

Minutes  
Vermont Council on Homelessness

**October 23rd, 2014**

2:00 – 4:00

AHS Central Office

208 Hurricane Lane, Williston

Present: *Calvin Smith (VCRHYP), Paul Dragon (OEO/DCF), Margaret Bozik (CHT), Deborah Hall (HPC), Angus Chaney (AHS), Arthur Hamlin (DHCD), Linda Ryan (Samaritan House), Maura Collins (VHFA), Polly Nichol (VHCB), Tony Folland (ADAP), Dana Lawrence (DCF/Family Services), Brian Smith (DMH), Richard Williams (VSHA), Jan Demers (CVOEO), Shaun Donahue (AHS), Daniel Blankenship (VSHA)*

Angus called the meeting to order at 2:07.

**Introductions and Announcements**

Maura – Housing Conference on November 19<sup>th</sup> at the Hilton, Burlington: Looking forward to great workshop speakers. People can register at <http://www.vhfa.org/conference/>

Jan – 100,000 Homes: 75 volunteers went out over three days in Burlington and spoke with over 100 people. Volunteers used the risk assessment. A report out is scheduled for October 29<sup>th</sup> at Contois Auditorium, City Hall, Burlington. There will also be a meeting in Middlebury on that same day to explore what Addison County can do with this approach.

Richard – VSHA has received 24 VA vouchers and may have an opportunity to apply for more. Regarding the rent study and revised FMRs, HUD appears to have revised the Vermont numbers somewhat in response to the study but not yet to the extent predicted.

Paul – Announced October 30<sup>th</sup> Poverty webinar “Women and Poverty in Vermont: Intersections of Inequity and Lessons.” Register at <https://www4.gotomeeting.com/register/506250815> Also discussed meeting on asylum seekers without refugee status.

Linda – St. Albans shelter already in “overflow” mode. Paul – OEO has distributed guidance and application materials for communities pursuing warming shelters.

**Public Comment**

No one present offered public comment.

### **Consolidated Plan: Homelessness – Arthur Hamlin (DHCD)**

DHCD is gearing up for the next five-year consolidated plan and is seeking more and greater input from the general public and people experiencing homelessness. Arthur reviewed the status of the Housing Needs Assessment. This will provide county-level data. Draft report will be finished shortly with a final report completed in December. Tentative regional meeting schedule is as follows:

- 12/17 – West Rutland: 4 PM at West Rutland Town Hall
- 12/18 – St. Albans: 4 PM at City Council Chambers
- 1/5 – Bristol: 5:30 PM at Holley Hall
- 1/15 – Bellows Falls: 3 PM at Opera House
- 1/16 – Randolph: 12 PM at Chandler Music Hall
- Lyndonville – TBD
- Bennington – TBD

DHCD is also looking into an online survey and possibility of a paper survey. The last survey had many respondents but none who identified as being homeless. Angus asked how to make the information more accessible and relevant to the general public and people experiencing homelessness. Questions from council members on whether it would direct funding between programs. More likely to influence activities within programs, not between programs. DHCD will also run large page ads this year that are harder to miss and worded more clearly. Questions on how many times people may be providing input if they go to meetings, fill-in a survey and sit on an advisory committee. Suggestion that getting to people at the point of service is important. Community organizations present seemed willing to help get the word out and help people access the survey there. Libraries are another resource for this.

### **Homeless Discharge Planning (AHS, ADAP, DCF Family Services, DMH)**

Angus provided context around homeless-discharge planning in publicly-funded system of care; HUD expectations; interaction between different systems of care.

**Residential Substance Abuse Treatment** - Tony Fallond presented ADAP's document relating to residential substance abuse treatment. Tony clarified policies around length of stay and concurrent reviews. Brief discussion of ADAP's treatment modalities. Some concerns around capacity for residential treatment.

**Foster Care** - Dana Lawrence presented the Family Services document and the division's resiliency approach. Programming provided under Act 74 has been critical in giving Vermonters in this age group better supports than they might have in other states. Kids in treatment at the time of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday probably encounter the toughest challenge. Richard – Question on use of Family Unification Vouchers for this group. Dana familiar with and uses this option frequently. Calvin – Question on how homeless and runaway youth in this same age bracket who are not exiting foster care can access similar resources.

**Mental Health** - Brian Smith presented DMH's policy, highlighting the importance of Act 79 in creating DMH's Subsidy and Care program. Daniel - Question on how the Department views Housing Authority staff as part of the care team.

**Evaluation of Effectiveness** - In future, coordinated intake and assessment could provide one place to analyze whether these policies, procedures or programs are effective at preventing discharge to homelessness and also help determine what systems of care people are interacting with prior to becoming homeless at a later date. This could help guide our prevention approach. The Continuum of Care has the lead role in developing coordinated intake and assessment and is receiving some technical support from OEO. AHS has asked OEO to think about what questions might be good to embed at intake to help us evaluate this area. All three documents, in addition to the document for Corrections, will be posted on the Council website. <http://humanservices.vermont.gov/boards-committees/vermont-council-on-homelessness/ahs-homeless-discharge-planning-documents/>

Council members who want to offer additional comment should send those in writing to Angus by November 10<sup>th</sup>. We will pick this conversation back up with Health Care.

#### **Approval of Minutes from June and August**

Calvin moved both months. Linda seconded. No discussion. All voted in favor with Polly and Richard abstaining from both and Deb abstaining from June. Minutes approved.

#### **Updates from Council Members**

Linda – Poverty Council has developed a number of housing and homelessness recommendations including a suggestion to increase the Vermont Rental Subsidy Program by \$250,000 and a policy to set-aside 10% of all publicly-funded apartment units for people who are homeless. Linda suggested discussing NLIHC report at December meeting. There may be interest in endorsing parallel housing recommendations targeted to extremely low income and homeless households.

Angus - For December's meeting, USICH has been invited to speak to the Council about their Family Connection policy paper and what other states and cities are doing in this area. The focus is on systems not just programs.

#### **Meeting adjourned at 4:12 PM**

#### **Tentative upcoming meeting dates through 2015 (All times 2-4 PM)**

- Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup> – Pavilion / Montpelier
- Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> – AHS / Williston
- Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> – AHS / Williston
- Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> – AHS / Williston
- Wednesday, August 19<sup>th</sup> – AHS / Williston
- Wednesday, October 21<sup>st</sup> – AHS / Williston
- Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> – AHS/Williston