

Craftsbury Neighbor2Neighbor Committee

Meeting Minutes

4/7/22 7pm via Zoom

Attending: Kris Coville, Chair; Susan Houston, SB Liaison; Penelope Doherty, Leslie Taylor, Tim Fritz, Kit Basom, Kim Larose, Nathalie Jonas

Kris welcomed everyone and looks forward to the next meeting in person, in July.

1. **Discuss and approve minutes of the 1/6/22 meeting**

No discussion. Tim moved, Susan seconded, that minutes be accepted as presented. Approved unanimously.

2. **Weekly COVID postings**

The weekly Covid data summary posted on Front Porch Forum has been paused. The committee briefly discussed what factors would merit resumption. Kris is curious whether people are accessing the state's Covid data map to keep informed about current case rates. Brian doesn't think the current uptick in cases warrants more public information being tracked locally. Penelope agreed; she also receives state emails about public health concerns and would alert the committee if action is needed.

Messaging about masking is still important. The Genny, town clerk's office and other places have recently made masks optional for the public and staff. Things seem to be going smoothly there and at school with communications about masking policy changes.

3. **Updates on our two food supply grants**

Kris and Prathana have been meeting to get started. GYO (Grow Your Own) staff in Hardwick is mentoring Prathana; she counts her project administration time as part of the grant. A meeting will be coming up to involve more people. Workshops are being designed, conversations with schools & Sterling are planned.

4. **Consider potential support beyond food during current price increases**

There is a concern that recent sharp rises in gas prices are causing real hardship for some Craftsbury residents.

Discussion: For a while, early in the pandemic response, people could use their CAE cards at C Village for gas or food. Some people have asked Kris recently about getting more cards that could help with gas. N2N has \$6,617 currently allocated in the general fund. Would \$30 gas cards be appropriate in current times? \$50? If we want to recommend using some of N2N's current funds to help people who are struggling with transportation expenses, how would it be distributed? The town doesn't have policies

for the distribution of assistance, but Susie reminded us the town is trying to look through an equity lens. Does a new ask for donations go hand-in-hand with providing this kind of assistance? We could have some gas cards available at the town clerk's office, and publicize that N2N is trying this out and inviting community members to donate to keep it going. We want to ask Michelle first; helping with this project is not included in her job description.

- Kim suggested that we choose wording to help people determine whether a gas card is appropriate for them - for appointments, essential travel, etc. The overall message to be: "This is an emergency need fund. If you need help, let us know."
- Do we even have the ability to make a decision on this? Penelope says yes, since N2N resources have been provided for such needs. The premise of the group is that we are "rapidly responsive". Susan, as SB representative, says it's OK.
- There was a lengthy discussion about the best size of the pilot for this project. Consensus was reached to start with \$30 gas cards, and expenditure of \$1,000. The exact motion (m. Kris, s. Kim) was to allocate \$990.00 of N2N funds toward the purchase of 33 emergency gas cards (@\$30) Motion carried unanimously. Kim and Nathalie will work with Kris on implementation.

5. Local Emergency Operations and Hazard Mitigation Plans

Penelope gave these updates: The town has to update its mitigation plan for the state, in order to get a higher rate of reimbursement in case of emergency need. Toward that end, a survey will be shared via Front Porch Forum and other venues to get input from citizens. Questions will include what impacts have occurred in the past, and what people's concerns are. After the survey has been live for 2 weeks, there will be a public meeting on May 24th to hear results and invite further input. The group will ask organizations such as the Care Center for their input as well.

6. Update on refresh of mutual aid lists and forms

The mutual aid form has been updated on the website, but activity has been quiet. We want to come back to this topic in future: what can we offer the community during "regular" times? We need to revisit the scope of the committee. We will need to have a robust packet of resources in the hands of multiple people if we are to expand the scope. As an example, in Hardwick librarians are involved in N2N and distribute information. Over the next 3 months, our homework will be to mull this over; we'll revisit the topic at our next meeting in July.

7. Reports/Needs/Concerns from representatives

- Food Pantry and Vermont Everyone Eats - Kris. Numbers have been going up approx 10 families per week, likely from rising prices. Volunteers rock! Everyone Eats program has been extended until the end of June.

- Mental Health rep - Kim is updating the MH resources packet, looking for yellow tulips come spring.
- Business/School/Churches rep – Kit. These shoulder seasons are lean times for businesses. Craftsbury has more of an economic base, but in Albany keeping business flowing at the Genny is a real struggle. They are eager for summer to come, though the end of Everyone Eats will pose a challenge. Penelope wondered how other businesses are doing. Planning is moving ahead to have a block party this year.
- Health Officer – Tim. All quiet, nothing to report.
- Emergency Management and Trash – Penelope. Should be back to regular schedules this week, except for occasional staffing shortages.

8. **Other Business**

There was none.

9. **Adjourn**

Tim moved, Penelope seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:21. All in favor.