**Attending via GoToMeeting:** Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing), Betty LaBua (MaineHousing), Melanie Bubar (Homeless Services of Aroostook), Norm Maze (Shalom House), Emily Flinkstrom (Fair Tide), Noelle Coyne (Safe Voice), Joe Locke (MaineHousing), Kate Easter (MCEDV), Bill Higgins (Homeless Advocacy for All), Chris Bicknell (New Beginnings), Alice Preble (DHHS), Sarah Wade (DHHS), Bridgette Semler (YAB), Erin Kelly (Preble Street), Tracy Allen (KBH), Cullen Ryan (CHOM), Gerald Botta (Home Inc.), Boyd Kronholm (Bangor Area Homeless Shelter), Awa Conteh (City of Bangor), Rotta Knott (Tedford Housing), Rebekah F. (YAB), Meredith Smith (CHCS), Kelly Watson (MaineHousing), Stephanie Primm (Knox County), Abigail Smallwood (City of Biddeford), Christina Dingus (MaineHousing), Katie Spencer White (MMHS), Rich Romero (OHI), Rachel Pretiss (Preble Street), Lauren Bustard (MaineHousing), Julie Davidson (Caring Unlimited), Meredith Pesce (Amistad), Erin Kelly (Preble Street),

Boyd Kronholm (BAHS), Vickey Rand (CHOM), Donna Kelley (WCAP), Johnnie Walker (Partners for Peace), Joe

McNally (Milestone), Jace Farris (CHCS), Jenny Stasio (Through These Doors), Rick Haywood (Protec Solutions),

Michael Shaughnessy (MaineHousing), Noel Thibodeau (Hope House), Sam Chamberlain, Stephonie Gregg (YCSPI) and Kari Bradstreet (FVP).

[Reminder – If you call in, please email blabua@mainehousing.org to let us know you were there!]

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Disclaimer: These notes are not intended to represent direct quotes, things may not be in chronological order, and ideas may not always be accurately attributed. If you have corrections or comments, please email blabua@mainehousing.org to let Betty know and she will edit accordingly.

**Maine**

**Continuum of Care**

**Meeting: Maine CoC**

**Date: January 21, 2021, 1:00 – 3:00 PM**

**Location: Ring Central**

1. **Member Introductions:**

Norm welcomed all in attendance.

1. **Review & Approval of minutes:**

MCOC Minutes from the December meeting were posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website.

***Chris made a motion to approve December’s minutes, Jerry seconded. No discussion. No objections. Passed unanimously.***

1. **Big Thinking Topics:**
* **Landlord Engagement-** A discussion concerning the question “*How to best entice* *landlords to* *engage in renting to tenants with vouchers”* delivered the following recommendations:
* Survey the providers who deny on a regular basis or who have stopped accepting vouchers in order to be able to address landlord concerns.
* Launch an outreach campaign to educate landlords of the benefits (such as 70% guaranteed payment) and available support services.
* In order to combat the common perception shared by landlords that vouchers are difficult to process and require overwhelming amounts of paperwork, assist in making the process quick and easy.
* Contact participating landlords to learn why they like the program and have them be advocates with a referral bonus.
* Emily F. noted Fair Tide has successfully engaged landlords piloting a program that offered a sign on bonus, risk mitigation fund, paid money to hold units and utilized case manager/landlord communication. Emily offered to assist with facilitating conversations on widening these ideas statewide. For all interested Emily provided this link,

https://www.fairtide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Landlord-Engagement-Initiative-One-pager-with-Policies-Procedures.pdf Link to info on Fair Tide's program

