



TOWN COUNCIL
**Committee to Address Homelessness
in the Town of Barnstable**
367 Main Street, Hyannis, MA
Selectmen's Conference Room
2nd floor, Selectmen's Conference Room

June 23 2020

6:00pm

MEETING MINUTES

I. BUSINESS

A. Roll Call:

Members present: Chair of Committee Councilor Britt Beedenbender; Councilor Debra Dagwan; Councilor Tracy Shaughnessy; Councilor Gordon Starr; Member at Large, Deb Krau; Officer Michael Riley, Community Impact Unit, Barnstable Police; Lt. Jean Challies, Barnstable Police, Chief Burke, Hyannis Fire Department; Assistant Town Manager Andrew Clyburn; Adam Burnett, CHAMP HOMES
Absent: Councilor Jennifer Cullum; Officer Eric Driftmeyer

Chair of the Committee opened the meeting up at 6:05pm, with the following statement:

In Accordance with MGL, Chapter 30A, Section 20, I must inquire whether anyone is recording this meeting and if so, to please make your presence known; Chair of the Committee asked for Roll Call, Roll Call done by Administrator of the Town Council, Cynthia Lovell, all members present with the exception of Councilor Cullum. Chair of Committee asked for any Public Comment: hearing no request for Public Comment, Chair Britt Beedenbender closed Public Comment.

- **Boots on the Ground (Community Impact Unit (CIU)/Hyannis Fire Department (HFD)**

Chair of Committee asked for a report from the Community Impact Unit, LT Riley's, **(1:59 in the recording is the start of discussion with LT Riley)** discussion was about the current social services that are still in place for the Homeless population, the CIU unit will no longer allow individuals to gather on the bandstand on the Village Green at the Town Hall or in groups throughout the town during COVID restrictions, the CIU tries to move them along to the Duffy Center where they can take showers and receive food at various locations throughout the town, as well as any services they may need at the time. The CIU continues to work with an individual that is often seen on Main Street at the Egg and I breakfast restaurant, the CIU has tried to reach out to her and get a relationship of trust with her to get her services, but she is reluctant at this point but they are continuing to try.

(3:59 into the meeting is Chief Burke, Hyannis Fire) Chief Burke, Hyannis Fire Department does not see any new issues, and stated that Officer Riley has described the current activity that they are seeing, there hasn't been any new developments or issues that he can identify at this time.

- **Shelter - Discussion re shelter-town needs; options going forward**

(4:29 in the recording) Chair of the Committee asked for a discussion from Sue Mazzarrelli, Catholic Social Services about the operation currently at St. Joseph's House which currently operates our Homeless Shelter. Chair of the Committee has heard from individuals and has received phone calls regarding the possibility of moving the shelter location because of the impact the location of the shelter has on Main Street and its business's. Chair of Committee discussed the viability of moving the shelter as well as a location or another building that may be possible for the purpose of serving this vulnerable

population, and the future of the shelter. Chair of Committee asked Ms. Mazzarelli to share her thoughts on St. Joseph's House, and possible future of the shelter

(6:59 into the discussion Sue Mazzarelli, Catholic Social Services, Director of St. Joseph's House) Ms. Mazzarelli thanked the community for wrapping their arms around this vulnerable population and offering help to them.) Ms. Mazzarelli stated that the building is currently owned by HAC (Housing Assistance Corporation) and they have a 5 year lease currently, we have a state contract we operate under right now that allows us to operate a shelter, that means we can run a shelter anywhere in the state that has a building that is adequate enough for space and the current programs run out of there, so we are just a tenant right now under HAC but do not have to remain there if another location was to be offered up. COVID has really amplified the issues we have, we have a capacity of 50, so that leaves another group out of the shelter and on the streets which brings no services to those we do not come in contact with, the other issue we have is the current contract we operate under in the state is about 20 years old and does not cover the expenses to run the shelter in 2020, the facts and figures and formula is 20 years old, so the money is made up that is a shortfall of what the state provides is donations, and because of COVID those donations are down because our churches are closed and the donations do not reach us. The answer to this issue is housing of course, which is in low stock on Cape Cod, we also looked at vacant hotels in the area that might serve as individual housing so it would act as a springboard to these individuals and get them into permanent housing.

