

## TASK FORCE

Homelessness task force

DATE November 1 2023

LOCATION

Hybrid meeting Zoom and City Council chambers

CALLED TO ORDER 6:33 pm

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Erica Reil, Chip Castle, Miriam Ben-Dor,, Joe Mueller, Stephen Finner and Philip Moros

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jeremy Spiro-Winn

OTHER ATTENDEES

Staff Liaison Brooke Pouliot, Samatha Hiscock, Linda Schlinder, Rebecca Baruzzi ,Police Chief Braedon Vail

TOPICS

- a) adjustments to agenda—none
- b) public comment

Rebecca Baruzzi spoke about the homelessness problem as seen at the Barre zCity Elementary School. Currently, there are 83 families who are unhoused who have students at BCEMS. Some of those are living out of cars.

Linda Schilder spoke of the obstacles of helping find housing for one person.

- c) approval of minutes from October meeting moved by Chip 2nd by Miriam approved
- d) State plans for the winter.

Philip contacted The Good Samaritan Haven for clarity on the issue. Currently, the shelters and overflow shelter are full. The Haven's focus is Montpelier centric. The overflow shelter is at the Elks in Montpelier. Clients should contact the Haven to inquire about space. They are running a van, but to access it you must be in Montpelier by 6pm to be transported to the overflow shelter. Starting December 15 people in need of shelter should contact 211 to get a motel room. The BHTF can make these things known.

The second item was to get a feel for how the state is following through on the rehousing promises made in June of 2023. To that end, Stephen will contact Rep. Teresa Woods about reporting to the task force. VIA had a meeting with Rep Woods and Stephen will make minutes

of that meeting available. Chip has summarized H171 and feels there are some answers within.

e) Conversation with Braedon Vail

The focus was on working with the police. How are needs being met and harassment complaints being addressed? More resources are needed. Also, it is important to connect police and people who know the resources. WCMH, The Turning Point, and Access Hub should be involved. The policy is to leave people who are camping alone unless there is a complaint.

BHTS suggestions: get input from people who feel harassed, have one on one conversations and do a survey among people at the Turning Point, Good Samaritan Haven and those who are camping. The goal of the survey would be twofold. Collect data and get a characterization of the interaction.

f) other updates

Stephen reported Alex Farrell has been named the Commissioner of Housing and Community Development. He met with VIA and said solutions will take time. They are exploring building up rather than out.

f) Action Plans

Phil will talk to BIG ( Barre Interfaith Group) about warming shelter. Hopefully to get a feel if any of the churches will have an available space.

Chip will send out his summary of H171.

Stephen will contact Rep. Teresa Woods

Next meeting Dec. 6, 2023 7 pm

Adjourned 8 pm

Respectfully,  
Philip Moros

CLERK Philip Moros