

Minutes  
Vermont Council on Homelessness

**April 24th, 2014**

2:00 – 4:00

Pavilion 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conf. Room

State Street, Montpelier

Present: *Calvin Smith (VCRHYP), Rick DeAngelis (VHCB), Tyler Sweeten (VCIL), April Allen (DCF), Chris Dalley (ESD/DCF), David DeAngelis (BHA), Maura Collins (VHFA), Andy Snyder (AOE), Paul Dragon (OEO), Lily Sojourner (AHS), Shaun Gilpin (DHCD), Julia Paradiso (COTS), Jan Demers (CVOEO), Amy Perez (CVCAC), Erhard Mahnke (VAHC), Liz Whitmore (DOC), Richard Williams (VSHA), Rebeka Lawrence-Gomez (Pathways), Brian Smith (DMH), Rachel Batterson (VLA), Angus Chaney (AHS)*

By Phone: *Whitney Nichols, Deborah Hall (RCHC), Jeanne Montross (HOPE), Morgan Brown, Jack C Kearnan (VIA), MaryEllen Mendl (211), Linda Ryan (Samaritan House)*

Angus called the meeting to order at 2:05.

**Introductions and Announcements:**

Rachel gave an update on Fair Housing testing and distributed a report on rental housing discrimination in Vermont.

Angus welcomed new council member, Calvin Smith of the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth (VCRHYP). Calvin replaces Mark Redmond who is stepping down due to a very full meeting schedule.

**Public Comment:**

No one offered public comment.

**Report out on Access to Housing Meeting of April 15th – Rick DeAngelis:**

Rick provided an overview of the day.

Approximately 60 people attended. Framing questions were answered in advance by Continuum of care. A panel from Washington County presented on their Housing Review Team and master-leasing of Transitional apartments. The panel from Chittenden presented on Family Supportive Housing and leasing units through the local land trust. Following the presentations, local groups developed short lists of six-month action items. Once materials generated from the conference have been sorted through they will be made available online.

Angus: Impressed by collaboration and partnerships happening at the local level as illustrated by the Washington County Housing Review Team presentation. Creative use of CHG dollars to master-lease transitional apartments. Central Vermont Community Land Trust and Barre Housing Authority are key housing partners. Case management and program coordination provided by Good Samaritan Haven, CVCAC, Field Services and others. Good projects and good partnerships reinforce each other. Housing Review Team is well coordinated, meets frequently and follows a regular format. Lily has templates they use and is happy to share

with others. Housing review teams important for looking at motels, shelter, VT rental subsidy. We can add more tools to these local groups such as HUD 811 referral.

Discussed the value of local data in the upcoming housing needs assessment. This is reflected in the annual VCH update to the state plan.

Whitney: Good presentations. Noted that there were not many people present identifying as formerly homeless and looking forward to more opportunities for that.

April: Interested in the discussions on how to work with landlords as well as master-leasing.

Linda: Interested in pursuing a boarding house model to address need in St. Albans.

### **VT Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth – Calvin Smith, VCRHYP**

Calvin gave a presentation on runaway and homeless youth, VCRHYP, and state and national developments.

McKinney-Vento definitions. Definition for homeless youth does not cover youth staying with their family in shelter. Youth often leave home with less than \$10 in their pocket. Nationally, over 40,000 youth are living on the streets. Most runaway between age 15 and 17. Important to honor the individual circumstances of homeless youth.

Calvin presented slides from the “High-Low project”. Homeless youth have a number of challenges but also a number of strengths.

VCRHYP is 14 member agencies. Among other things, the organization supports a community of practice. Local control allows programs to tailor response to youth homelessness in their region. Runaway and homeless youth reluctant to get involved in what looks like a system. The longer youth remain on the streets, the greater the risk of physical or sexual assault and exploitation. Peers play an important role and are viewed as family. Importance of encouraging youth to explore strengths.

Trends: Age shift among youth seeking assistance from 2/3rds under 18 to 2/3rds 18 and over and on their own for whom returning to family is not a realistic option. “Kitchen Sink” Youth needing intensive assistance in multiple areas: employment, education, mental health substance abuse.

VCRHYP lost a \$200,000 federal street outreach grant three years ago. They are finishing a proposal to apply again (combined application with Spectrum). Vermont’s small size is a challenge with national competitive grants.

Planning a new project with Ned Castle who helped with the “High-Low project.”

