
Data is key
Looking for a coordinated system

Value of developing a network of providers:

Opportunity for networking
Sharing Policies and Procedures
Shared Training opportunities
*One shelter shared that their staff had a Mental Health First Aid Training