

# **SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUGS & YOUTH SERVICES**

**January 17, 2023 at 5:00 PM**

Chairman Barry called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Barry, Cavanaugh, Levasseur, Trisciani, George-Kelly

Messrs.: A. Robichaud, Mayor Craig, S. Wickens, P. Chiesa, Alderman Long

1. Presentation by Amanda Robichaud, Director of Northeast Development at GateHouse Treatment in Nashua, NH.

Chairman Barry stated I believe everyone has received the email from Amanda in reference to her proposal. Amanda, could you please come up to introduce yourself and talk about your proposal.

Amanda Robichaud, Director of Northeast Development at GateHouse Treatment in Nashua, NH, stated thank you for letting me come up here today and submit this proposal to your city. I am nervous. I am not going to lie. This is not my typical scenario or scene where I do my outreach so please forgive me if I mess anything up here. I will try to keep all my words straight and my nerves at bay. Basically, I am an LNA and I also provide all of the northeast business development for GateHouse Treatment in Nashua, NH. We can start with this proposal. I will read through it and let you ask questions at the end. This is the GateHouse Treatment or TST (Triage, Stabilization, and Transition) Initiative. In 2021, GateHouse Treatment provided intensive street outreach and support services to the City of Manchester's chronic homeless population experiencing mental health and addiction. We have saved the lives of 76 individuals experiencing mental health and addiction within an eight-month period. Data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention states that homeless is a public health law. These people might be chronically homeless, have temporarily lost their shelter, be fleeing domestic violence or facing any number of issues. Homelessness is closely connected to declines in physical and mental health. Homeless persons experience high rates of health problems such as HIV infection, alcohol and drug abuse, mental illness, tuberculosis and other conditions. Health problems among homeless persons result from various factors such as barriers to care, lack of access to adequate food and protection, and limited resources and social services. As each of these factors have legal underpinnings, legal and policy interventions have often been used to address homelessness, although not always from a public health perspective. GateHouse Treatment understands this matter to be an urgent issue that must be addressed from both a public health perspective and as minimizing the barriers to proper treatment care. The GateHouse Treatment's TST committee members are pleased to submit this proposal and all approve of it for funding to support the City of Manchester in achieving its goals for improving the number of chronic homeless individuals experiencing mental health and addiction issues. GateHouse Treatment has partnered with dozens of programs throughout the northeast. These are businesses and non-profit partners committed to improving the overall quality of life for individuals suffering from mental health and addiction. GateHouse Treatment

is capable and willing to facilitate all levels of substance abuse and mental health care for the chronic homeless population residing in the City of Manchester. Our objective is to reduce the number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness due to mental health and/or drug addiction in the City of Manchester. Triage through intensive street outreach with the goal of detox and placement for individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. Stabilization will include a continuum of care for all individuals screened and placed in triage from Phase I only. Stabilization may include a psychiatric unit, residential levels of care, partial hospitalization programs, intensive outpatient programs with housing and supportive housing. Transition will consist of sober living homes throughout the City of Manchester and throughout the state of NH. GateHouse Treatment will provide our city officials, business owners, and residents of the City of Manchester with an online Zoom educational meeting addressing, enabling and holding boundaries with individuals in active addiction. In addition, the meeting will also address some of the direct issues we, as a city, without knowing have unwillingly caused. Our solution and process. Phase I. The triage solution will provide detox for a minimum of 3-7 days with a short-term private detox option. That timeframe again would be 3-7 days. Phase II is the stabilization. This includes a continuum of care for all individuals screened and placed in triage from Phase I only. Stabilization may contain psychiatric unit, the residential level of care, partial hospitalization program, intensive outpatient with housing and this timeframe would be 30-45 days. Phase III. This transition includes use of all NH Coalition of Recovery residents so they have to be NH core certified sober homes. This timeframe for emergency housing is 30-90 days and traditional supportive housing typically does not exceed two years. Our execution strategy incorporates proven methodologies, extremely qualified personnel and a highly responsive approach to managing deliverables. The following is a description of our project methods including how the project will be developed, a proposed timeline of events, and reasons for why we suggest developing this project as described. GateHouse Treatment will remain point of contact for all areas of this project. This will include providing data such as number of chronic homeless individuals entering detox each week, the number of chronic homeless individuals proceeding to partial hospital programs, intensive outpatient programs and outpatient levels of care and the number of chronic homeless individuals transitioning to sober living or supportive housing. Data will include how many individuals return to Manchester, pre-completion of services, and post-completion of services. GateHouse Treatment will be the first call for any chronic homeless individuals needing treatment. The Admissions Team will pre-screen to determine if detox is necessary. Once determined, GateHouse will then connect individuals to the private detox teams and/or provide the necessary code to authorize services for detox. GateHouse will provide monthly updates to the City of Manchester. This will allow an open line of communication and provide an opportunity to discuss any unforeseen circumstances immediately. Our program requirements and priorities. Priority #1 is the City of Manchester to provide funding to help defray the cost of hiring two additional outreach workers to create a team of four full-time employees dedicated to outreach on the streets of Manchester, NH. Priority #2 would be the City of Manchester shall release funds for the detoxing requirements of Phase I in the amount of \$200,000 for 60 unhoused individuals of Manchester, NH. Priority #3. The TST Committee is currently working towards making revisions on the NH committal laws to include verbiage that includes individuals with substance use disorder. This revision would be eligible for updating in September of 2023 and could be brought before the state in January 2024. Priority #4. The TST Committee is actively working towards a

