

Hartford Ad Hoc Committee on Coronavirus Response Meeting Minutes

5/15/20 @ 4:00 PM | Via Zoom

Committee Attendance: Kristi Clemens (Chair), Sue Buckholz (Vice-Chair), Simon Dennis (Secretary), Becky Chollet, Barbara Farnsworth, Dan Fraser, Brannon Godfrey, Brett Mayfield, Martha McDaniel, Deborah Scribner, Gail Ostrout, Scott Cooney, Becca White, Chuck Wooster

Community Attendance: P.J. Skeehan, Kevin “Coach” Christie

Kristi Clemens called the meeting to order at 4:04, took attendance, and called for amendments or a motion on the minutes of 5/8/20.

Martha McDaniel moved to pass the meeting minutes of 5/8/20, Becky Chollet seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Town Updates

Brannon Godfrey reported that there is a COVID Testing Clinic in effect at UVAC ~~the High School Auditorium~~ on Saturday. Today’s Order from the Governor made only minor adjustments. But these will not affect the in-office employment. Some concerns regarding first responders: the police department has been stretched thin with reduced outside support from State and local mental health services that had been provided pre-covid. This is currently an unsustainable situation. And the State is considering following support employees. The Town is issuing a statement to the Governor to call for additional support. Martha asked what professional Town’s people can do to help. Brannon answered that public shows of support would be helpful. Letter to the Editor of the VN. Brett mentioned that volunteering with the Haven when they are distributing meals would be a big help. Brett reinforced the point that the Police Officers are working very hard. More personal interaction with voucher residents is needed. Becky mentioned again the value of sending a regular message out. Chuck mentioned social media as a method for spreading positive messages.

Brett Mayfield reported that some businesses are confused about opening up. Brett has been working on supporting them.

Some conversation followed about the swab testing to take place on Saturday.

Hartford Resident Incident

Kristi suggested that we may have contributed to an atmosphere of othering through sending out the letter to out-of-state homeowners. Brannon said that he did not feel that the Letter was responsible. Brett mentioned that he had received 17 phone calls from people who received the letter and not one negative response. Chuck reported that they had checked in with the family to which the statements were directed. He is pondering what we can do as a town to foster a sense of community. Brannon said that at a Staff Meeting recently it was recognized that there are not special events and ice cream socials at this time. Coach Christie said that we have frustrated people, and it hurts to have members misrepresenting our community to others. The best we can do is to keep getting the good word out. Sue and others mentioned that there may be value

in printing an open letter signed by many individuals in the community in the Valley News. Chuck said he would create a draft.

Masks

Martha reported that we don't have enough masks to meet current needs in the town. The more we can offer in a gentle sort of way, the better. Options include having enough mask makers to do the work and reimburse for mask making. An idea that has been floated is to say on a highway sign: My Mask Protects You, Your Mask Protects Me or something to this effect.

Should the Selectboard suggest that the State Legislature require people to wear masks? Should the Selectboard require that people wear masks? Brannon said that this is a pretty compliant community. There is a culture that wants to model good behavior. Becky said she is developing signs for the businesses doors. Sue Buckholz said that constitutionality of a mask ordinance needs to be considered. Brett said that the Governor said he would increase the regulations if it was reported that people/businesses are not following the regulations. No conclusions were reached on this subject.

Barbara said that the Food Distribution Group (to voucher residents) HCC, UVRT, Haven, LISTEN, and others.

Support the Economy

Brannon reported that the survey responses were back and had been organized. The Group will continue to review the surveys. The discussion about potential HBRLF forgivable loans continues. The committee's concern is that the Fund has given out loans over the years and they are all on payment plans. If businesses are given out for forgivable loans it would constitute a contradiction of past practices. This conversation will continue.

Subgroup Structure

Martha McDaniels mentioned that Community Morale is really important. A Communications Subgroup was also mentioned. It was agreed that we would take up this matter at a subsequent meeting.

Sue Buckholz moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:34. Deborah seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at that time.

Submitted by Simon Dennis, Committee Secretary