

Hartford Committee on Housing and Homelessness

March 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes Approved

Members Present: John Haffner (Chair), Jennifer Kravitz (Vice-Chair), Brandon Smith, Dan Nott, Lori Hirshfield (staff), Lexi Webster (staff)

1. Call Meeting to Order

John Haffner called the meeting to order at 6:19PM.

2. Review Order of Agenda

There were no changes to the order of the agenda.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4. Approve January Meeting Minutes

There were no changes to the minutes. Dan Nott made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and Brandon Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

5. Welcome Lexi Webster, Housing and Development Specialist

Lexi Webster, the new Housing and Development Specialist at the Town, introduced herself and provided some background information about her education and experience in grant administration, economic and community development, and housing.

6. Next Steps on Rental Inventory Survey Review

Lexi Webster presented the 3/12/25 draft of the Hartford Rental Housing Inventory. This draft includes average rental rates based on information from the 2024 Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) noting that the rental rates include utilities. Dan Nott had the idea that a similar survey targeted at renters should also be made. It was agreed upon that Lexi Webster and Lori Hirshfield would make the edits which Dan Nott noted to create a second Hartford Rental Housing Inventory survey for renters (instead of only distributing one survey to property owners).

The survey will be available both online and as hard copy. A distribution plan may include targeted outreach (mailing), reaching out to property owners via phone and adding the survey to appropriate town websites. The goal is to give an update to the Hartford Town Manager and then to the Selectboard on 4/1/25. Rollout could start early April. The Department of Planning and Development will handle data collection and assessment.

7. Senior Housing Solutions

Lori Hirshfield suggested that one way for the Committee to start working on senior housing solutions is getting information out in the community about HomeShareVT. Brandon Smith reported that he has heard several stories recently of seniors sharing a large house together (home sharing), but that the owners would like to downsize but cannot afford to.

As a result of the home share conversation, Jen Kravitz is planning to get in contact with the Bugbee Senior Center for HCHH to do a lunch drop-in with seniors to discuss potential housing solutions.

8. Continue to Discuss Solutions for the Unhoused Community

John Haffner reported that the new shelter area from the Upper Valley Haven on Route 5 is moving forward.

Jen Kravitz requested that HCHH buy copies of the “Just Getting By” documentary for all libraries within the Town (Hartford Library, Quechee Public Library, West Hartford Library, and the Wilder Club and Library). She also proposed that a few committee members attend the showings and provide programming/dialogue discussion for the audience afterwards. All members agreed. Jen Kravitz is going to check with each library to ensure that they do not already have the documentary and are interested in having it.

9. News from Committee Members

Jen Kravitz reported that she has become a volunteer at the Upper Valley Haven, which is a nonprofit organization in White River Junction, VT, providing food, temporary shelter, educational programming, and other support services to those in need.

10. Update on Town Website Page on Housing

Dan Nott reported that he is working with Danielle Taylor to get the HCHH website up and running. Lori Hirshfield discussed the planned organization of the website page briefly.

11. Adjourn Meeting

Jen Kravitz made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Dan Nott seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting ended at 7:40PM.

Committee Members

John Haffner, Chair (1/6/2027)

Jennifer Kravitz, Vice Chair (through 4/03/2025)

Dan Nott (through 11/25/2026)

Nancy Trottier (through 9/18/2025)

Maggie Burnett (through 12/11/25)

Brandon Smith, Selectboard Liaison

Lori Hirshfield, Staff Liaison

Lexi Webster, Staff Liaison