

HOMELESS & ADDICTION COMMITTEE MEETING

**Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 5:00 P.M.
City Hall Council Chambers
300 West Crowell Street, Monroe, NC**

Item 1. Homeless Discussion on Inclement Weather

Item 2. Public Comments

Item 3. Approval of Minutes – January 12, 2026

ATTENTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Please contact Heidi Bumgarner at 704.282.5770 to confirm your attendance. Thank you.

CITY OF MONROE
HOMELESS AND ADDICTION COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 12, 2026 MINUTES

The Homeless and Addiction Committee of the City of Monroe, North Carolina, met in the City Hall Council Chambers located at 300 West Crowell Street in Monroe, North Carolina at 4:00 p.m. on January 12, 2026 with Chair Sheila Crunkleton presiding.

Present: Chair Sheila Crunkleton, Member Joseph Quinto and Member Myles Kuly

Absent: Member Gray Biber

City Staff: Doug Britt, Lisa Hollowell

Others: Luisa Covington, Wesley Keziah, Mary Garceau, Stephanie Pate

Chair Crunkleton called the Homeless and Addiction Committee Meeting of January 12, 2026 to order at 4:10 p.m.

Item 1. **Public Comments** – (see below discussion)

Item 2. **Homeless and Addiction Discussion**

Wesley Keziah, Director of the nonprofit Ground 40, spoke briefly about their faith-based program designed to help men transition back into the community from homelessness, addiction, and incarceration. Mr. Keziah stated in the past, by way of addiction, fentanyl was hitting them the hardest, and over the years has backed off. Now, rather than illicit illegal substances, they are dealing with kratom and over the counter items you can buy at any gas station. He has been trying to bring awareness to this shift by doing news stories and coverage on these topics, speaking to doctors and senators about kratom and its effect. Further stating that alcoholism is on the rise again.

Stephanie Pate from Bridge to Recovery, a faith-based addiction resource center, spoke briefly about their program. The four main services offered are family interventions, day treatment, residential treatment for men and women, and access to sober living opportunities. The men's dorm can hold 20 and the female dorm can hold 15. Both house directors and most house staff have all been offered jobs after graduating from their program, working and remaining sober. Clients can choose after-care options such as staying in the dorms rather than just returning home, with approximately 80 to 85% of clients remain in long-term care. Ms. Pate also agreed the majority of their addiction problems have been with kratom and other easily obtained substances rather than illicit drugs. Chair Crunkleton and Member Quinto stated how shocked they were this is the first time hearing about kratom and the effects over the counter items are having on the addiction problem, agreeing awareness is key.

Chair Crunkleton then asked if Mary Garceau with David's Backpacks, who has an extensive background in dealing with the homeless population (friends as she calls them), might have some comments or suggestions for recommendations the committee is working on to present to council. She brought up the city's desire to get an accurate account of homeless to get a better understanding.

Ms. Garceau stated the numbers the City of Monroe came up with after the assessment was not accurate, as people in shelters were being included, not just those on the outside. Personally, she works with around 70, who live outside on a daily basis. She also works with rehoused friends she gets off the street and some underprivileged and poverty-stricken friends as well. She stated Union County has a lot of generational poverty. She explained how the numbers change with the seasons, as more are likely to be inside during winter, but in warm weather, everyone is outside. The numbers can double, which is why we should do counts multiple times during the year in order to get an accurate accounting of what we are working with and what the community actually needs. She knows there are times she works with over 100 on the streets in warmer weather.

Chair Crunkleton asked if there was one thing the city could concentrate or build on, she felt would help most. Ms. Garceau said the lack of affordable housing, explaining she had helped over 20 of her friends win disability cases, but it still is not enough money for them to pay for housing, food, utilities, transportation and medication. The housing issue is the biggest hurdle.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the issues of homelessness, addiction, many with records and other past issues keeping them from resources and forcing them into the woods. Maybe a way to get them basic supplies and a place for them to keep their possessions locked up and safe, or if there were generic trash bins out so they could dump their trash, or charging stations for phones.

Louisa Covington stated her background as a case manager in private practice and a cancer survivor. She also helps with the homeless community and unification is the key. All these organizations need to come together and be on the same page to advocate and serve these people.

Item 3. Approval of Minutes – December 11, 2025

Motion: Member Myles Kuly made a motion to approve the December 11, 2025 Minutes as presented.

Second: Member Joseph Quinto

Action: The motion to approve passed unanimously.

There being no further business, Member Joseph Quinto made a motion to adjourn the Homeless and Addiction Committee Meeting of January 12, 2026 at 4:55 p.m.

Second: Member Myles Kuly

Action: The motion passed unanimously.

Attest:

Sheila Crunkleton, Chair

Heidi Bumgarner, Clerk