

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**AD HOC HOUSING STABILITY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, September 14, 2022**

**3:00 PM**

**Council Chambers**

**Members Present:**

Mayor George S. Hansel, Chair  
Councilor Bryan Lake  
Doug Iosue  
Natalie Darcy  
Steven Bragdon  
Jennifer Seher  
Stacie Pickford  
Joshua Meehan  
Craig Henderson

**Staff Present:**

Rebecca Landry, Communications &  
Marketing Director/Assistant City  
Manager

**Members Not Present:**

Jennifer Alexander

**1) Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Hansel called the meeting to order at 3:16 PM. Roll call attendance taken.

**2) Approval of Minutes**

Councilor Lake motioned to approve, motion seconded Josh Meehan. Unanimous approval of minutes.

**3) NHCarePath Housing Discussion**

Ms. Rebecca Landry introduced Ms. Jennifer Seher and noted that she had invited her to speak about the documents and resources that were included in the last agenda packet. Ms. Seher said she believed this committee had taken a stance about being creative and not recreating the wheel and using existing initiatives. One such initiative in NH is actually based on a federal administration on community living federal funding directive called No Wrong Door. There are many initiatives out there right now based on this idea of “one stop”. It is essentially a community network team, that was established with funds from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to be a one stop place where people could tell their story one, have it documented,

and clients would agree to have that information shared with providers that they have agreed they would like to have working with them.

This program was the seed for ServiceLink. Their focus is on long-term care, but also being a one-stop for anyone who is in need and in desire of staying in their own home and needs help to determine what they need to be able to do so. Federal initiative of NHCarePath and by contract the community mental health center, MDS, ServiceLink, the agency on aging and disability resource center and the district office that determines Medicaid eligibility are all contracted and required to participate. This means New Hampshire has a regular CarePath team and the State has insisted that those players are at the table because they have the authority to determine eligibility and applicable services. Ms. Seher has sent all this because she sees that it exists already and while it is not tied into housing initiatives, maybe Keene can model how to take these pieces and model how to connect them. The Housing First movement is based on the same concepts and there just needs to be a place that takes existing initiatives and connects to the other providers. She posed the question to the group of how can we model these initiatives and make them more meaningful at the human level and at the individual level. In order for people to be sustainably housed, they have to want to be and have to have a plan of what they want/what they think they need and she believes the Housing First model has that in it, but does not have the systems aspect in it.

Basic principle of the program, if working well, would include a person-centered plan where an assessment is done no matter what door they entered to determine what they want/need and the person would be able to guide the conversation to identify needs as well as wants and puts them together in a person centered plan. It is then all on paper; agreements are all there as the person has identified involved agencies and provided permission/approval for their information to be shared.

Mr. Josh Meehan noted that Housing First is what it sounds like- person is housed first and services are brought to the individual as need and want is identified. It has been shown that this is the most successful way. He asked where is No Wrong Door locally now and if there is not a spot, what is needed currently to get there.

Ms. Seher responded that this team of people with a representative from each of the following attending: Service Link, the Community Mental Health Center, the area agency on aging, the Department of Health and Human Services. This group meets every quarter and Service Link has been designated as the facilitator. There is nothing that needs to be reinvented, but the question is whether we can turn those meetings into a wraparound care model for unsheltered individuals. Essentially, it would be a social worker or someone trained in person-centered planning model and their role would be similar to a care navigator serving as a direct point of contact for the person and a connection point to all available services.

Mr. Meehan asked whether that person exists. Ms. Seher explained that right now, Service Link staff are the only ones statewide that are trained and billable. It exists, but not in a targeted way in conjunction with housing.

Ms. Stacie Pickford said while she loves the transitional housing model and the services available, the problem is the availability of housing. She questioned how the Housing First model would be able to work with limited available housing.

Chair Hansel said the point is to get to a recommendation that we can include in the report and include in the topic.

