**MAINE STATEWIDE HOMELESS COUNCIL**

**Minutes–December 10, 2019 9:30am – 12:30pm**

**Location:** **MaineHousing Conference Room, 353 Water Street. Augusta, ME 04330**.

**Members:** Stephanie Primm (KCHC), Tracey Hair (HOME, RIII), Donna Kelley (WCAP, RII), Josh D’Alessio (PCHC, RIII), Cullen Ryan (CHOM, RII), Lauren Bustard (MaineHousing), Chet Barnes (SAMHS),

Cheryl Harkins (HVJ, R1),

**Guests:** Betty LaBua (MaineHousing), Tracy Allen (KBH), Christi Staples (CSH), Alex Morse (Side Sea), Steve McDermott (MaineHousing), Bruce Noddin (MPRN), Sarah Sherman (Maine Bureau of Veterans’ Services), Kevin Joyce (Maine Sheriffs’ Association), Chris Rector (Sen. Angus King), Elizabeth Simoni (Maine Pretrial SVCS), Ginny Dill (Shalom), Pick Hayward (Protech Solutions Inc.), Kelsey Brown (HUD), Sean Crothers (Courage House), Katie Spencer-White (Mid Maine Homeless Shelter & Services), Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing), Representative Victoria Morales

**Phone:** Donna Yellen (Preble Street, R1), Aaron Geyer (COP), Joe McNally (Milestone), Noelle Coyne (Safe Voices), Boyd Kronholm, (BAHS), Joann Oliver White (HSA), Andrew Parlin (Shaw House), Terri Power (FUSE), Craig Phillips(Tedford Housing), David McClusky (Shaw House, RIII), Richard Hooks-Wayman (VOA), Robert Marcroft

**Minutes:** Betty LaBua (MaineHousing) and Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing)

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from meeting held on October 8, 2019 were approved.

**FUSE Presentation and Discussion, Christi Staples, CSH and Terri Powers, CSH:** Terri Powers, presented a power point presentation highlighting 2 of the 35 successful CSH/FUSE programs. By charting the achievements with the projects Returning Home Ohio and the Community Transition Program, Terri outlined how the FUSE model helps break the cycle of bouncing vulnerable people between crisis services while increasing housing stability and reducing multiple crisis service use. Terri noted the evaluation of data from FUSE programs showed a reduction of jail days, fewer shelter days, fewer hospital stays, reductions in psychiatric input and an increase in stabilized housing. Representative Morales, House District 33, before exiting for a legislative vote, voiced her political will in support of the FUSE process and will continue to work to keep this a bipartisan issue. The subject of funding was addressed, by both Christi and Terri citing innovative methods of financing, such as teaming with Housing Authorities, Criminal Justice Pilot Projects and DHHS Opioid Reduction Programs. Terri will send a budget breakdown of services and housing. Stephanie suggested a group to be formed to compare both the rates in Maine vs. Ohio and the demographics.

**Side Sea Presentation, Alex Morse**: With the intention of changing misconceptions in the conversation ofpoverty and homelessness,Side Sea, in unison with Knox County Homeless Coalition, submitted an application to the Gates Foundation for a $100,000.00 grant to help fund the cost of a podcast titled “What If.” Each monthly episode will focus on a personal story being told. Alex presented the example: “What if a person experiencing homelessness didn’t have to choose between paying for medical bills and house payments?” In addition to the objective of changing mistaken beliefs, the podcasts will assist individual agencies, educate the public and track both rural and urban data throughout the state. Concerns of negative interpretations of the “What If” were raised. Side Sea will address all comments. The project, initiated by the Innovations Committee, will be managed by Side Sea with input from the SHC. Lauren invited all in attendance to consider joining the Innovations Committee.

**Corrections Blue Print Update**- Funding for the DOC will be voted on December 10th, 2020. Bruce Noddin is optimistic funding for additional ICMs will be appropriated. Currently there are 1-2 ICMs for 100 people allowing the ability to help only those with the most serious mental health issues. Cullen had the opportunity to meet with Sheriffs and Representative Morales in order to clarify the Corrections Blue Print and FUSE. Kevin Joyce, outgoing President of the Maine Sheriff’s Association, commended the work of the SHC and will attend as many meetings as possible. Sheriff Joyce is supportive of FUSE and will bring information back to the December’s Maine Sheriff Association meeting. Sheriff Joyce mentioned that the March/April Sheriff’s meeting needs a speaker and formally invited SHC to attend and make a pitch. Cullen will work with volunteers from SHC not only to bring this invitation to fruition but to continue to increase better communication between all players.

**Brief Reports**:

**Regional Homeless Councils-**

**Region1-** Donna Yellen indicated that Region 1 continues to struggle with the increased number of people living outside. There is an influx of additional families from other countries arriving in the Portland area and finding them housing is also a struggle. Donna conveyed that York County Shelters are seeing an increase in populations with acute mental and physical health conditions.

**Region 2-** It was reported that the increase in rents in both Kennebec and Somerset counties is causing an upsurge of people living outside.

**Region 3-** Josh reported the BAHS warming center is now open. In order to give priority to those who are most vulnerable, Hope House is currently permitting guests to make same day reservations. By targeting the most vulnerable, Josh stated the reduction of LTS from 620 a year to 460. Washington County has 5 LTS.

**Legislative Update**-

**Federal-**The President signed another short term CR to fund the government through 12/20. The Senate voted 84-9 to approve a spending bill for HUD programs for FY20 with $2.3 billion above FY19 enacted levels.The Trump administration is expected to reopen the public comment period on the proposed rule to end broad–based categorical eligibility for SNAP.As is, this rule will result in at least ½ million kids loosing SNAP benefits, 1,300 estimated in Maine.

**State-**Motion passed for SHC to support FUSE and State Tax Credits for affordable housing. Stephanie will expresssupport contingent on not taking money from HOME funds.DHHS and MSHA abstained.

**February Meeting Directives:** Stephanie’s proposal for a 4-5 hour meeting focusing on proactive goals in February was approved.

**January Meeting Update:** Place Sheriff on the agenda first.Gaps and Needs presentation.New Website Input.

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, January 14, 2020**

**MAINEHOUSING CONFERENCE ROOM**

Maine Statewide Homeless Council | c/o MaineHousing | 353 Water Street | Augusta, ME 04333 | maineshc.org

*Developing policies and strategies so that everyone is pushing in the same direction to end and prevent homelessness in Maine.*