**Maine Homeless Policy Committee**

Meeting minutes 7/10/15

In attendance: Vickey Rand, Cullen Ryan, Donna Kelley, Awa Conteh, Ginny Dill, Steve Ellis, and Jerry Dewitt.

**I. Items of current focus.**

**Federal and State**. The group decided not to review federal and state policy issues as the majority of the group heard them the day before at the MCOC meeting.

**NAEH Annual Conference, July 15th-17th:** Cullen walked everyone through the logistics of the meetings with the Maine delegation, which are occurring the afternoon of Thursday, 7/16. The group reviewed the policy priorities, which consist of two asks (Section 8 HCVs and McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Programs) and six other areas of interest (VA/SSVF/HUD-VASH, RHYA, NHTF, HOME, PATH, and SAMHSA).

II. Proactive Strategies. This group has agreed to circulate Op-Eds for topics regularly. Previously, the group discussed strategizing which to cover when, and how to create a series of message that blend with and build on other recent ones. Incorporate an Investment Focused theme into each of the following topics:

1. Substance Abuse – What happens when you don’t treat it. **This topic is on hold, as some of the other topics are relevant and time-sensitive pertaining to the Governor’s budget.**

2. Prioritize one vulnerable group at the expense of another – that is not the only choice. **Who has interest in this topic? It is still timely and relevant to the Governor’s budget.**

3. Safety Net – What are the basic needs of a person/family? This budget cuts (all, some, most) of these. **Steve Ellis wrote an Op-Ed on this topic that was published on May 11th in the Bangor Daily News.**

4. It is a good investment to invest in people so they can do well. (“They” have decided we need to spend more on fraud, judges, incarceration; this gives the idea that people are criminals waiting to be caught.) **Shalom House expressed interest in an Op-Ed on this topic at the 5/8 meeting. More information on this is upcoming.**

5. Mental illness – what it means to be psychotic, and how we have chosen to serve people who experience it. **Cullen wrote an Op-ed on this topic that was published on April 10th in the Portland Press Herald.**

This group will be able to re-focus on these beginning around August-September.

**III. What we are for, and why. (Why certain policies can work).**

**IV. Meeting Dates**. The group meets the Friday prior to the Statewide Homeless Council, which is typically the first Friday of the month, but sometimes is the second Friday, at 3pm. **The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 7th, at 3pm.**