Chair of the Committee asked what the length of stay is currently, Ms. Mazzarelli stated the original program was 90 days and you were out of the shelter, but the limited availability of affordable housing is the biggest issue, so there are individuals that have been here over a year. Ms. Mazzarelli also stated the vouchers are a problem, people may get a voucher for housing, but there is no housing, so this list for the vouchers has grown to 6 years waiting now.

(15:36 into the recording) Councilor Tracy Shaughnessy asked if the shelter was still on lockdown. Ms. Mazzarelli stated no, we are in a hybrid state in order to get our clients services they need we encourage them to leave the shelter in the morning and get done what they need to and then most return at night before the cutoff time to stay. Ms. Mazzarelli stated that Duffy has been wonderful during this time, they test our clients, and if they are positive they are sent to a motel to isolate until recovery and then they can return to the shelter after a negative test result, we are still issuing meals through the town, so that continues, but we are at only 40 for night time capacity, but we are looking at the CARES funding currently to see if we can secure some of those funds to take care of the folks that have lost their shelter place and then find them a place to stay based on limited funds from the state.

(18:55 into the recording) Councilor Dagwan asked Ms. Mazzarelli about the possibility of the hotel idea, and obviously would need more staff to operate this, but Councilor Dagwan wanted to know if the motel next to the Baptist Church on West Main was a possibility of a location. Ms. Mazzarelli said she was looking at old nursing homes, hotels, hospital or doctor offices that may not return in 2021, and if something like this came up could we possibly with a little rehab make this work in another location.

(21:35 Assistant Town Manager) stated there was discussion about vacant hotels and such, the issue was location and proximity to services and the clients being able to get to the locations they need to. Ms. Mazzarelli stated yes that is an issue, most of our clients do have employment, so if they can't get to their jobs, or can't ride their bikes to, but the state contract needs to be revamped and updated so that we have true funding to make programs work.

(26:10 Ms. Mazzarelli) explained the funding from the state is distributed to be able to maintain the current programs, we should be using the funds for services only, not using the monies to fix the building and such, we should be using the funds to provide sole services for these clients, and that currently does not work that way, we have been able to keep going due to the donations of the Diocese.

So with our churches being closed during COVID and Ms. Mazzarrelli has been looking at vacant Catholic buildings currently on the Cape, but there is not any buildings on the Cape that the Diocese has that we can use.

(32:00 into the recording) Councilor Clarke asked if other churches in the area are helping, not Catholic related. Ms. Mazzarrelli said they do receive donations from other Churches having to do with food and clothing, but financially no, all the Churches have financial issues, donations are down considerably because we can't do fund raisers, we have no congregations meeting or gathering for worship, so donations are way down, and the Catholic Churches programs were cut that would normally help us in funding. Councilor Clarke asked if there was a way that the Cape residents could donate to, she was unsure where people could contribute either financially or with any other items needed. Ms. Mazzarrelli said anyone could donate directly to the **Catholic Social Services** and the money will come directly to the shelter, if someone donates just to the Catholic Church, that money is divided up into other program needs, and we often do not receive a lot from this as they are trying to keep other programs going during this time.

(36:03 in the recording) Ms. Mazzarrelli mention the state is looking at possibly a different procurement procedure when the contrat is up, so she is uncertain how that is all going to work, right now we are at a hold on thoughts until the state decides what to do with the contracts of all our shelters throughout Massachusetts so its an uncertain time right now for us across the state; so she is unsure about what steps to take next since the contrat is up for renegotiating, and not sure what direction it may take.

Assistant Town Manager asked if the Catholic Social Services is not in a position from what he could see that financially if a hotel came up for sale would they be in a position to purchase and the staff to equip the needs, Ms. Mazarrelli stated no not at this time, we are limited in funds.

(44:56 into the recording) Member at large Deb Krau mentioned the Needs Assessment Report done years ago that has some valuable information that wouold help today, is there also going to be a change in the programws, are there overnight programs that will be offered, Ms. Krau stated that she could get the needs assessment report to the members of the committee as soon as possible there is a lot of good information that was gathered

(48:31 into recording) Councilor Shaughnessy stated that one of the next steps needs to be getting the delegation of our representatives involved, they have resources that they should be using to help us out. The other idea that was mentioned is possibly getting together with Yarmouth and forming a partnership with Yarmouth regarding the hotels that are shared on our borders where Hyannis reaches Yarmouth, we could possibly reinvent that discussion with Yarmouth.

