

# October ROSC Consortium Meeting

Facilitated by: Michelle Dettwiler and Brittney Card

Attendees: Erica Petcher, Patrick Miller - IL Faith & Recovery Collaborative, Jennifer Carron, Tyler Link, Michelle Wallace with Acorn, Amy Robinson, Patrick Miller, Erica Petcher, Maria Clark, Kelly, Brian Pollo, Carmen Lanham, Bailey Moore, Samantha Hicks, Johanna Gonzalez, Bailey Moore, Becky Hatlee, LM, Carrie McKinzie, Cayla Manns, Jill Dupy, Stephanie Carson (Gateway), Chirsty Blank, Markus, Thomas Srygler, Adrienne Edwards, Whitney Steward, Jon Magnuson, Julie Pohlman, Kevin Schott, Leasha Bennett, Jill Wright, Adam Pennock, Karen Webb, Kenny Ryker, Wayman Meredith, Candi Mazza, Dwayne Gerl, Jacob Fleming, Savannah Holthaus, Chas Swearingen, Charles LeGrande, Derek Graham, Brian Lawton, Lauren Davidson, Greg Santoni, Johanna Gonzalez, Carissa Van Den Berk, Lindsay Minor, Hannah Korunka, Tina Morris.

- Utopia Board Game (like Catan– board about resources to keep ROSC actionable and to keep people involved)–
  - created a list of felony-friendly workplaces
  - If interested in joining, the game is at the back of the room.
  - Charles LeGrande – Pavilion – task for Utopia was to find guest speaker and found one. Available to speak when we are ready for them, let Charles know.
- Approved Sept. Committee Minutes and October Planning Committee Minutes.
- Planning meeting date (missed – next meeting was scheduled to be on Veterans Day, but in turn will be the following Monday instead.)
- Teens for Teens were scheduled to provide a report of their subcommittee but were not able to join. Teens for Teens is a youth subcommittee for the ROSC which focuses on youth activities, action and voice all while they are still active students in the district.
- We wanted to invite Chief Ryker to discuss the ordinance and give the community the chance to ask questions and to get clarification on what the ordinance means for Litchfield. It is very likely surrounding towns will receive homeless populations because of the ordinance and could possibly pass the ordinance in the future.
- This came to the City of Litchfield – as a police system, we sought this out to answer the current problem. The Municipal League came out with a newsletter about the Supreme Court decision on public camping – property owners have a right to decide what activities occur on that property.
- Violation of the ordinance could lead to a fine and misdemeanor/petty offence.
- After the municipal league reached out, we also became aware of communities that set up bedding in front of businesses. BF ordinance only by compliance that people would move; this gives them the ability to advise them they are committing an

offense. Most of the time, we don't have any issues getting people to move, but there have been exceptions. That's why something with an enforcement action makes it easier for the police.

- We have a homeless issue – there is a truck stop that increases it. This problem has been more visible since I started at this job. There used to be more of a transient population that couch surfed – we didn't have people in an area that disrupted other people's movement.
- For state-owned property – States-supported property regulations – you have to get in the way of other people's enjoyment of their property. There are also a lot of other rules and regulations focused on property. This encompasses public libraries, water districts, schools, courthouses, jails.
  - This is under the jurisdiction of the State's Attorney.
  - The state attorney is also not prosecuting offenses – (the current case focused on a park). Not sure if they would prosecute offenses on other state-owned properties.
- *How do they usually handle this?* Usually run into these people through public welfare check – which focuses on welfare, not expectations for people to move. We usually then try to help connect them with services. It's only when it becomes a chronic problem.
  - If you have an encounter with someone who refuses to identify themselves and they are violating the ordinance, you have a right to force that identification to occur. Not sure if there is someone out of state who has a much higher offense which we need to know about.
- *If someone doesn't have ID what happens?* They are only required to provide us with a legitimate name and date of birth. If we do not find them in the system, then we have to ask follow-up questions – which will help us to identify them in the system.
- *Once a person doesn't respond to ordinance regulation – what happens when someone doesn't have an address?* This can result in an arrest warrant, which takes 30 days; then the city Atty will need to have a warrant issued. This likely will be affected by whether a person is still in the area – and if not, it likely will be dismissed. Also, if you have a warrant, you will not get a bond. This is also only good in the county – we will probably not bother with cases that are out of the county. Fines are usually waived.
- *Seems like this ordinance puts punishment bf opportunity for change. No clear protocol related to warnings, and care coordination, etc.* Kenny Ryker agreed there was no progressive discipline in the ordinance – but assured that usually there were warnings occurring before ticket issued.
- *You will be offering services to the individual before you arrest them?* In my case – I work with and have personal cell phone numbers of some of the people in this room. We are aware of resources that exist in our community – we offer those avenues and reach out – we are built that way – as long as contacts exist we will utilize them but there is no way to force that result. There is no intent to punitive for where people land – we know people are in a tough spot – it just becomes a problem

when structures start to be built – this can cause harm to others and people begin to complain. In this room there is a unified mission but outside of this room there is not – and police try to do what they can to please them.

