

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)

Spring Community Meeting

Thursday May 8, 2025; 4:30pm-6:30pm

Burlington City Hall - Contois Auditorium

149 Church Street Burlington, VT 05401

***Minutes***

Announcements

Paul, from CVOEO, announced they are taking over the Williston Family Shelter on Monday.

Travis, from CVOEO, announced that on July 1<sup>st</sup> they will have coupons for the Burlington Farmer's Market.

Radha Sylvester announced she was hired by King Street Laundry and will be hosting classes over the next weeks. See program flyer [HERE](#).

Frank, from HHAV, announced they will be hosting their membership meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

**1. Strategic Planning Update**

**30 Minutes**

**a. Progress on Implementation – Nicole Kubon**

Nicole highlighted Phase 1 of implementation of the Strategic Plan.

The CCHA is building foundational relationships between members to carry all committee workplans forward, year by year. The workplans have been a great tool for accountability and helping committees stay on track with their responsibilities laid out in the Strategic Plan.

The goal is for each of the committees to complete their workplan templates at the Co-Chair retreat in September. These templates will be useful in carrying workplan tasks over from year to year.

The SPC has been discussing creating a Policies and Procedures document that would contain operational standards; this document would be edited and reviewed regularly, and the Governance Charter would then become more of a static document without annual changes.

***b. New CCHA Website – Bryce Bierman***

Bryce gave an overview of the new website.

***c. New Budget Presentation – Travis Poulin***

Tabled.

***d. Phase 1/2 Implementation – Nicole Kubon***

See agenda item 1.a. above.

***e. Break-Out Groups: What value can CCHA community meetings provide?***

**2. Responding to Unsheltered Homelessness**

**10 Minutes**

***a. Shelter Providers Convening Discussion & Next Steps – Sarah Russell***

Tabled.

***b. Encampment policy and City's response – Sarah Russell***

Tabled.

**3. Data Review**

**20 Minutes**

***a. Coordinated Entry - 12-Month Review – Travis Poulin***

Travis, from CVOEO, presented an annual review of the Coordinated Entry system data. See the report [HERE](#).

***b. Community Resource Center – Travis Poulin***

The Community Resource Center has moved to 184 Pearl Street for the next several months while the former location is being remodeled. Attendance has dropped for the new location, but it is growing week-by-week as people learn about the new location. The food truck serves hot food on Wednesdays for lunch.

***c. General Assistance Emergency Housing Program – Kristina James***

Kristina, from the Agency of Human Services, presented an update and overview of the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program. See the report [HERE](#). Use the report to update the DCF information on the Housing Retention webpage.

Taylor, from Champlain Housing Trust, said she appreciates Kristina's presentation, because she wasn't aware of the changes.

Derek, from Burlington Housing Authority, asked "what would happen if a voucher ended and the motel decides not to renew the stay?" DCF would assist the household to find housing elsewhere.

Kristina mentioned the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program management team is a great contact for clarifying changes in detail.

**d. 2025 PIT Count Update – Multi-Year Review – Marcella Gange**

**e. COTS Warming Shelter Overview - Jonathan Farrell**

Operations ended on April 30<sup>th</sup>. They served over 200 people. Four people moved into permanent housing. See the COTS exit data [HERE](#). Jonathan thanked the other shelter providers, CSLs, Park Rangers, and EMTs.

**4. Legislative Updates**

**15 Minutes**

**a. Frank Knaack – Housing & Homelessness Alliance of Vermont**

The next year will be the same system as the last year for the General Assistance program. The same 80-night cap, 1100 room cap, and the caps are relaxed for cold weather months again.

The administration is trying to add requirements to the program to create a smaller pool of users.

H.91 doesn't include more funds to address the ongoing crisis; it simply reallocates responsibilities.

The administration is pushing to pull \$5 million from the Vermont Housing Conservation Board; they already had roughly \$35 million in funding pulled this year.

**b. Paul Dragon - Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)**

Paul gave an overview of the H.91 process. The process is moving quickly and changing rapidly. It would combine the Housing Opportunity (HOP) funds with

the General Assistance Emergency Housing funds. CVOEO has been asked to lead the region as the designated Community Action Agency. They were notified about 7-10 days before the changes were announced to the public, which has forced them to be reactive.