plan that would include judges, attorneys, probation and parole officers, and public defenders offering treatment programs with housing to individuals apprehended on substance related charges. Priority #5. The TST Committee members will use other means to raise donations to help offset and support the TST program services offered to the City of Manchester's chronic homeless population. Our project deliverables. Short-term detox at the private pay rate. The short-term detox centers have agreed to partner with GateHouse Treatment to detox individuals at a reduced private pay rate of \$550 per day. The long-term stabilization requirements will be provided by GateHouse Treatment and other contractual treatment providers. The last deliverable will be a reduction in the chronic homeless population in the City of Manchester. Those suffering with co-occurring disorders such as mental health and substance use. The description is to reduce the number of chronic homeless individuals in the City of Manchester by providing adequate services to those struggling with substance use and mental health. Our proposed project timeline. The TST Program start date would be 1/18/23. The end date would be 1/17/24 with a duration of one year. We would like to hire four outreach workers under the GateHouse Treatment Team. That start date would be 1/25/23 and we would have 30 days to get these people on board ending 2/25/23. The commencement of street outreach would start 2/1/23 and end on 1/17/24 with a duration of an 11-month pilot. The TST Program would be operational from 2/1/23 to 1/17/24. The TST annual report to the City of Manchester would happen between 1/17/24 and 2/1/24. The following table details the prices for delivery of services for 60 persons as outlined in the proposal. GateHouse administration costs – legal structure, professional licensing, program support staff, program supplies, program communications and marketing supplies needed would amount to \$45,000. Project financial accounting with year-end report would be \$5,000. This is a breakdown of the detox services: a) the private detox rate, transportation and housing included is \$550 per day; b) severe alcohol use, transportation and housing included for five days is \$2,750; and c) opiate use, transportation and housing included for 5-7 days depending on usage is \$2,750 to \$3,850.

Chairman Barry asked can you just stop for a few minutes so we can see if there are any questions.

Alderman George-Kelly stated thanks for coming to our committee meeting Amanda and presenting all of this information. I think it is really valuable. I do have some questions for you. I guess my first question for you is can you tell me how the first pieces of your budget proposal, a through d, is not a duplication of services that the Farnum Center is already offering in our community?

Ms. Robichaud answered yes. Essentially to most people when you look at it it probably does look like a duplication of services that Farnum Center is already offering and I know that they have a \$500,000 contract in place. My challenge to the city would be if you called the Farnum Center right now with this being an urgent matter, you are going to get put on a phone line where you are going to leave a recorded message and nobody is going to call you back and get you into detox. The private detox that I am contracting with, I could call them literally right now in front of everybody and they are going to answer and get that person into detox and have a vehicle on the way to pick them up with their belongings on the street in less than 20 minutes.