Mr. Meehan added that Keene housing participates in a demonstration program called Moving to Work Deregulation Demonstration Program, which provides regulatory approval to try new things. It is essentially a Housing First pilot with SAU 29 to house families of students at Franklin and Symonds schools. He added that what they do well is the housing part, but the other services are not their forte and are not their area of expertise. Part of why Keene Housing thinks we might be successful is because the skeleton of it exists. These families can forget about the waitlist- they will get housing right away and Keene housing will help them. Mr. Meehan agreed with Ms. Pickford and said the housing stock just does not exist here.

Ms. Seher explained there are some things that if you work in the adult services world, there are rules that say there cannot be waitlists, but there are waitlists. Currently, a great plan can be created, but then there are all these barriers and to get SUD treatment, you have to jump through all these hoops to get it. Identifying a trained individual to walk them through the plan in an empowering way rather than a judgmental way.

Ms. Landry asked Mr. Meehan how many families are on a waiting list for housing. Mr. Meehan responded and said there are over two thousand households (just over one thousand from Keene or close to Keene). He noted that being on this list does not mean that they are homeless.

Ms. Landry was honest and stated she was overwhelmed and would like to get to a point where the group can come up with actionable ideas that can be included in the report to the Council.

Chair Hansel thinks it is important to identify an organization that is willing and capable to offer a service or take on a program like this. He does not believe it is the City.

Ms. Seher said one of the key things is identifying a trusted broker in order to expand the Collaborative Approach to Public Goods Investments (CAPGI). Chair Hansel added that one thing we might want to include in the report is to identify the partner as an actionable item.

Ms. Pickford stated she submitted something about quality of life task force on an area much larger than Keene. She noted Kevin MacLean from with Monadnock Family Services (MFS) has

run something similar facilitating people from different sectors coming together and working together.

Ms. Seher noted that what Ms. Pickford is discussing ties into NH CarePath. She questioned whether this report could help push this forward and offer up a carrot or incentive for someone to step up. Ms. Seher believes there is room for the State to provide support.

**4) Collaborative Approach to Public Good Investments (CAPGI) Discussion**

Mr. Len Nichols is a researcher and professor at George Mason University who has done research to show there is economic incentive for agencies to work collaboratively. UNH brought the CAPGI evidence-based model to New Hampshire and Ms. Seher asked if they would be willing to engage and advise. She noted that this is available in NH, and this organization is looking for communities who are willing to embrace this idea of partners working together in a more formal way and are willing to support us. She added that there is funding available for seed money and that a trusted broker would need to be identified as a leader - the United Way is the trusted broker in Ohio's CAPGI initiative – but that it cannot be led by a hospital.

Chair Hansel asked if any questions. With no questions, they moved on to the next topic.

**5) Update on State of Housing Funding and Programs**

Mrs. Natalie Darcy updated on the State Housing and Ethics Resolution that has been come up with through the New Hampshire Local Welfare Association to bring all the local welfare resources together. This was done to try create some sort of unity there. It was a good faith effort to explore resources after it was identified that none were reasonably available.

Once someone has lived in a community for 30 days the welfare responsibility is with that community. The resolutions clarifies this responsibility. If individuals have been in a town for 30 days like Jaffrey for example, and are now in Keene and have paid a month of your own stay at a hotel. You then become the responsibility of Keene. This has been put out to the body of welfare directors to clarify.

As far as housing action and programs go, she asked Mr. Craig Henderson to speak.

Mr. Henderson said the New Hampshire Emergency Rental Assistance Program is going strong. Southwestern Community Services (SCS) put out more than a million dollars in one week. They expect that the program will go through this year and into 2023. They have a lot of good news on funding. They submitted an emergency solutions grant, about 1-2 months ago which has been approved for 4-5 years and for 1.5 million dollars. He noted that while they can never truly say how long the money will last, there is certainly more money in the agency now. Anyone who had State grant and aid from the state so anyone offering housing was offered some of the 5 million and 1 million went towards existing or creating warming shelters, the other four went to the shelters that already had that money and it was based on bed capacity.

