

**CITY OF LEBANON
TASKFORCE ON HOMELESSNESS
WEDNESDAY AUGUST 10, 2016
CITY HALL WEST MEETING ROOM
10:00 AM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Interim City Manager Paula Maville; Human Services Director Lynne Goodwin; Police Chief Richard Mello; City Councilor Bruce Bronner; City Councilor Karen Liot Hill; Director of Silent Warriors Bev McKinley; Executive Director of The Upper Valley Haven Sara Kobylenski;

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Maville called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 29, 2016

A MOTION by Lynne Goodwin to accept the July 29, 2016 minutes as included in the August 10, 2016 Meeting Agenda packet. Unanimous in favor of accepting the minutes.

III. DISCUSSION ITEMS – taken out of the order listed in the August 10, 2016 Meeting Agenda

C. Liability/Legal Issues

Ms. Maville said she was not able to learn anything new since last meeting regarding the City's liability and legal position related to the encampment. She said she would provide the information as soon as she had it, which she hoped would be before the next meeting, or bring it to next meeting.

A. Report on Status of Alternative Emergency Housing/ B. Report on Status of Needs Assessment (Known Encampment Residents)

Ms. Kobylenski stated she and the other human services groups had been working with the list that Ms. Goodwin had compiled which identified 15 individuals in 12 households as the initial encampment residents. She said resolutions had developed for 10 of those 15 individuals – either on their own or with help from human services agencies. She said the remaining five still options or opportunities other than the encampment. She said the need for an emergency shelter did not seem to be as critical as finding solutions for individuals was. She said elusiveness on the part of the individuals has been a big part of the problem to finding solutions for the remaining five.

Ms. McKinley noted that there did not seem to be a solution for the “revolving door” situation at the camp – that as soon as one person was moved out into a home, another one moves into the vacated space. Chief Mello stated this continues to be a problem.

Councilor Hill arrived at 10:13 a.m.

The group agreed that the message to anyone interested in moving into the encampment is that it is not legal place to live and people should be directed to Ms. Goodwin at the City Human Services

Department. The group also discussed the viability of getting solutions for all 15 individuals by the end of August/Labor Day, but was not certain that could be attained.

Councilor Bronner asked about bringing the ordinance, first presented in June 2016, back to the City Council for action. Ms. Maville said it could be brought back to a future City Council meeting in September, after the end of the month, if that were set as a goal to have options for the 15 known individuals at the encampment.

Chief Mello and the group discussed how the ordinance (once approved) would be enforced once options are made available to the individuals. Ms. Maville said if the ordinance is approved in September, it would be important to give people at the encampment a deadline or date by which to vacate the camp and to provide information for City and local service agencies to help them find alternate living arrangements.

Councilor Hill stated she was in favor of modifying the proposed ordinance with an affirmative defense and that it would show that the City's intention is help people move from homelessness to a stable place. She said it builds in a safeguard for people who are working with service agencies to find permanent homes. The group agreed legal review would be necessary if such a modification were made to the proposed ordinance.

Ms. Maville said she and Chief Mello could craft language related to affirmative defense, send it for legal review and then include it in the task force's recommendation as a written report to City Council with the ordinance.

Ms. Kobylenski noted that NH Legal Aid is aware of this situation, and suggested NH Legal Aid should be included in the review process. She also suggested that some of the individuals who are being helped could also be included in the discussion to voice their needs and fears about the encampment.

Ms. Kobylenski said the services group team had also discussed on-going, efficient systems that can easily be implemented to prevent future crisis/situations, and that the services group team will continue to meet. Ms. Goodwin noted that even though solutions are found for these individuals, it doesn't mean they may not wind up homeless again. Councilor Hill said the establishment of the team that will continue to work on an on-going basis is a positive step toward managing the homelessness situation in the City. Ms. Kobylenski noted that the team will meet again on August 23, 2016.

The group discussed other encampment areas in the City, and how the ordinance would be applied to all once adopted. Chief Mello stated the issue will not go away, but the ordinance provides a way to manage the situation.

Ms. Kobylenski said one issue of this situation that is not being addressed in the City is the mental health issue. She said it would be important to invite mental health agency members to join the service group team so that aspect of the situation could be represented and addressed by the team.

IV. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Maville set the next task force meeting for August 26, 2016. She said the services group team would have met and can report on its additional work, and she would bring any further liability/legal information that she was able to receive from the City's attorneys.

Councilor Bronner asked if a sign could be posted that the land at the encampment is City property. Chief Mello suggested that a sign be posted once the ordinance is ready to be approved. Councilor Hill suggested language about signs be included in the ordinance.

Councilor Hill asked if the ordinance could be ready for the Council for the September 21, 2016 City Council Meeting. The group said it could possibly be ready, depending on the work of the services group team and the cooperation of the individuals.

Ms. McKinley suggested flyers be posted at the community dinners and other program events to provide additional education about the situation and to direct people in need to City/local services programs and that the encampment is not a legal or viable residence option.

Councilor Hill asked that the City follow up before the August 26 meeting with the citizen who had offered to provide dumpsters and other services at the June 2016 public hearing. The group suggested talking to him and letting him know more about the encampment living situation and offer other ways he could help that do not enable the encampment.

V. OTHER BUSINESS - none

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Maville at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paula Roux
Recording Secretary