



**Fidelity Committee  
of the  
Tri-City Joint Mayors’ Task Force on Homelessness  
Meeting Conducted Remotely  
October 8, 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:** Paige Farmer, Home For All. Tory Jennison, IDN. Martha Stone, Crossroads House. Julian Long, Rochester Economic Development.

**MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order**

Vice Chairman Marsh called the remote meeting to order at 6:03 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: Barbara Holstein, Todd Marsh, and Betsey Andrews Parker. Chairman Hutchinson, Charlie Reynolds and Dina Gagnon were excused. Mayor Caroline McCarley and Mayor Bob Carrier were also present

## **2. Public Input**

Paige Farmer, Home For All, reported that the 'Affordable Housing Incentive Program', which is a landlord incentive program to initiate affordable housing and acceptance of housing choice vouchers, will be launching within the next week.

## **3. Communications from the Mayors**

Mayor Carrier spoke to the Committee in regards to what is going on in City of Dover with the potential uptick in COVID-19 cases and the work being done in the City.

### **3.1 Update on Seasonal Shelter**

Betsey Andrews Parker updated the Committee on the most recent shelter updates. She stated that with the help of the mayors and County Commissioners, there was an exhaustive search done for a location to house a temporary winter shelter for decompression of COVID which was occurring. There were over ten locations considered, not including exploring the faith-based options which had been utilized in the past or the option of expanding existing locations. Eventually Frank Cassidy came forward to offer the Rochester Care Pharmacy property. Unfortunately, it was realized that to make the commercial space into a shelter space would have required zoning variances as well as a great deal of work to be brought up to health and life safety code. Ms. Andrews Parker stated that it would have been a significant cost to add a fire suppression system and to add the required egresses out of the building. There were concerns about roof integrity as well. When all was said and done if the property was renovated, it would not be available until February, months after it would be beneficial.

Ms. Andrews Parker reported that they were now partnering with the Garrison Hotel in Dover to have a wing of rooms to house up to 30 people. They have met the thresholds to qualify for CDFA funds, which would supply \$500,000 for this program starting in January. They are looking for additional community support to come in to help with funding and support for November and December. She stated that they are partnering with Crossroads House to try to get funding through NH Housing Finance Authority, but time is short and they are hoping the tri-cities can come forward to offer funding to avoid CAP needing to reallocate money which could be utilized for supportive housing. Ms. Andrews Parker said they will be providing transportation between the Garrison Hotel and CAP, SOS, or other places in order to offer wrap-around services.

Ms. Andrews Parker stated they are looking to hire a Shelter Manager currently which is position which will be funded for the next 20 months and will include continuing services and for finding housing upon leaving the Garrison.

Vice Chair Marsh asked when the space at the Garrison Hotel would become available. Ms. Andrews Parker said as long as they have staff to run the program, it will be available November 15. There will be an office available at the hotel and there will be a paid staff member of site.

Vice Chair Marsh asked about the need for supplemental low-barrier shelter and whether the communities should continue to prepare to offer short-term cold weather emergency centers. Ms. Andrews Parker agreed that the cities should be prepared to open these warming centers if the low temperature trigger the need. She said that if an emergency overnight shelter opened, CAP would be able to assist with food and services. There was a discussion on how volunteers would play into the program.

Mayor Carrier asked about the possibility of some of the local churches opening their properties to help the homeless. Ms. Andrews Parker said that churches which are not currently holding in-person services are not allowing their properties to be used for the homeless. Tory Jennison said that some properties are reluctant to participate because the permitting process would involve letting the fire department come in for an inspection. There is also a great deal of volunteer management and training involved which is challenging.

Mayor McCarley stated that the City of Rochester is prepared to offer 38 Hanson Street again this year as a temporary warming center as needed. Mayor McCarley inquired about the volunteers for such a shelter and where they would be sourced. Ms. Andrews Parker said that the feedback received from many previous volunteers is that the overnight centers are too risky during COVID. Ms. Andrews Parker emphasized the need for paid staff because of this reason and where additional funding for this purpose may come from.

Martha Stone, Crossroads House, said that they have not been able to engage volunteers in the same manner than they have historically due to COVID because people are more hesitant to put themselves at risk. She concurred that there needs to be a viable plan for paid staff members to run shelters and warming centers.

Mayor McCarley asked if CARES Act funds could be applicable for staffing of warming centers and shelters because there is currently \$100,000 of these funds which are not earmarked for a specific program. Julian Long, Rochester Grants Coordinator, stated that the grant money could be used for staffing. He stated that these CARES act funds do not have the usual restriction of only 15% for public services costs.

**4. Communications from the Chairs**

Vice Chair Marsh said he was hopeful about the direction of the Committee is heading and the actionable proposals which are being made to the respective councils.

**5. Ending Veterans Homelessness initiative**

It was decided to table this item until the next meeting in order for Chairman Hutchinson to be present to lead the discussion and update on the status of the proposal.

**6. Continued Review of Master Plan**

**6.1 Recovery Friendly Workplace recommendation for Tri-City Councils**

Mayor Carrier and Mayor McCarley committed to following up with their respective City Managers and reporting back to the Committee on the status of this proposal in Dover and Rochester.

**7. Other**

Vice Chair Marsh suggested the committee review the Master Plan and identify potential action items and proposals which could be presented to the tri city councils.

**8. Closing Public Input**

No discussion.

**9. Adjournment**

Vice Chair Marsh **ADJOURNED** the Fidelity Committee Meeting at 6:57 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara  
Deputy City Clerk  
Rochester