Alderman George-Kelly asked can you tell me a little bit about your plan for sustainability. GateHouse feels like it is coming into the community and growing pretty rapidly and working to establish new programs pretty rapidly and I think one of the things that can be detrimental to the community is when programs open and then don't have the ability to sustain themselves and close their doors pretty quickly. Other than city funding that you are proposing in this plan, can you talk to me a little bit about what GateHouse's sustainability plan is overall?

Ms. Robichaud responded yes. This direct funding wouldn't actually be going to GateHouse Treatment at all. This would actually just be a contract between the city and this other detox facility. With our expansion of services throughout the years, we are constantly hiring and bringing people onto the team for these expansions. We come up with our game plan obviously a few years ahead of time and then we start to roll out these services but as we grow, our team has already been in place for X amount of time so when we roll it out it is working. My question back would be with the Farnum Center having this \$500,000 contract in place, they don't have...

Mayor Craig interjected it is a state contract.

Ms. Robichaud stated right with the state contract in place they don't have the support to do it themselves. The Manchester Fire Department, and this is why I am involved, wasn't able to get people in overnight. They were turning people away in the middle of the night so I was pulled in initially as a resource to help get these people the treatment that they needed immediately and I have been providing those services to the city since 2020.

Alderman Cavanaugh stated thank you for being here. It sounds great and you have already saved 76 lives. I think it is a great thing you have done already. I just have a question. How close are the detox facilities from the city? Are they close by?

Ms. Robichaud responded this specific detox facility is in Millbury, MA. It is about an hour and 20 minutes from here. They use different routes to get the individuals picked up like Uber Health or Lyft Health services. They will also provide transportation from their detox facility themselves. Usually the pick-ups are within a very short amount of time. These services, again, if somebody was to call at 3 AM they are going to go to treatment. By 3:20 AM they will be picked up. They can bring their tent and all of the things that they have with them to that facility. The Farnum Center is not going to answer a call at 3 AM and I know from previous experience that it just doesn't happen and they are not bringing their tent.

Mayor Craig stated first I do want to thank you for all that GateHouse has done and continues to do for individuals in the City of Manchester. I have a few questions and comments. When you did bring forward the issues with Farnum, I want to say that I and others met with Farnum and they have said that the issues that were encountered in the past will not be going forward. I think we have to be careful in terms of what is happening now and what happened before and what you are proposing should stand on its own. I just want to make that point. One of the key components here for an effective program is getting someone to say yes they want to get to detox so I would like to learn more about how you do that and my second question is this sounds like a great

program and have you brought it forward to the state because from my perspective this is something, if it is an effective program and evidence-based, that should be rolled out statewide because we know there are homeless individuals in Nashua and Keene and Dover and Portsmouth and Concord and while it is valuable in Manchester, it is also valuable in other places. I think it should be brought forward at the state level and then brought into the local communities.

Ms. Robichaud stated I 100% agree. Our approach to outreach is it is very different than I would assume other individual's approach is to outreach. I state that because I have been out there since 2020 walking around the streets engaging with these individuals and taking the time to sit down and talk to them and ask them what brought them out there. Most individuals in our city don't aspire to just be unhoused at 199 Manchester Street. That is the reality but that is not their dream. Nobody woke up and decided they wanted to be homeless.

Mayor Craig stated in any community I think that is true.

Ms. Robichaud stated a lot of it is underlying mental health. That is what I am encountering when I am out there. Now through my experience in working at GateHouse and previous treatment centers and being coached with doctors that specialize in psychiatric and addiction needs, they were able to coach me and show me what mental health looks like, what substance use looks like and what co-occurring disorders look like. So when I am out there assessing these individuals, it is very clear to me the ones that need detox first and the ones that could go directly to a program like GateHouse Treatment. That is kind of where this came along.

Chairman Barry asked Sharon Wickens to come forward to talk about the actual funding. One of the things that we have been discussing...

Mayor Craig interjected can we get an answer to my question or no.

Chairman Barry responded I thought she did answer it.

Mayor Craig stated no. I would like to know why they aren't going statewide because there is a ton of opioid money at the state level.

