

**Public Safety Board
- Subcommittee on Homelessness -
APPROVED Minutes**

**March 8, 2024 (12:00 PM)
City Council Chambers**

In Attendance:

Andrew Biemer, Stefanie Breton (Guest), Serina Chase (Minutes), Fire Chief John Chisholm, Jessica Eskeland (Chair), Councilor Jeff Foote, Deputy Fire Chief Mark Hebert, Councilor Jennifer Kretovic, Nicole Petrin, Councilor Jim Schlosser

Introductions:

The meeting was called to order at 12:00pm.

Approval of February 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes:

Motion made by Councilor Jennifer Kretovic to approve the February 16, 2024 meeting minutes. Nicole Petrin seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

SOAR Program representative/information update (Councilor Kretovic / Guest):

Jessica Eskeland began by notifying the subcommittee that the SOAR Program presentation will be rescheduled for the next meeting in April 2024.

Councilor Jennifer Kretovic also notified the subcommittee that she recently had a conversation with Deputy Police Chief Moulton who has some additional information that he would also like to share with the subcommittee about SOAR. She also briefly shared her own insight into the SOAR Program.

Jessica Eskeland suggested it might be beneficial to have the SOAR Program available to the full Public Safety Advisory Board. Councilor Kretovic explained that the presentation should first be made available to the subcommittee. After that, a recommendation could be made to make the SOAR presentation available to the entire Public Safety Advisory Board. Councilor Kretovic then briefly shared some further insight into the SOAR Program.

Monthly homeless data from Merrimack County counts (Councilor Schlosser):

Councilor Jim Schlosser shared his findings regarding statistical data provided by the state Homeless Management Information System. He also explained a national program called Coordinated Entry and explained the assessment factors of being placed in its rank ordered queue system.

Several clarifying questions were asked regarding Coordinated Entry's vouchers and how people are entered into the system.

Councilor Schlosser then commented that the data provided is good but it is not great due to some under and over estimations. However, he stated that the data is the best we have at this time. He then expanded on these under and over estimations issues.

Further clarifying questions were asked regarding the inconsistent enrollment of homeless persons into Coordinated Entry, GIS related costs, and vouchers.

Jessica Eskeland asked what the major takeaways were. Councilor Schlosser said that bounding the information is important and that the trends of the data are informative.

Councilor Foote mentioned that he was interested in learning the total amount of money that the City is spending on homelessness and the effectiveness of what is being done. He also mentioned that he is interested in learning more about the criminal aspect of the homeless crisis.

Councilor Schlosser provided a very brief overview of where some of the money being spent on homelessness might be originating from. He also briefly spoke about some modest grants that may be available.

Clarifying questions were asked about the use of the methadone clinic, eligibility for services due to mental illness, and support for those applying for services.

Councilor Foote asked if collecting data on homeless persons is part of the focus of the two new social workers that were hired by the PD. Nicole Petrin said that it was not the entirety of her position – The other social workers position will be more focused on this data collection and outreach.

Jessica Eskeland said that she would also be interested in learning what the total amount of money that the City is spending on the homelessness effort. She also mentioned that she is interested in getting information regarding homeless related call volumes from the Police Department and Fire Department. Chief Chisholm said that it may be somewhat vague to ask for this information and that specific criteria and a focus would first need to be defined.

Councilor Kretovic said that if we could estimate the number of homeless persons currently in Concord or Merrimack county, we could estimate the October expenses that Fire and Police accrued when responding to calls made by homeless persons. This information can be used as a starting point to understand what the City may be spending on the homelessness effort. She then briefly explained that the City makes contributions to many local charities and organizations that support those affected by homelessness.

A clarifying question was asked regarding the Fire Department's data collection for homeless calls.

Lancaster, PA "Functional Zero Update (D. Biemer):

Andrew Biemer began by explaining that he reached out to municipalities around the country that were as close to functional zero as possible. He also tried to focus on cities of similar size to Concord and also state capitols. The closest he could find was a city in Canada.

He continued that as soon as he compiles all of the remaining data, he will distil it into an abstract which can be sent out to the entire committee and can also be made available to anyone upon request.

Councilor Schlosser mentioned that Roseanne Haggerty is the chair of the Committee for Concord's Plan to End Homelessness. She is also the CEO of Community Solutions that works with many communities around the country to achieve functional zero. He continued that if the subcommittee is able to narrow its focus so as not to duplicate efforts, she can speak to the subcommittee.

Councilor Foote then read an email from a Concord citizen who is concerned about the safety of the Concord due to the homeless crisis. He expressed his own concern for the welfare of the City and those within the City.

Councilor Kretovic and Jessica Eskeland also expressed their own concerns for the welfare of the City and those within the City.

A suggestion was made by Councilor Kretovic to hold subcommittee meetings on the second Friday of every month for consistency. It was also suggested that a beginning time of noon would be best for the meetings.

Set new agenda items:

- SOAR Program representative/information presentation (Councilor Kretovic / Guest)
- Functional Zero update (Andrew Biemer)
- Coalition to End Homelessness update (Councilor Schlosser)
- Emergency response data points (Deputy Police Chief Moulton)

Adjournment:

The meeting was completed at 1:13. No official motion was made to adjourn the meeting.