Runaway and homeless youth are a unique population. Rapid Re-Housing is a challenge for this more mobile population and VCRHYP is advocating at the national level for HUD to acknowledge this.

Morgan: Liked presentation. Does not like the term “runaway” and suggested it be changed. Questions around emancipated youth.

Rachel: Question on number of homeless youth in Vermont and Nationally. Calvin said numbers were high in Vermont but may still be under-reported as many do not see themselves as homeless.

Erhard: Question on number and type of beds around the state. Calvin provided information on shelter, transitional and safe homes.

Andy: Reminder that people who are homeless (youth and all age groups) are underreported. Reasons being stigma and definitions that may not include people who are doubled-up. McKinney-Vento coordinators in schools wear many hats and there remains a need for more training for them and outreach by them. Help them understand that numbers are actually greater.

Morgan: Are the numbers unduplicated? Calvin: Yes. Morgan: Is there vetting of people providing services and shelter? Calvin: Yes.

Brian: Question re emancipated youth; does it give them a better chance with applying for federal student loans? Calvin cited examples of parents damaging credit rating of youth by setting up accounts in child's name.

MaryEllen: Question re concerns on human trafficking. Calvin: NH has noticed this in the Manchester area. Bennington and Rutland have seen a few cases in which they suspect illegal activity but no one has come forward. MaryEllen and Calvin are on the trafficking task force and can discuss more in that venue.

#### **Approval of February Minutes:**

Moved By Calvin. Seconded by Morgan. Morgan offered amendment pertaining to the section on the state plan so that it would read: *"Morgan: Not intending to support any plan that says Vermont has made progress, unless it also frankly discusses challenges."* Minutes approved with amendment. None opposed. Richard Williams abstaining.

#### **State Plan: Reviewing Progress and Planning for the Annual Update**

Angus presented on progress on the draft update and reviewed the working draft which was sent out with the agenda. The three current strategies are important enough and broad enough that they can be maintained with some updates to action items. Three new action items come from our future strategies table developed for the five year plan. Most ensuing discussion dealt with strategy 1.

Angus: We did not set production and affordability goals. What do people feel about using county-level housing needs assessment and homelessness data from the PIT count to set local goals? Shaun: Yes, and look not just at number of units but type. David: Can we utilize local continuum of care for this? Erhard: supports setting goals but feels we should attach dollar amounts to this as well or it will not mean much. Rick: Reiterated value of the housing needs assessment.

Rachel: Would like to add exploring ways to reduce regulation that is adding costs to construction and thereby reducing the number of units that can be built. Maura: Agreed, but questions if this is the right group and vehicle to move the needle on this.

Brian: Noted that funding for more transitional housing would have to come from the state as HUD is moving away from that model.

Morgan: Suggested adding a challenges section for each strategy.

Rachel: Can we look at including the strategy of expediting SSI this year? Brian: The SOAR initiative does this and would cover that item for the plan.

Angus will plan to give council members a few more days to reflect and will post the draft for comment in a week. Will allow 30 days public comment period.

### **Housing First – Update on Pathways Vermont Sustainability Plan**

Rebeka Lawrence-Gomez gave the council an update on Pathways application for SSA status so that their organization could bill for Medicaid like a designated agency. Rebeka distributed a handout outlining the Housing First program and scale in Vermont. The designated agencies have submitted comments to the commissioner of Mental Health. Last week's public meeting had a strong turnout. The public comment period has closed and Pathways will await the determination of the Commissioner of Mental Health.

Morgan: Moved "That the Vermont Council on Homelessness support the Pathways Vermont SSA application and highly recommends the application be approved." Rick Seconded.

Discussion:

Andy: Questions on the amount of funding. Rebeka: \$600,000. Further discussion and questions from members on what share that represented compared to other Medicaid spending.

Angus suggested a vote be warned on the motion, but to do that soon to avoid waiting until the June meeting. Members discussed parliamentary procedures. Morgan requested a vote. Others felt that until a fuller discussion is had around process, we should adhere to our practice. A second motion to table the earlier motion was made and seconded. The chair determined that a quorum of named members was not present to vote on either motion and no formal action was taken by the Council.

### **HUD 811 – Update on Federal NOFA**

Maura: gave update on status of Section 811 application. Questions on age eligibility. Maura: Decided by HUD many years ago. Questions on number of vouchers. Maura: approximately 50. Additional information available on one-page handout sent with agenda.