Chairman Barry stated that is why I want to talk to Sharon.

Mayor Craig replied not in Manchester; at the state level.

Chairman Barry stated I get it and that is why I want to talk to Sharon because I discussed it with her today to see if we can get the money from one of the funding alternatives we have in the city and GateHouse can then propose to the state...Sharon can you address that please.

Mayor Craig stated I would like to understand...

Chairman Barry interjected I honestly don't want to wait for the state Mayor. I don't want to wait for funding. I think we have done that way too often.

Mayor Craig replied but we have an individual also who is hired in the City of Manchester to address this and I don't know if this program has been run by him and I think that is an important point that needs to be made. You can rush it through if you would like but I think the other point that needs to be addressed is the relationship with the sober homes. Manchester, NH has 38% of sober home beds and I think it is really important to understand and measure and track when you or anybody puts someone in a sober home in Manchester how long they are staying and where they go after. We have been asking for that information from the state and that is a big component to this proposal. I didn't see that information. If I am going to support something, that is something that I am going to want to know because I feel that there is a lot of turnover and that is causing individuals to be unhoused on the streets of Manchester.

Ms. Robichaud responded I can absolutely understand that. So in this proposal and I am actually backtracking here for a minute because it does state that I will give pre and post updates on people who complete the three phases of care. That would include individuals who do not go to sober living.

Mayor Craig asked or who stay for only a week.

Ms. Robichaud answered yes. I want to be very transparent with you guys and that is something I find when working with other individuals and programs here. Their data is skewed. They are counting the same person six times. I am looking to count one person one time and if they repeat services and they repeat and I would know that upfront but I would tell you guys that because that is important information that you need to have. The other piece of this is when you look at the data from these other programs, the accountability constantly gets put on the homeless person. In this case, I am not going to allow that to be the issue. I am asking for funding to help them get into detox which doesn't benefit GateHouse in any way, shape or form. It is also me holding that detox accountable to do what they say they are going to do and you are able to hold me accountable to track those numbers and give that information back to you. I have spoken with Andrew Warner. Initially in our conversation he wanted to bring all of these other treatment facilities to the table and my question to him was I have been out here since 2020 and none of these people have been helping me detox any of the individuals who need it so why now. They are still not offering to detox these individuals. Again, if we bring all of these other players to the table at the beginning, that skews my ability to be held accountable in the way that I am asking the city to hold me accountable and to give you that true data that you really need. This is a matter of funding. Every year, not through this specific project, but these are numbers that you guys have to have in your budget and your plans and if you don't have real data, your numbers are useless.

Alderman Levasseur asked are you able to provide us with the data you have from the last two or three years since you started as far as how many people you met and got help. Can you provide that to us before we make any decisions?

Ms. Robichaud replied yes. The specific data was that I was able to get 76 individuals off of the street and put into treatment programs. Three of them had a recidivism back to the City of Manchester. One recently died...

Alderman Levasseur interjected do you have a spreadsheet or something that says the date, the placement, etc.

Ms. Robichaud responded yes I could get that for you.

Alderman Levasseur asked if you were able to help 76 people, did you get funding for that from somewhere.

Ms. Robichaud answered no that was through my networking and social skills and my business development and knowing where to send these individuals for treatment. That is all a part of my job that I do daily so coming to that first aldermen meeting, I was able to identify a lot of pain points that the city has right now and that is where coming here with a plan in place...it is all very clear to me because it is a job I do daily. I feel that your city may need a little bit of assistance with this. I want to give you guys true numbers. That is the biggest piece.

Alderman Levasseur stated I am just wondering where did you get the funding to help those 76 people. Did they pay you or was it insurance?

Ms. Robichaud replied for those 76 people they either had state insurance like Medicaid or Medicare or some had no insurance and we had to utilize services like The Doorway to get them set up with insurance because if they didn't have it they needed to get on it. What we would do is at that time in NH we actually had more facilities providing detox to these individual but since then those programs have stopped providing detox because the reimbursement rate is so low and we can no longer utilize a number of them. I know that 76 with their insurance, if it was opiate or alcohol use we would utilize the NH Core Funding for the sober living component. They would move along into sober living with state funds and city funding. That is how it was all organized. GateHouse directly...I get paid to work for them and whatever I am doing they know I am out there getting people the help that they need and that is good enough for them.