- *When a lot of mental health institutions shut down the homeless population skyrocketed.* We have all seen an increase in cross issues, Meth use crossed with psychotic disorders. There is pressure coming from a lot of directions from people that are the pivot point of where this starts. Someone set up in the middle of railroad property – but he just moved – because there is a specific criminal trespass for railroad property – this just does not occur for public property. It's very difficult to say what you can and cannot allow in a public space. You can be in a dangerous situation, and you just let them stay there? This population had expanded exponentially when they took away services that were state supported; Covid made it worse.
- *Are the fines and fees collected from the ordinance used to help people who are homeless?* If we have to prosecute, have to pay an attorney to do it, if they levy a fine it will be too low (not worth it).
- *Springfield has a huge homeless population, and they have some resources.* Brittney spoke on the fact that a homeless shelter has been brought up several times but many of the community members do not want that in their county, stating that it will bring in more transient individuals. She also spoke about the possibility of an oxford house. Ryker stated this depends on someone who has an insane amount of money to build a shelter – infrastructure within that building has to build so many resources (like counselors), or we just have sleeping rooms. We have that broad spectrum – you would need a ton of money to provide that service. We put people on trains, we drove people to Springfield or St. Louis. This is beyond Litchfield.
- *One of the resources that were lacking is transportation – Litchfield ambulance services have been driving people all the way to Chicago. When people bring people to the emergency room, the hospital covers the cost to transport said individual to Chicago which can cost up to \$8,000 and also takes man hours. This is solely due to the fact that the only choices here are Pavilion, Touchette, and if they are youth there are only two options in the state. Adam and Kenny work together on a daily basis. We paid for airline tickets; we got to the root cause of why someone was homeless. We really need more help close to home because we can't afford to bus people all the way up to Chicago. Karen also stated that she and her staff had purchased plane tickets from their own pocket to get people back home. They cannot continue to do this.*
- *If the State's Attorney won't prosecute, and the unhoused population don't accept resources, what is the city of Litchfield's next step?* We face a situation and try to work through it. This Supreme Court decision gives the right to a public entity, and the ability to trespass someone. But basically – it takes States' attorney or judge to agree. Otherwise, all we can do is continue to cite them. They can get expensive – up to \$750 in fines with \$250 default for not showing up. Ryker also stated that

since the ordinance has been in place, they have yet to have to issue a citation. They usually go along their way or get the help they need.

- *There is growing concern in Gillispie over the issue of homelessness coming across county lines, and many unhoused individuals have stated that they were told to go there via Litchfield Police Department.* If you are a larger city – you are a magnet from smaller cities. We received letters from the Truck stop corporation demanding we keep transient populations from coming to the truck stop. The problem is we can't monitor the truck stop at all hours, and many of the transient individuals are hitching rides from the Truck Drivers themselves.
- *Will you be collaborating with TASC? How much is that program actually providing? Greg Santoni spoke on this.* TASC's biggest hurdle – Choices developed by IL State Police here in Macoupin, Jersey, and Green. Worked with Litchfield police – helped three people in the park and relocated them to Springfield within the last week. The problem is a lot of these homeless people have substance use/mental health issues as well. We are not able to relocate a lot of people – because of the lack of resources, and this reduces trust, and so they are less likely to come to us.
  - Law enforcement trusts each other but does not really trust others. When seeking assistance – it's results-driven – will refer and tell you to reach out if it works. If I need something and I have those connections with law enforcement – I will ask within the organization. I think there is more success to be had. Now, territorially – Green and Calhoun are very rural. The key here would be to find a trusted individual – someone who knows an individual.
- Brittney brought to their attention that a lot of times, when people talk about the unhoused population, they don't think of youth. There were 131 youths that were labeled unhoused just in the City of Litchfield at the end of the 2023 school year. It's not just substance abuse/mental health, it's children displaced because of their environment.
- Jacob Fleming states the officers are very united. Litchfield has many schools that are up for sale, and there has been discussion about creating a homeless shelter. \_\_\_ has Haven Home (Hillsboro). Why not take care of local homeless people before taking in others? I think many people in Litchfield want a Haven Home, but we can't have it be unregulated (like sleeping rooms).
- *Do you feel that there are resources you are lacking that you would need more info on?* My email address (email address) – It is not missing resources, there is a disconnect from some of them, if missing anything, it is coordinators, we have connections to very specific resources (juvenile services, for example, is better). There are a number of police officers who have sat on boards, drug court, locust street, ROSC, 708 Board, etc. Sometimes we miss that people in criminal justice are engaged. There is a good ear here for everyone, if you catch the right ear. I would add that – if you want access to people in crisis, we maybe get inordinate responsibility attached to response to those things. We are not designed for long term; we are designed for quick response. We are still an enforcement agency at

heart, and this is where gaps exist – this is what we want to focus on, not the other things.

- *Fire Chief.* Is the homeless population problem a city of Litchfield problem? Does Hillsboro have a vested interest in it? No, they tried to block it before because it's in a residential neighborhood. Don't just look at local politicians – why are you not fixing them? We could throw a million dollars and solve the problem, but we have to ask Litchfield residents what we need to cut to solve these problems. People come from across state lines and will not return because they think it is more generous here.
- Brittney highlighted St. Francis Way Clinic, across the street from the hospital, is a Mental Health and Substance Use Clinic and we have Nurse Practitioners, Psychiatrists, Substance Use Counselors, and a Practitioner that specializes in dual diagnosis of Mental Health and Substance Use. We are an outpatient clinic but have Case Managers that can help with resources for in patient care if needed.
- November ROSC topic – Homeless Awareness Month – fundraiser event November 16<sup>th</sup> for Hearts United. Hearts United is a local non-profit organization that offers many resources to our unhoused population and this event will be a way to give back to them so that they may continue their efforts. Jon Magnuson will have the RISE food truck, and there will be a bake sale where all proceeds will be going back to Hearts United. Will be sending out flyers soon and keep everyone up to date on any changes.