

## **Veterans Committee Meeting Minutes - 12/18/24**

*In attendance: Megan Benway, VA Outreach, Steve Connor, Veterans Services, Mike Hagmaier, Soldier On, Gerry McCafferty, Hampden CoC, Ann Lentini, Domus, Inc.; Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH; Wendi Warger, Three County CoC*

### **Hampden County CoC Veterans Update:**

- 7 veterans on by-names list; one had a move-in planned for 12/5, another who has VASH is viewing an apt. on 1/6, so may be down to 5
- One is National Guard only, so no eligibility
- One is in family shelter system - connected Way Finder's case worker with VA

**HUD-VASH Outreach:** great outreach team doing great work! Notable aging population (70 and older); no capacity at shelters is also a barrier

### **Discussion and Recommendations: The Network's FY26 budget and legislative priorities**

Pamela sought the group's experiences and perspectives that will inform the Network Steering Committee's decision making for this coming year's budget debate and upcoming Legislative Session.

### **FY26 Budget Recommendations**

We looked at our [FY25 budget priorities](#) as a starting point for discussion. Suggested priorities include:

- RAFT
- MRVP
- Access to Counsel
- Individual shelter funding

### **2025-2027 Legislative Session - begins in January, 2025**

We looked at our [last Legislative Session's priorities](#) as a starting point for discussion. Suggested priorities include:

- Rent control (very difficult to use HUD-VASH vouchers because of high rents) - several voiced this issue as the highest priority
- Access to Counsel
- TOPA
- Transfer Fee for Affordable Housing

### **Announcements**

- [Annual Homelessness Candlelight Vigil Memorial](#) - Sat. Dec. 21, 4-5 pm, First Churches, Northampton

**Next meeting: Wed., March 19, 3 pm**