

The Chautauqua County Homeless Coalition



Promoting a uniform response to the needs of the homeless in our community

NYS Executive Order No. 151 Multi-Agency Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 14, 2016

Connections North Parent Conference Room
10825 Bennett Road, Dunkirk, NY 14048

In Attendance: *See attached sign-in sheet*

1. Welcome & Introduction:

Today's meeting was called to order at 1:02 pm by Bill Vogt, Housing Director of Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. and Chairperson of the Chautauqua County Homeless Coalition. All attendees introduced themselves by name and agency.

2. State of New York Executive Order No. 151 – Emergency Declaration Regarding Homelessness During Inclement Winter Weather:

Governor Cuomo's Executive Order No. 151 was distributed for review ahead of time and copies were also available at today's meeting. Bill Vogt gave an overview of the Executive Order and opened the meeting for discussion of current plans and resources that are in place within the County.

3. Multi-Agency Discussion, Resources and Strategies for Enforcement of EO 151:

Marge Basile Johnson of Department of Health & Human Services stated that those needing assistance are helped during normal business hours with referrals through COI. They currently have after hours arrangements with area motels/hotels and are working with law enforcement as a temporary plan at this point. The Sheriff's Department expressed concern that dispatch is usually very busy during inclement weather and they are hoping to create the best plan to not burden the system moving forward. Discussion was held over having law enforcement work directly with the motels/hotels at a local level to alleviate the burden on dispatch. Health & Human Services agreed to provide the updated motel/hotel list and authorization form to the Sheriff's Department who will then pass it on to all local Police Departments. Other agencies, such as local hospitals, Department of Mental Hygiene, Mobile Crisis, etc, asked about the possibility of accessing the authorization form so as to avoid having to call for Police transport after hours. DHHS has concern over a loss of control if too many agencies have access to this form and requests that all other options for housing are explored first and that the use of a motel/hotel should be an after hours, last resort option only. Agencies interested in having access to the authorization form should email Marge Basile Johnson at johnsonm@co.chautauqua.ny.us. DHHS also stated that every attempt to make contact with an individual housed in a motel/hotel will be made on the next business day by their agency. Law enforcement is also requesting an official protocol for the use of the motel/hotel authorization form.

It was also noted that if an individual has mental or substance abuse issues, housing them overnight in a motel/hotel is not appropriate. Law enforcement officials added that if an individual poses a threat to themselves or others they will be transported involuntarily to a hospital/facility under code 941 (Mental Hygiene Law). Otherwise, an individual cannot be forced to be transported to a shelter. State Police, Sheriff's Department, Dunkirk Police

Department and Jamestown Police Department all indicated they are willing to transport individuals in need of and willing to accept shelter within reason. On behalf of the Homeless Coalition, Bill Vogt thanked law enforcement for their willingness to do this.

Discussion was held in regards to daytime temperatures under 32 degrees and any resources that can be used as warming shelters. Norma Cummings of the Office of Emergency Services stated that there is nothing operating on a regular basis due to a lack of funding and other resources. A suggestion was made to reach out to fire stations, schools or other public buildings. Norma noted that these facilities are already struggling with no resources on an ongoing basis, but if there is enough volunteer interest this may be a possibility. She also stated that with many faith-based organizations combining resources lately, housing previously used for pastors is now empty and could be a possible consideration for emergency services housing in the future. Bill Vogt reported that Community Helping Hands does have the Gateway Center serving as a warming shelter and they are open to providing more depending on the resources that are available. Patti Yokom of the Youth Bureau will reach out to the Salvation Army to identify any possibility of developing a warming shelter.

It was also noted that the need for shelters in the area is very high now, especially with the closing of Union Gospel Mission in Jamestown and Willow Mission in Dunkirk. Roberta Keller of COI stated that this is an opportunity for a coordinated group to open a shelter that would serve the entire county and work with initiatives to move individuals served from crisis into a stable situation.

Currently within the County, the list of resources to serve homeless needs is as follows:

- COI - Safe House for youth under age 18.
- COI – 3 single-family homes for families with children.
- Salvation Army – Agnes Home for domestic violence victims.
- YWCA Jamestown – Transitional housing for women & children (with application process).
- COI – Transitional living for youth ages 16-21 (with application process).
- STEL & HOME – Permanent supportive housing, voucher-based programs, rental units with subsidies and supportive services (referral and application process).

Bill Vogt provided the following statistics on individuals who were homeless or at risk for homelessness in Chautauqua County for 2015:

Individuals Served	853
Adults (18+)	575
Youth/Children	278
Male/Female	50/50 split
Self-Reported Mental Issues	39
Self-Reported Substance Abuse Issues	29
Single Person Households	300
2 Parent Family Households	288
Single Female Head of Households	151
Single Male Head of Households	50

Prior to receiving services, these individuals were staying in the following situations:

Emergency Shelter	73
Hotel/Motel	15
Place Not Meant for Human Habitation	56
Hospital	1
Substance Abuse Center	6

On a positive note, it was announced that the two parties involved in discussions to possibly re-open the Union Gospel Mission in Jamestown will hold a meeting with attorneys present next week. Gina Ward of STEL and the Homeless Coalition added that the Coalition is willing to assist with the re-opening of this shelter.

4. 2016 Point-In-Time Count:

Bill Vogt gave an overview of the upcoming Point-In-Time (PIT) count of the homeless which is required by HUD. This year's count will be conducted Thursday, January 28, 2016, from 4:00 am – 8:00 am. Notification letters were sent earlier in the week to local law enforcement. Police Department officials requested that a list of volunteer vehicle descriptions also be submitted by calling the Communication Center the day of the count. Gina Ward is the PIT Coordinator and will coordinate this request. All meeting attendees were encouraged to contact Gina if there are known locations where homeless individuals frequent. Volunteers for the count are also needed and welcome. Gina can be contacted at 716-484-1526 or wardg@stel.org.

5. Adjourn:

Bill Vogt opened the meeting to any additional questions or input. There being no further comments the meeting was adjourned at 2:14 pm.

Any agencies interested in becoming members of the Chautauqua County Homeless Coalition are welcome to contact Bill at 716-661-9430, ext. 2231 or bvogt@chautopp.org, or Lori Del Nero at 716-661-9430, ext. 2230 or ldelnero@chautopp.org.