

## **Hampden Individual Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 4/19/22**

*In attendance: Tanja Alessi, Friends of the Homeless, Ric Avila, Eliot Services, Farida Batura, Mercy Medical Center, Kevin Cavanaugh, Samaratn Inn, Lynn Conway, Eliot Services, Elysse Cooper, Kim Fontaine, Eliot Services, Janice Humason, Friends of the Homeless/CSO, Jay Levy, Eliot Services, Gerry McCafferty, Hampden CoC, Bill Miller, Friends of the Homeless, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Stephanie Tonelli, Springfield PD, Kenyetta Wilson, Friends of the Homeless/CSO*

**2022 Point in Time Count** - See [HERE](#) for the powerpoint shared.

We had a lengthy discussion reviewing the numbers in the powerpoint. A few stand-out findings:

- the number of chronically homeless rose significantly
- the number of unsheltered individuals rose significantly
- the racial and ethnic disparity continues to be starkly disproportionate
- a much higher count in Holyoke, in part a result of pop-up shelters and better capacity to count the individuals; Springfield's number was higher as well
- the number of people counted with serious mental illness or substance use issues is high but also mostly steady over time (but these numbers are self-reported so we can assume that they are in fact higher)

We discussed the value in obtaining the community of origin (not for political purposes but for system response purposes) and brainstormed ways to do that. We discussed the urgent need for greater housing stabilization and treatment services. We discussed the difficulty in using vouchers without sufficient services attached. We discussed the need for specialized affordable housing units that include services, e.g., Safe Havens. As our system is currently structured, in PSH, the responsibility to provide services falls on homeless services providers, but we need more DMH and DPH involvement.

Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV): the earlier decision to NOT distribute EHV's to people who are unsheltered (as opposed to people in shelter) no longer makes sense given the need. Gerry will revisit this with the Board next week.

### **Network announcements:**

- The Senate is debating the Supplemental Budget for FY22 – big ramifications for rental assistance and eviction protections – see [this blog post](#) and call your senator!
- Be sure to [register for the Network annual event](#) on 5/6.
- The Network is receiving an award from the MA Housing and Shelter Alliance for its commitment to address homelessness. [See here](#) for more. Congratulations everyone!
- The Network introduced its [FY23 budget priorities](#) at a meeting with Western MA legislators last week. It also provided an update to its [legislative priorities](#).
- Stay connected on the blog - [be sure to subscribe!](#)

**Next meeting date: Tuesday, 4/19, 1 pm**