



**Fidelity Committee
of the
Tri-City Joint Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness
Meeting Conducted Remotely
June 18, 2020
6:00 PM**

MAYORS

Mayor Caroline McCarley
Mayor Robert Carrier
Mayor Dana Hilliard

Rochester Members

Jeremy Hutchinson
(chairman)

Barbara Holstein

Dover Members

Charles Reynolds

Betsey Andrews Parker

Somersworth Members

Todd Marsh

Dina Gagnon

Others Present: Julian Long (Rochester Economic Development), Ashley Desrochers (Strafford County Public Health Network), Dave Carpenter (City of Dover Planning), Tory Jennison (IDN), Lindsey Williams (City of Dover Council), Fr. Matthew Mirabile.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chairman Hutchinson called the remote meeting to order at 6:02 PM and read the following preamble:

Good Evening, as Chairperson of the Fidelity Committee, I am declaring that an emergency exists and I am invoking the provisions of RSA 91-A:2, III (b). Federal, state, and local officials have determined that gatherings of 10 or more people pose a substantial risk to our community in its continuing efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. In concurring with their determination, I also find that this meeting is imperative to the continued operation of City government and

services, which are vital to public safety and confidence during this emergency. As such, this meeting will be conducted without a quorum of this body physically present in the same location.

At this time, I also welcome members of the public accessing this meeting remotely. Even though this meeting is being conducted in a unique manner under unusual circumstances, the usual rules of conduct and decorum apply. Any person found to be disrupting this meeting will be asked to cease the disruption. Should the disruptive behavior continue thereafter, that person will be removed from this meeting. The public can call-in to the below number using the conference code.

1-857-444-0744 conference code: 689461

(Please note: In order to notify the meeting host that you would like to speak, press 5* to be recognized and unmuted)

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their name also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

Cassie Givara, Deputy City Clerk of Rochester, called the roll. The following members were present: Chairman Jeremy Hutchinson, Vice Chair Todd Marsh, Barbara Holstein, and Charles Reynolds who joined the meeting at 6:14 PM. Betsey Andrews Parker and Dina Gagnon were excused. Mayors Caroline McCarley and Bob Carrier were also present.

2. Public Input

There were no members of the public present on the conference line to speak.

3. Communications from the Mayors

Mayor McCarley reported that the Mayors had taken part in a call with some local agencies in regards to what had been lacking and what needed to be established as far as volunteers and processes for the warming centers. She stated that although there had been some concern regarding space and schedule, the bulk of the concern centered on the volunteers.

4. Communications from the Chair

Chairman Hutchinson stated that the Fidelity Committee will plan to continue with remote meetings for the foreseeable future as opposed to switching back to the in-person format.

Vice Chair Marsh spoke about the mission of the Committee. He stated that the group had been making strides and working well before COVID hit, but due to the

pandemic, many of the Committee members and contributors had their focuses shifted elsewhere to more pressing matters. Vice Chair Marsh said now that things were evening out slightly, he felt confident in moving forward and accomplishing more of the goals of the Master Plan.

Chairman Hutchinson reported on some data related to COVID-19. He stated that nationally in the month of June, 1/3 of homeowners missed their mortgage payments for the first time, and renters reported missing their June rent payments. He anticipated that there may be increased need for assistance in various forms for not only the homeless population, but also for populations which have never had to seek out assistance in the past. Chairman Hutchinson requested that in his role as the Rochester Welfare Director, Vice Chair Marsh keep the Committee apprised of any changes in trends or increases in services. There was a brief discussion on the potential of a resurgence of COVID-19 this upcoming fall with the loosening of State guidelines as well as decrease in social distancing and use of PPE. Chairman Hutchinson speculated on the issues and needs which may arise for those needing to be out of work for extended periods twice in one year.

Ashley Desrosiers, Strafford County Health Network, noted that her organization is actively looking for information and statistics on the local homeless population including how to access the different communities to be gathered as an assessment for the State. She reported that the State does want to offer COVID testing to the homeless community which is often a population which is left out. Vice Chair Marsh asked when the last "Point in Time" survey of the homeless community was taken. Tory Jennison, IDN, stated that it was last done in January.

5. Discussion: Funding for paid Warming Center Staff position. City budgeting for warming center/shelter support

Chairman Hutchinson gave a brief summary of the agenda item. He stated that the Committee had been discussing the potential of offering a stipend to warming center staff or creating a paid volunteer coordinator position using grant money as well as budgeted funds from each of the three cities.

Vice Chair Marsh reported that he had taken part in a meeting with the Rochester and Dover mayors as well as representatives from CAP. He stated that CAP is interested in helping to coordinate his funding and the Mayors as well as CAP have set up a meeting with the Strafford County Commissioners to discuss options and a potential collaboration in the form of County land for a warming shelter. He spoke of the two parallel tracks occurring currently, one for a permanent shelter and the other for an interim shelter similar to last year's warming centers; however with a potential paid staff position/positions.

