

Shelburne Social Services Committee Meeting

Wednesday, October 27, 2021

Present: Sue Furry-Irish (Chair), Patricia Fontaine, Linda Riell, Elaine Limanek and Louis Maguire

Call to Order: meeting called to order at 6:36PM by Sue

Public guest: Kira Ecay (intern for Jessica Brumsted), Tricia Tyo, Deputy Commissioner, Economic Services Division of the Department of Children and Families

Appoint Note Taker: Lou was appointed note taker

Consider Approval of Agenda: agenda approved by all unanimous vote recorded

Citizen Participation: Guest from VT Agency of Social Services, Tricia Tyo, Agency of Human Services, Deputy Commissioner, Executive Economic Services Director DCF and responsible for the SWAP Program, GA Voucher System and Public Benefits.

Sue began the discussion with a summary of the round table discussion held at last months meeting. (See approved minutes for further detail)

Tricia Tyo followed and made the following points of information to the committee:

- She wanted to correct a false impression about the percentage of the homeless population in Shelburne compared to other Vermont towns. There is a high concentration in Shelburne due to the amount of motel rooms available that were needed to provide shelter during the pandemic.
- Days Inn is being sold to the Champlain Housing Trust so that it will be closed and will not have residents for at least 60 days and residents will be moved to other places.
- Many of the cases are complicated and the needs quite varied. DCF is contracting for case management to assist with social services to make connections to find appropriate placement that entails extra attention.
- Shelburne Motels and reported unhoused occupancy:
 1. T Bird – 27 households, 24 adults, 10 children.
 2. Harbor Place – on site staff 24/7 by Champlain Housing Trust, 49 rooms with 55 adults and 41 children.
 3. Days Inn – 12 rooms, 12 adults and 1 child.
 4. North Star – 24 rooms, 29 adults and 1 child.
 5. Quality Inn- 6 rooms, 7 adults and 3 children.
 6. Total unhoused in Shelburne motels: 127 adults, 56 children= 183 people temporarily housed in motels

- Emergency housing is available for those eligible through the SNAP program; must renew every 30 days
- All children received meals this summer, continue to receive them through school
- EBT cards provided do not have a mechanism to provide transportation.
- FEMA funding for covid-related "mass feeding" ended July 1.
- Current SNAP funds have been increased, recipients have healthy balances.
- No storage capability/ no cooking is a challenge in the current situation as the mass feeding program provided 3 meals per day delivered.
- Current programs are designed to 1st utilize shelters and then only when not available to provide motel accommodations. The pandemic required the closing of shelters for safety, so motels were the only option. Shelters are beginning to open back up, so less need for motel housing.
- Current program has been extended until 12/31/2021 for eligible residents that include disabled, pregnant, those fleeing domestic violence, over 60, homeless, with income restrictions for up to 84 days of housing.
- Department is working with the legislature to close a funding gap to provide affordable primary housing from an allocated \$90m to the requested \$250m
- Patricia inquired as to any agreement on the food program and Tricia responded that there were no delivered food programs available since the end of the Mass Feeding.
- Sue noted that local support has come from the Rotary Club and Churches to assist with providing meals to those in need.
- Discussion ensued on the security problems that have been encountered with the residences, straining the ability of local support to respond. Tricia stated that full time security had been provided to the Days Inn and from the Lamoille County Sheriff. However, this was contrary to what was reported to Sue on an in person visit to the location.
- Sue requested from Tricia any advice she might have for the committee, and she responded that there was not anything in addition to what we are currently doing.
- Sue thanked Tricia for providing so much information to the committee to assist in the work needed to support our residents.

Approval of September 22, 2021 Minutes – motion to approve made by Linda and 2nd by Patricia; minutes approved by all

Treasurer's Report: Linda Riell – see attached message with update current expenses and balances

Old Business:

1. Sue: Budget for next year – see attached FY 2021/2022 Proposed budget
 - Sue attended the Lightning Session held by the SB, requesting:
 1. Raising Social Services Budget to \$40,000
 2. Level funding for Community Fund

3. Reviewing charters for both funds
 - Sue will be sharing information with the committee in order to develop a plan to refine the proposal based on Selectboard feedback. Lou will work with her on this proposal in the coming weeks.
 - Sue (and Jessica Brumsted) attended a seminar that was held on topic of affordable housing shortage online offered by VT Senator Kesha Ram-Hinsdale. The shortage of housing is acute & will not be solved quickly.
2. Update on housing and food issues – discussion was led by Sue on the roundtable issues raised for possible action items. See highlighted items from 9/22/21 roundtable discussion.

General agreement that in the interim since the discussion, and based upon the report from Tricia Tyo, many of Shelburne's immediate issues may decline, particularly while the Days Inn is closed for renovation. The topic should be reviewed for further action at an upcoming meeting later in the year to determine follow up required. Sue will consider reporting back to the Selectboard, if they have time available.

New Business

1. VT FoodBank, \$2000– application criteria reviewed and determined to meet standard of eligibility
Application approved by unanimous vote.
2. VABVI, \$500- application criteria reviewed and determined to meet standard of eligibility
Application approved by unanimous vote.

Next Meetings: Originally scheduled for Nov. 24, & Dec. 29. **Committee agreed to amend the meeting dates due to proximity with seasonal holidays to be November 17 and December 15 at 6:30 PM.**

Final comments: Patricia noted for the record that we were all thankful for the leadership and diligence in presenting to the Selectboard the need to support the committee's work.

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn 1st by Linda and 2nd by Patricia. All were in favor; the motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Louis Maguire