Chairman Barry asked Sharon what are our alternatives. Do we have money whether it be from the state or federal specifically for this type of homeless and opioid problem?

Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, answered the first pot of money that we were kind of looking at was from the opioid litigation trust. We have just shy of \$500,000 sitting in there. I called Emily Rice because she sits on the advisory commission up at the state for these funds. She said at first glance she feels it could be used for this but she would want to analyze further everything that is being done to make sure it falls within the criteria to use these funds. There are also revenue replacement funds that could possibly be used for this. There is a huge pot of money up at the state, like \$50 million, specifically for this purpose. My question to Gateway would be have you applied for any money from the state? I think it would be good to ask them to delay. If we don't want to delay this, and I know that was your concern Alderman Barry, we have the money to start it but it would be a good idea to have GateHouse apply for these funds because it may be fully funded by the state and maybe fully funded for years to come. We could get quite a few years. I see that you don't want to delay it and if you don't want to delay it and it is the will of the Board to say okay we are going to move forward,

we have the money now but we can have them apply and if they get the money it would come back to the city and we could deploy those funds for other services.

Alderman Trisciani asked regarding the opioid litigation trust, my understanding is that is for drug use only and wouldn't cover substance abuse so we would have to balance that out.

Peter Chiesa, Deputy Solicitor, stated I can speak on that issue. I did look up the statute. Atty. Rice isn't available at the moment. She does sit on the board and can clarify, however, the opioid abatement fund can only be used for opioid use disorder that co-occurs with something else like mental health. The funds can't be used solely for mental health issues or solely for substance use disorders or solely for alcohol use disorders or solely for homelessness. There has to be some sort of opioid treatment involved with any of those other issues. I doubt very much that 100% of the opioid funds that we have could be used towards this type of thing and there would have to be some way to quantify the ratio of what is actually being used to report to the state because they are the ones that issued the funds and if something goes awry there are reporting requirements and whatnot. Again, Sharon is correct that they can apply directly to the state fund rather than coming to us.

Alderman Trisciani asked so essentially we would have to figure out how to code it appropriately to make sure we have the right treatment going for the reimbursement through the funding correct.

Mr. Chiesa answered right. There would have to be some sort of opioid use disorder treatment that co-occurs with one of the other issues they are addressing like homelessness or mental health disorders.

Alderman Trisciani replied and I take it that at this juncture we don't have any guidance on that other than what we put around it.

Mr. Chiesa responded no we don't. It is relatively fresh.

Ms. Robichaud asked with that being said, because a number of the individuals that are currently out there are also suffering with alcohol use disorder and that is the bigger issue because there are things you can do for opiate withdrawals...you can't die from an opiate withdrawal. They still need detox so don't get me wrong when I say that but the alcohol use, these individuals can die from the withdrawal symptoms. I don't know if that funding is available for that or is something that would have to be built in because you have to address both.

Mayor Craig stated the state did just allocate money for alcohol abuse to The Doorway system. I know that was added within the last few weeks which is good news.

Chairman Barry stated we have to be really quick because unfortunately the meeting is only scheduled for a half an hour.

Alderman Long stated you got me on your objective which is to reduce the number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness due to mental health or drug addiction.



That peaked my interest. Of your experience out on Manchester Street, what percentage would you say are opiate tied?

Ms. Robichaud answered I actually drew up this proposal as about 50% are opiate and 50% are alcohol. I would say it could go either way.

Alderman Long stated I believe that we don't have the luxury of looking at other avenues to get money. This is an immediate need. In eight months you took 76 people off the streets. I recall that time because I saw fewer homeless people in Veteran's and Victory Parks and talked to the former Homelessness Initiatives Director and she said yes they took 12 people this week and so on. So I did see that and my understanding is three of them came back. So 73 people in eight months is pretty good. This is an 11-month thing and you are looking to do 60. I think that is very doable. You outdid yourself in 2021. I would be in favor of supporting this. Also, with respect to the added outreach people, what was it \$50,000?