He said the bill has come a long way since testimony has been collected.

CVOEO would prefer if the CCHA would continue to administer HOP funds for the next two fiscal years.

Existing funding streams would be managed by the Office of Economic Opportunity. For future HOP funding, a democratic process will be used to prioritize programming.

Changes from H.91 will be in fiscal year 2027 for the General Assistance Emergency Housing component and 2028 for the administration of HOP funds.

The intent of the program is to reduce the reliance on the use of hotels and expand the use of emergency shelters. The legislation calls for an additional \$3 million to increase shelter capacity.

The administration is trying to include a residency requirement to access services, which CVOEO is not supportive of.

The Advisory Committees will be made up of people within the Community Action Agency region.

Domestic Violence organizations and their client lists will operate through a separate process to retain confidentiality.

There will be a de-designation process for the Designated Community Action Agencies.

CVOEO is advocating for the Office of Economic Opportunity to retain its responsibilities.

CVOEO feels a sense of duty to take on these new responsibilities assigned by the legislature however difficult this transition may be.

## **5. Affordable Housing Development**

**15 Minutes**

### **a. Vermont Housing Conservation Board – Elise Greaves**

Tabled.

### **b. Champlain Housing Trust – Michael Monte**

See the presentation [HERE](#). Champlain Housing Trust has housed over 500 folks who were homeless as of March 31<sup>st</sup>. They are working to develop multiple new shelters. Michael encouraged membership to reach out for creative ideas for partnerships to house more people.

Slide two represents how funds have been used over the last two years. More development was accomplished than is normal due to an influx of federal funds during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The administration is shifting housing resources higher up the income spectrum.

### **c. Vermont Housing Finance Agency – Catherine Lange**

Catherine is an in-house architect with VHFA and works with developers through pre-development and construction stages.

Presentation [HERE](#).

Michael mentioned that the 4% LIHTC funding is harder to use now that other supportive sources of funding are drying up. Development rates will likely decrease with the decreases in availability of funding.

VHFA funds 3-4 9% LIHTC projects each year.

4% of LIHTC projects are harder to complete now with fewer alternative funding sources to use collaboratively.

### **d. Chittenden County Municipal Managers**

Kerri, from the Agency of Human Services, spoke with some municipal managers in Chittenden County and shared some recent housing development updates.

Shelburne has recently constructed 28 homes, and 95 homes are under construction. This represents a 20% increase in housing stock for their town.

Williston has made more zoning changes to allow more development of affordable housing.

## **6. Sub-Committee Updates**

**15 Minutes**

### **a. Membership & Outreach Committee – Will Towne**

Tabled.

### **b. Housing Retention Committee – Jen Hunter & Jennie Davis**

Tabled.

### **c. Coordinated Entry Committee - Will Vilardo & Ciara Kilburn**

Tabled.

## **7. Public Comment & Reflection**

**15 Minutes**

A person with lived experience, Jeanie, said “There needs to be a place for homeless people to be. Where can they exist legally? Perhaps a community garden could be started to support the homeless population. She spends a lot of time picking up needles and other trash from public parks.

“We need help.”” She has been working with Pathways Vermont to find housing for months, but has been unsuccessful. She is sure her cart of belongings is being robbed outside while she is in this meeting, but the meeting is worth it to her. “We are all people.” It is a hurdle to have people lose a housing voucher if they are trying to stay with family temporarily. Without housing, she can’t commit to a job because everything she owns will be stolen while she is away.

Stephanie asked what happened to the man who hosted a locker storage service for people. Stephanie, from Burlington Housing Authority, said the program was discussed during the pandemic but never came to light.

*We encourage questions and participation in discussion and place great emphasis on hearing from people with lived experience of homelessness and/or housing insecurity. If you are a person*

*who has lived experience, you will be provided with a stipend for attending; please let us know after the meeting concludes. Please reach out to us prior or let us know when you arrive at the meeting should you need any accommodation(s).*

*Thank you so much for joining us.*