Mr. Henderson noted that it will put a much needed funding stream in keeping staffing available to keep working and pointed out that there are lots of good things on the horizon. Lastly, he said that the State put in supplemental notice of funding, submitted an RFP to be a subcontractor, and were given outreach money for about 3 years for a total of about three hundred thousand dollars. This money will cover outreach services for both counties, Cheshire and Sullivan.

Mr. Henderson spoke to housing first and said SCS is the regional hub of coordinated entry. They work with Hundred Nights, and other organizations with homeless individuals can connect with us through 211 and outreach. Their focus is housing and the goal would be to have case conferencing where SCS would work with multiple agencies. He added that while the housing first model is good, many property owners have problems with it because they worry about what happens after the person is housed and whether services will be available. To have these wraparound services available might alleviate some of that. If we build it, they will come. He personally has twenty percent of his tenants as Keene Housing recipients. It protects against inflation and serves as guaranteed money. If agencies came together to make homelessness a priority and made sure there were resources there for those involved, property owners would be more willing to work with us and have some reassurance. Mr. Meehan said this is why they are characterizing this plan as a pilot, because we are forcing conversations that are not happening. If it can be pulled off successfully, then there is a plan that can be scaled up. Chair Hansel added a hub is not good without any spokes.

Ms. Seher noted that there have been many attempts at trying to figure this out. One thing she liked about having the CAPGI model is she believes it has been a mistake have a hospital system so strongly leading these efforts in the past. She believes this is an opportunity for community-based providers to commit and decide what that looks like. There is more capacity if we can show and demonstrate the collaborative nature of the services. The Urban Institute has money to help organizations seed this work and she believes the state has funding in their own little way.

Chair Hansel noted that the State has made it clear that they are open to communities taking lead in addressing homelessness. Ms. Seher said the other thing the state is also invested in the fact that people are getting older and the cost of having individuals incarcerated or ending in nursing homes and interested in helping innovate projects that can keep people in their homes.

With no further questions or comments, Chair Hansel suggested Ms. Landry move to the draft preview.

## **6) Committee Report Outline Program**

Ms. Landry handed out the draft report outline to committee members. She had taken the notes from all the meetings and tried to “bucket” the topics into categories. Up to today, there has not been significant actionable outcomes.

She noted that this is a starting draft and identified the need to scope this out and remember that this is a City committee responsible for taking ideas to the City Council.

She suggested starting the report with an introduction that states the problem and the desired outcomes.

In talking about recommendations, she sorted them into housing development, affordable housing development, shelter services and regional coordination opportunities and then a summary or conclusion. Within housing development, topics discussed were prioritizing new multi-family development, alignment with state housing goals, opportunities for housing in the commerce district, Invest NH.

Affordable housing topics included the needs analysis being conducted by the City, accessory dwelling units, opportunities for detached accessory dwelling units, maximize use of existing structures, education around code, reduce barriers to subsidized housing, reducing barriers seemed to be a common theme and Ms. Landry said that is something the group should take note of. NH CarePath and CAPGI, NH Council on Housing Stability has been a resource.

Shelter services identified that with emergency rental assistance funding, the lack of case management has been discussed. Implementing case management to increase transition to shelter and housing, identifying and reducing resistance to housing, collecting and reviewing data across the state, increasing outreach, increasing resources for mental health support and there have also been a number of conversations around camping and how to help transition people to shelters and housing solutions. Discussions also included the need to review current housing initiatives and try to bring initiatives together. There was mention a few meetings ago about increased transportation between communities for people to access services.

Ms. Landry asked the group if topics needed to be moved to another category, to please speak up.

Chair Hansel and Doug Iosue thanked Ms. Landry for organizing and putting this together.

Chair Hansel said he found it useful in another committee when there was a directive to break it down to the top ten.