### **Updates from Council Members**

Andy: Announcement on changes to Title I education funding which may expand eligible categories but not funding to cover them.

**Meeting adjourned at 4:02 PM**

**Vermont Council on Homelessness**

**[Appendix to Minutes of April 24, 2014]**

**Voting on resolution to endorse Pathways Vermont' request for Special Services Agency status:**

**Vote conducted by electronic mail: April 25<sup>th</sup> through May 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

## Chaney, Angus

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**From:** Chaney, Angus  
**Sent:** Friday, April 25, 2014 3:12 PM  
**To:** Snyder, Andy; 'Brenda Torpy'; Calvin Smith; Chaney, Angus; 'Connie Snow'; 'Deborah Hall'; Dupre, Paul; 'Elizabeth Ready'; Whitmore, Elizabeth; Hollar, Jennifer; Jack Kearnon (Kearnan.Professional@gmail.com); 'Linda Ryan'; 'Michelle Faye'; Morgan Brown; 'Rachel Batterson'; 'Richard McInerney'; 'Richard Williams'; Rick DeAngelis; 'Rita Markley'; Rowe, Will; 'Sarah Carpenter'; Yacovone, Dave  
**Subject:** Vermont Council on Homelessness - Electronic voting on motion of 4.24.14

Good Afternoon.

At yesterday's Council on Homelessness meeting, a motion was made that: *"The Vermont Council on Homelessness supports the Pathways Vermont SSA application and highly recommends the application be approved."* Council members were not comfortable voting on the item without first warning a vote which is our practice. I am sending this out to all named council members for a vote by e-mail. Please indicate a "Yea," "Nay," or "abstain" by 3:30 PM, next Friday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Yes	No	Abstain

I will be sending another e-mail shortly with some housekeeping items to help us better negotiate voting procedures in the future.

Angus Chaney, Chair  
Council on Homelessness

Angus Chaney  
Director of Housing  
Agency of Human Services  
Office of the Secretary  
208 Hurricane Lane  
Williston, VT 05495  
871-3008

## Chaney, Angus

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**From:** Chaney, Angus  
**Sent:** Friday, May 02, 2014 1:00 PM  
**To:** Snyder, Andy; 'Brenda Torpy'; 'Calvin Smith'; 'Connie Snow'; 'Deborah Hall'; Dupre, Paul; 'Elizabeth Ready'; Whitmore, Elizabeth; Hollar, Jennifer; 'Jack Kearnon (Kearnan.Professional@gmail.com)'; 'Linda Ryan'; 'Michelle Faye'; 'Morgan Brown'; 'Rachel Batterson'; 'Richard McInerney'; 'Richard Williams'; 'Rick DeAngelis'; 'Rita Markley'; Rowe, Will; 'Sarah Carpenter'; Yacovone, Dave  
**Subject:** Vermont Council on Homelessness - Results of Electronic voting on motion of 4.24.14

Good Afternoon, Council Members.

The majority of you have now cast votes on the motion that:

*"The Vermont Council on Homelessness supports the Pathways Vermont SSA application and highly recommends the application be approved."*

**The motion has passed with 10 YEAs, 0 NAYs, and 4 abstaining.**

While the SSA comment period has closed, I will communicate the Council's resolution to the Governor's office and Department of Mental Health this afternoon.

Have a great weekend.

Best, Angus  
Council on Homelessness

## Chaney, Angus

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**From:** Chaney, Angus  
**Sent:** Friday, May 02, 2014 1:18 PM  
**To:** Dupre, Paul; Reardon, Jim  
**Cc:** Miller, Elizabeth  
**Subject:** Vermont Council on Homelessness - Endorsement of Pathways' Vermont SSA status

Commissioner Paul Dupre, Department of Mental Health  
Commissioner James Reardon, Finance and Management

Dear Commissioners Dupre and Reardon:

In my capacity as chair of the Vermont Council on Homelessness, I am communicating that the Council has passed the following resolution:

*"The Vermont Council on Homelessness supports the Pathways Vermont SSA application and highly recommends the application be approved."*

Our Council's state plan to prevent and end homelessness references the importance of permanent supportive housing and "*housing first*" options for people who have experienced chronic homelessness. Pathways Vermont is one such program that embraces the housing first approach to ending homelessness.

The Council understands that the comment period on SSA status is closed but request that our symbolic endorsement become part of that related file.

Sincerely,

Angus Chaney  
Chair, VT Council on Homelessness

Cc. Elizabeth Miller