

**Craftsbury Neighbor2Neighbor Committee**  
Meeting Minutes 7/7/22 7pm  
**IN PERSON at Town Hall**

*In attendance: Kris Coville, Chair; Susan Houston, Select Board Liaison; Penelope Doherty, Leslie Taylor, Kim LaRose*

Kris Coville called the meeting to order at 7:10.

**1. Discuss and approve minutes of 4/7/22 meeting:**

There was no discussion. Kim moved to accept minutes as presented, Penelope seconded. All in favor.

**2. Update on funds and N2N checking account question:**

Neighbor to Neighbor funds are still mingled in the town general fund and the committee should probably have a segregated account and checking account, according to most. Penelope pointed out that since donations are made to the N2N fund, it is different from other town funds. In case of a crisis, donations may come in quickly; thus we need to have more of a structure in place for handling funds. Penelope will discuss with Michelle and an auditor to determine best practices. We believe a N2N checking account would need to have at least 2 designated signers, one being Michelle.

**3. Reports on gas card initiative and food supply grants:**

**Gas cards** totalling \$990. were printed after our last meeting, and they have been mostly distributed. Michelle has 3 cards left at the town hall, and there are about 10 left at the Food Pantry. One announcement about the availability of the gas assistance was made on Front Porch Forum; otherwise people learned about it via word of mouth.

Discussion ensued about the need for this kind of assistance going forward, and the best ways to conduct outreach efforts. Craftsbury food pantry recipient numbers are up; households served recently are in the high 80's. Hardwick's numbers are up as well. Kris said with transportation and food costs up, people are feeling the crunch again. Gas cards given out due to local referrals seemed necessary. What more could be done to get assistance in the hands of those most in need?

Kris said we could have put notes in food share boxes, or distributed a flier. Kevin Gregoire and Energy Committee members are often in homes and get insights into who is struggling to make ends meet. Other possible outreach partners are firefighters, road crew, school personnel, and Steve Perkins of the hazard mitigation team. If we do the

gas card project again, we want to connect with a more concrete outreach network. However, for the remaining 13 cards we don't need this.

Any future messaging should be along the lines of "Craftsbury has gas cards for residents" to avoid people from other towns thinking they are free for all. Kris will put notes in pantry food boxes, and bring the remaining gas cards to Michelle for distribution to those who express a need.

**Young Leaders grant** - Prathana has been working with Grow Your Own (GYO) to present workshops in self sufficiency. They are planning workshops in seed saving and fermentation. Prathana led the Girls on the Run in a service project through the pantry. Planned school partnerships (Craftsbury, Sterling) have been harder to bring about due to staff transitions.

**Community meat project** - John Smith is keeping two cows across the road from Kris's farm. Tim Fritz has expressed an interest in exploring possibilities with raising chickens for this project. Shelburne Farms is donating 2 young polled Milking Shorthorn steers to the project. Some of the \$4,000 in grant funds was used to buy the two cull cows.

#### 4. **Local Emergency Operations and Hazard Mitigation Plans:**

Penelope reported that the Town's Emergency Operations plan is updated every year, but the Hazard Mitigation plan (for reducing risks from natural hazards through response, recovery and resilience planning) hasn't been updated since 2005. The Town put together a cross functional team to update the plan, and the report is in the final edits stage now. Penelope reviewed proposed mitigation strategies that may have a connection to N2N's role in the future. She mentioned:

- Identifying backup power sources and water for the emergency shelter
- Identifying alternate emergency shelters
- Helping keep local emergency management plan up to date
- Ensuring residents have proper solid waste disposal information
- Functioning of food pantry
- Integration into reviews by welfare administrator
- Winter tire access
- Network of neighbors to help dig out after a big snow event
- Identifying elders at risk

When the plan is done in a few weeks, Penelope will "pull out" N2N related roles. Currently the description of Neighbor to Neighbor reads "an official Town Task Force charged with aiding and supporting the community in times of distress". In other words, our role is to address the human side of disaster management, i.e. food & emotional support.

**5. Refresh of mutual aid lists and forms:**

We plan to refresh the N2N volunteer list by 1) emailing the people on it with a message such as, *The N2N committee is holding this list and will occasionally send out requests for help. Please let us know if you want to be taken off the list.* and 2) adding community outreach for new volunteers 2 times per year (fall and spring). When refreshing the list, we will re-state the mission of the N2N committee and let other town committees know that we have this volunteer bank. Kim clarified that our goal is to keep a bank of community members willing to be called upon when needs arise, and that church members may be an integral part of this effort.

**Capacity/Focus of N2N during usual times:**

Determining this is ongoing.

**6. Reports/Needs/Concerns from representatives:**

- Food Pantry and Vermont Everyone Eats - Kris reported that Everyone Eats will be extended for one year only if FEMA funds are continued. It's possible we could apply for ARPA funds to continue support for Everyone Eats through a designated fund if FEMA funds are not continued.
- Mental Health - Kim reported that the 988 National Life Line is operational, and that a local walk is being planned for this fall.
- Business/School/Churches rep – Kit reported that the Block Party was a huge success.
- Emergency Management and Trash – Penelope reported that Bulky Waste collection day was a big success, with much more waste collected this year. The Town allocates money to provide this service to Town residents, and now people from other towns are inquiring how they can participate.

**7. Next Meeting:**

The next meeting will be October 6th, the first Thursday of October. Kris requested that we have the outreach for new N2N volunteers completed well before the October meeting, and send adequate notice to committee members about the meeting date. Also ask committee members to respond if they are unable to attend.

**8. Adjourn:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Submitted by Leslie Taylor