Mr. Steve Bragdon noted that while he does not have a lot of practical knowledge, he felt joy when Chair Hansel suggested breaking this down into ten recommendations. He noted that for someone not in this world, it is difficult to get a handle on. He suggested breaking down this list into ideas that make sense to the average person who is not involved in the service community.

Chair Hansel asked the group what we need to do to get this list into 10 recommendations.

Ms. Landry said she was hoping to get some consensus around the buckets and whether they are appropriate. She believes the work and value of this committee is going to be to identify what are those 8, 10 or 12 things are.

Chair Hansel said there is some expectation from the community for us to think outside the box and that the discussion today was useful. We should put that call out to the community for an organization to step forward to be that “hub”.

Ms. Pickford noted multi-family, especially family friendly housing along with the County affordable housing trust, gap funding as part of the ten-year plan. Ms. Landry asked Ms. Pickford for information on housing trust.

Mr. Henderson suggested breaking it down to short-term versus long-term. How many people do we have on average? How many new people come in each year? What is the magnitude of the problem before we move forward? He noted that research and data gathering is going to be key to convey to the communities what is being faced.

Councilor Lake said the top thing he would like to highlight is needing additional resources around the city of social services and outreach.

Mr. Iosue said under camping, it was worded helping transition to shelter and housing solutions. He noted that not everyone is going to be amenable to the structures or what society thinks that should look like. He asked whether there are going to be other alternatives to those who choose not to engage in the typical service delivery system.

Ms. Seher added she believes an easy solution is to integrate services into the system that is already there. She noted the importance of having integrated access and assessment services. A real thing is to start having a person-centered entry for people identified by the police or the hospital, for example. How do we leverage the existing services available, truly start to work together, and how do we put it into nonprofessionals’ terms.

Chair Hansel recommended formalizing the City’s social services group meetings. Ms. Seher responded that her organization is not presently involved in that group.

Chair Hansel suggested if anyone had any further ideas to e-mail them to Ms. Landry.

## **7) Communication**

Ms. Landry let the committee know that communications from Ms. Pickford were included in the agenda packet.

## **8) Future Agenda Topics**

Next meeting is first Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup> at 3pm

The Mayor opened the meeting to public comment.

Dave chandler, of Langdon place, wants to thank the committee for this fine summary and good to see something in black and white that we can all understand. He stated he would like to mention or expand on something Doug Iosue brought up, which is the idea of transitioning to shelters and housing solutions. He believes it is a good way to look at camping and we want that

to happen. While it may take a lot of convincing as some people are resistant, the transitional process is a good way to look at it. The idea of providing a parking area for people to sleep in their car for month or so is a good way to look at this transitional program and is something the committee could focus on. He suggested the parking area over by the pickle ball courts might be a great area to do this and could even install some cameras. It could be a way to facilitate and ameliorate some of the issues.

Tom Julius, a resident of Gilsum and chair of Monadnock Interfaith Project (MIP), noted he was speaking for himself. He noted that Mr. Bragdon brought up education and Mr. Julius agrees and thinks it is extremely important and framing ideas in ways that allow the public to buy into the suggestions. To reflect on meeting from last week, what was evident to him was that there are many entities within the city whose activities are focusing on people who are unsheltered and requiring a lot of their time and resources and the overriding impression was that it was a very ineffective way to utilize all those people. Coordination of those resources are going to be crucial in moving forward. Deeply appreciative of everyone's time and energy on this. He added that the Monadnock Interfaith Project is working on a proposal on increasing the number of units available by creating incentives for developers to price units targeted and affordable to people under fifty percent or even thirty percent. The free market is great at creating upper level housing, but very hard to price housing under thirty percent area medium income and make a profit. MIP is leaning into a project with incentives to offer units at those prices. He encouraged the idea that people who are currently camping on private land and creating challenges for the city and resident, that having options that they can go to before they get into more permanent housing is a crucial piece.

**9) Adjournment**

Chair Hansel adjourned the meeting at 4:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Rebecca Landry, ACM/Communications & Marketing Director