Chair of Committee outlined the next steps:

Review the Needs Assessment report that was done years ago

Discussion with Senator Cyr this week update at next meeting

Sober Homes - update from Councilor Jennifer Cullum and Attorney Karen Nober

Respite Program

Functional Zero - current status and next steps

(55:00 into the recording) Beth Albert from the County discussed Functional Zero: Memo below sent to the members of the Committee explaining Functional Zero, because of the late hour, Chair Beedenbender asked the Committee members to read the following document and prepare questions for our next meeting.

BARNSTABLE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES 3195 Main Street, Post Office Box 427 Barnstable, Massachusetts 02630 Office: 508-375-6628 | Fax: 508-362-0290 www.bchumanservices.net Elizabeth Albert, Director balbert@barnstablecounty.org

June 23, 2020

To: Britt Beedenbender, Chair, Town of Barnstable Committee to Address Homelessness

From: Beth Albert, Director, Barnstable County Human Services

Re: For Discussion - Definition of Functional Zero

Background The term “functional zero” as it relates to homelessness gained national prominence with the emergence of the Zero 2016 Campaign, a national change effort designed to help a committed group of US communities end chronic and veteran homelessness by December 2016.

The Zero 2016 campaign defined “functional zero” as when, at any point in time, the number of people (e.g. veterans) experiencing sheltered or unsheltered homelessness will be no greater than the current monthly housing placement rate for people experiencing homelessness. i

Functional Zero doesn’t mean that there are no longer any people experiencing homelessness in the region, it just means that the numbers of a specific group of people (e.g. veterans or unsheltered homelessness) who are experiencing homelessness hasn’t increased in a region.

Critics of the term suggest that by using the word ‘zero’ policy makers and practitioners may believe that homelessness is no longer an issue for their community.

Federal agencies that are part of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness ((USIHC) have moved away from using the “functional zero” terminology and adopted the new “operational definition of ending homelessness” contained in USICH’s recently released amended federal homelessness plan *Opening Doors*: An end to homelessness means that every community will have a systematic response in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible or is otherwise a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.

Creating a Healthy Connected Cape Cod *The Mission of the Department of Human Services is to plan, develop, and implement programs which enhance the overall delivery of human services in Barnstable County and promote the health and social well-being of County residents through regional efforts that improve coordination of services.*

- Functional Zero is achieved when there are enough services, housing and shelter beds for everyone who needs it. In this approach, emergency shelters are meant to be temporary and the goal is permanent housing. A key aim of homeless-serving systems is to provide immediate access to shelter and crisis services, without barriers to entry, while permanent stable housing and appropriate supports are being secured. iii
- Functional zero recognizes that there will always be people or veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, but as long as these people can be identified and re-housed quickly and effectively, the homeless rate will be effectively or functionally zero.

References

https://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/Functional_Zero.pdf

<https://www.homelesshub.ca/blog/infographic-what-functional-zero>

<https://www.hudexchange.info/news/snaps-in-focus-ending-veteran-homelessness-and-what-it-means-for-zero-2016-communities/>

<https://www.neoch.org/cleveland-homeless-blog/2015/7/18/functional-zero-for-homeless-veterans-confuses-public.html>

<https://www.usich.gov/>

Chair of the Committee asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 12, 2020. Councilor Tracy Shaughnessy made the motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 12, 2020, this was seconded by Councilor Dagwan, all members voted infavor of approval of the meeting minutes of May 12, 2020

Chair of Committee Councilor Britt Beedenbender	yes
Councilor Debra Dagwan	yes
Councilor Tracy Shaughnessy	yes
Councilor Gordon Starr	yes
Member at Large, Deb Krau	yes

Chair of the Committee asked for a motion to adjourn, Councilor Tracy Shaughnessy made the motion to adjourn, this was seconded by Councilor Gordon Starr all members present vote in favor of adjournment

Chair of Committee Councilor Britt Beedenbender	yes
Councilor Debra Dagwan	yes
Councilor Tracy Shaughnessy	yes
Councilor Gordon Starr	yes
Member at Large, Deb Krau	yes

II. ADJOURN: 7:02pm

NEXT MEETING: July 14, 2020 6pm