Ms. Robichaud responded yes.

Alderman Long stated \$50,000 is half of the four and GateHouse is paying the other half.

Ms. Robichaud replied yes we would actually be hiring two more people in conjunction with your team.

Alderman Long asked and what are you looking for from the city financially.

Ms. Robichaud answered it would be \$300,000 which when you break it down is \$5,000 per person at 60 people.

Alderman Long asked so you are asking us to pay for GateHouse's administration cost and professional licensing.

Ms. Robichaud replied yes.

Alderman Long stated I don't know why that would be the case because you could keep these people and we paid for them but whatever. This would start immediately once approved?

Ms. Robichaud answered yes.

Alderman George-Kelly stated I have a follow-up question. When you say that you were able to take 76 people off of the streets of Manchester and 3 returned, do you do any follow-up with the other 73? Do we know if they just didn't return because they were in a detox facility and hour and a half away and had no transportation back to our community or are they successfully sober and participating in a "productive life?"

Ms. Robichaud responded we follow-up with everybody. We have our own alumni department at GateHouse Treatment so we are constantly following up with everybody. We do that for a number of reasons. We want people to be able to reach out to us if

there is a recurrence that happens. We want to be the first call or the last call that they make, whichever one they decide but we want to make sure that we are right there to catch them when they fall, scoop them up quickly and get them into the next level of care because that is what recovery is all about. We follow-up in the sense that some of the people work for us. They end up becoming sponsors for these individuals and we are partnering them, the client, specifically in communities that best serve their interests. So a number of individuals that come to GateHouse in Nashua, and I am just going to use us as an example because not all of these individuals came to our program, we would utilize those services because there is a very strong recovery community there and the outpouring that comes from the AA or NA community, they get engulfed by it and they enjoy that community and fellowship. We are constantly doing the follow-up. I have a gentleman who just graduated our program two weeks ago and we are talking every single day. He is letting me know what his next step is and his next plan. He moved to Portland, ME and is getting into the Portland Recovery Center Program working as an advocate for them to give back what we gave to him. That is what the bigger piece is with this plan and proposal. It is being able to teach these individuals how to pick themselves up with a willingness and desire to change but at the end of the day what results from this type of community and this fellowship is these people then turn around and offer and give what we are giving them away so freely.

Mayor Craig stated just following-up on Alderman George-Kelly and Alderman Levasseur's questions, of the 76 people can you provide a spreadsheet with the status to include how many went to sober homes, how many stayed in the sober homes and where are they now. I think that is what we are looking for. That to us is how you measure success with this. The other thing I want to mention to this committee is that tonight at the full Board there is an Overdose Prevention Efforts overview by Director Thomas, Matt Barter and Andrew Warner and I think that we should potentially...I think it is very important that we get feedback from the team that is working on this in the City of Manchester and not serve this as a one off. There is tremendous value here and I would guess that we are probably going to move forward but I think it is worth working with the team that is working on this or getting their feedback. I would love to get your commitment that you are going to prevent this to the state and get the state to implement this in other communities. I think, again, there is value here but Manchester can't be the only community that is providing these solutions or a lot of people are going to come here for the solution. It is really important that this is happening in other communities in the state. If you need help, we are here to help you make the connections but this should be presented at the state level because there is value. You mentioned something about the city working with the detox facility and I think before we can sign-off on anything we need to understand who that detox facility is. I don't even know the name of it at this point not that you need to talk about it tonight but those are just by viewpoints.

Alderman Cavanaugh stated I know we are in a time crunch and this is an extremely important issue. I have questions too like where are the sober homes when they get out of detox?

Ms. Robichaud stated regarding the sober homes, there are a number of them right here in Manchester but there is also...I provided my committee with 17 pages of NH

Core Certified sober homes throughout the state and I anticipate that we would collectively utilize all of them.

*On motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Levasseur**, it was voted to table.*

Chairman Barry stated just so you understand Amanda, we will set up another meeting soon. You have heard the questions and concerns that we have and we hope you work with the state on this issue also.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Clerk of Committee