Mayor McCarley emphasized that winter comes quickly and the cities are trying to be proactive and start the planning earlier this year. She spoke about the three cities sharing the responsibility of warming centers and the great deal of work entailed. Mayor McCarley said that it had been determined that coordinating the non-profits and volunteers as managing the schedules, notifications, and other details

which go into the warming center operations should not be an unpaid position for the centers to be sustainable and efficient. She reported that the mayors would be meeting with the Commissioners on Thursday June 25th to discuss the matter of location, but that each City could likely find money within their budget to support paid positions for a volunteer coordinator.

Chairman Hutchinson suggested that after their meeting with the Commissioners on Thursday the 25th, the mayors can touch base with the Committee members in the format of an emergency meeting to pass along any pertinent information which was discussed. Mayor McCarley and Mayor Carrier both committed to coming back to the Committee with a summary of any relevant information discussed at the upcoming meeting.

Vice Chair Marsh inquired of the mayors what they saw as the Fidelity Committee's role in regards to the warming center. Mayor McCarley stated that the Committee has already done a great deal of work for the homeless community and she felt that it is important that the Committee be aware of what other social services agencies, the County and the Cities are doing to prevent duplication of efforts and so the Committee can assist as needed. She said it is also important to determine if the focus will be on a permanent shelter or if the focus will instead be on a paid volunteer coordinator position to manage a warming shelter system for the upcoming winter. Mayor Carrier agreed that it is important for the Fidelity Committee to remain involved in the discussions on warming centers and the potential of a permanent shelter. Chairman Hutchinson reiterated that gathering the information from the discussions on sheltering and warming centers in a timely manner would help the Committee moving forward in developing policy initiatives and making decisions.

6. Update: Permanent Shelter locations discussion

It was discussed that, at the current time, there has been no location identified for use as a permanent shelter. It was determined that this agenda item would be revisited after the mayors had their meeting with the county commissioners and could potentially offer more insight.

Vice Chair Marsh clarified that regardless of the course that is taken, whether it's for a permanent shelter or an interim warming center system, there will still be the need for paid staff and/or funding. Chairman Hutchinson inquired about the specifics as far as salary for a paid staff member. Vice Chair Marsh said Betsey Andrews Parker had prepared a document for the Fidelity Committee in December which contains data relevant to funding, and this document can be distributed to the Committee again for review. The information was originally for a full year shelter versus a seasonal shelter, although it did not contain salary information specifically for a volunteer coordinator for a multi-city warming shelter system because that was not in discussions at the time.

There was a brief discussion regarding how the cities would fund such a position now that the annual budgets have all been finalized. Mayor Carrier stated that there

is a great deal of support within the Dover City Council to assist with the homeless community and he felt there would be available funding within the budget.

7. Proposal of Master Plan strategies for draft policy initiatives

Chairman Hutchinson spoke about the Recovery Friendly Workplace initiative which had been proposed at a previous meeting and asked the Committee if there were any other recommendations moving forward. Lindsey Williams, Dover City Councilor, stated that she felt the recovery friendly workplace initiative was a good item on which to focus due to the economic recovery post-COVID and how to build new employment structures. Councilor Williams also reported that she was participating in the NH Municipal Association Legislative Policy Committee. She stated that the policy proposals are not yet public, and although it was unlikely there would specifically be homelessness mentioned in any of the policies, but when the proposals are released to the communities she would encourage the Committee to see if any of the policies could integrate or be tied into the Fidelity Committee's Master Plan initiatives.

Vice Chair Marsh asked Ms. Givara, Deputy City Clerk of Rochester, if there had been any additional requests coming into the City Clerk's office for vital records fee waivers since the policy was enacted in the fall. Ms. Givara reported that although there had been several requests which came in immediately following the City's adoption of the policy, there had not been any requests in quite some time.

Vice Chair Marsh asked for input on whether the Committee should ask someone from Dover or Rochester with experience in Recovery Friendly Workplace to speak to the Committee at a future meeting. It was agreed that Vice Chair Marsh would reach out to an individual familiar with establishing the Recovery Friendly Workplace and it will be placed on the July agenda.

Chairman Hutchinson suggested that at the July Fidelity Committee meeting, there could be a review of the Master Plan to be re-familiarized with the strategies and prioritize the goals and proposals.

8. Other

Dave Carpenter, Dover Planning, wanted to reiterate that although it is hot outside currently, winter will come sooner than we think. He recommended not only being proactive, but planning two seasons ahead and gathering data and trying to think ahead. He spoke about the potential uses of both CDBG funds and the second round of CARES act funds which will be coming in late summer/early fall. The more data which can be gathered, the better decisions can be made in determining how the incoming funding can be best used.

Chairman Hutchinson said he would wait on word from the Mayors following their meeting with the Commissioners on June 25th and would distribute any relevant information to the Committee.

The next regular scheduled meeting of the Fidelity Committee will take place remotely on July 9 at 6:00 PM.

9. Closing Public Input

There were no callers on the conference line for public input.

10. Adjournment

Chairman Hutchinson **ADJOURNED** the meeting at 7:48 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara
Deputy City Clerk
Rochester