* Lauren mentioned there are marketing materials available from MSHA
* Cullen added, when encountering fearful landlords, have them call CHOM as a resource to voice the positives of landlord engagement
* Any additional ideas should be sent to Bill or Chris as chairs of the Resource Committee.
* **PIT and HIC Update-** Due to COVID restraints and the probability of skewed data, a full waiver for an unsheltered count was submitted to and granted by HUD. Kelly asked for all HIC forms to be returned by the appointed deadlines, stressing the importance of non-participant forms, especially FEMA shelters and GA hotel placements. If any questions arise with the forms, contact April Reed through the HMIS help desk. In order to obtain a better sense of the scope and scale of the unsheltered population, Scott is exploring ways to implement data collection throughout the year.
* **COVID 19 Continued Discussion-** Norm opened the discussion by inviting all in attendance to mention any COVID changes, positive or otherwise. Bill announced the CDC has extended the moratorium on evictions through March 1, 2021. Stephanie stated sheltered staff have been assigned to Phase 1B of the vaccine distribution and encouraged all to reach out to local hospitals and public health nurses for assistance with scheduling the inoculations. Stephanie advised any provider encountering inconsistencies with the roll-out should contact Dr. Lisa Letourneau who is working on the vaccine distribution in congregant settings. Due to the large quantities of misinformation on the vaccines being shared and the general distrust of the medical process, Chris noted obtaining prior consent as a major component of getting shots in arms. It was agreed that all need to educate their staff and clients on the safety and importance of the vaccines.
1. **Legislative Updates:**

Cullen provided a summary of this month’s legislative packet.

* **Federal-** On 12/27 the President signed a package passed by Congress which included a $1.4 trillion FY 21 omnibus spending bill, funding the government through 9/30/21. On 12/27 the President signed a package passed by Congress which included an FY 21 omnibus spending bill, funding the government through 9/30/21. HUD received $49.6 billion - more than $12.4 billion above the president’s request, and $561 million above FY20 enacted levels, excluding Federal Housing Administration receipts. The spending bill likely provides enough funding to renew all existing voucher contracts for rental assistance. Beyond rental assistance, the spending bill provides level funding or moderate increases to all programs. Cullen ended the Federal updates by highlighting the 4th stimulus package signed by the President on 12/27. The package is a bipartisan $900+ billion economic relief bill, which will provide: $288 billion in another round of small business aid through the PPP program, $160 billion for state and local governments and willfund federal unemployment benefits at $300 per week for 16 weeks (into April 2021).
* **State-** The Governor released a statement regarding the previously predicted budget shortfall for this fiscal year. It appears that by using unspent funds from last year, CARES Act funding, and unexpected increased revenue from alcohol sales, they will be able to balance the budget without using the Rainy-Day Fund. However, when the new Legislature convenes and they begin work on the next biennial budget, they will be looking at about $100 million in revenue losses**.** The 130th Legislature convened on December 2, 2020. Several bills have been introduced, in particular by Rep Morales, to address with homelessness, housing, rental assistance, GA and food insecurity. Cullen will continue to update MCOC on the progress of these promising bills.
* Cullen asked for COC to vote to allow the chairs, on behalf of the MCOC to send thank you letters to Senators Collins and King for their support of the 4th stimulus package and the omnibus spending bill. Norm made the first motion to approve. Bill Seconded. No discussion. No objections. Passedunanimously.
1. **SHC Updates:**

Stephanie updated the committee by highlighting the key points discussed at January’s Council meeting. The focal points of the meeting entailed CSH progress and COVID related issues. CSH has identified service HUB areas and is working on element mapping to provide a snap shot of where services are needed. COVID vaccine distribution is a topic being followed closely and updated at MSN weekly meetings.

1. **Long Term Stayers:**

Difficulties in finding ways to house people continues to be a major hurdle. There are new housing units available in the Portland area through AVISTA. There continues to be an increase in the number of LTS in shelters and hotels due to COVD that do not need the traditional scope of services.

1. **COC Board Update:**
* **Coordinated Entry Committee-** The committee is currently scheduling meeting times with TAC. The meeting will resume in February and the MCOC will be updated as the process moves forward.
1. **Youth Action Board Update:** Bridgette reported there will be a Youth Inclusivity Training held on Friday, March 12, 2021 from 9:30-11:00 am offered by the Resource Committee and conducted by Dee Balliet of True Colors United. YAB members will assist in the scoring process of RFPs for the YHDP Grant.
2. **Updates:**
* **NOFA-** Did not meet. Will meet again when NOFA’s status is formally announced.
* **Resource Committee-**Bill Higgins has elected co-chair of the committee. The committee is formulating a schedule for 2021 trainings on the following topics Youth Inclusivity, VAWA and HUD LGBTQ Equal Access Rule Trainings.
* **Project Monitoring-**Committee will resume meeting in March.
1. **Next Meeting Agenda: February 18, 2021- 1:00-3:00**
* All are invited to email Betty, Scott or chairs agenda suggestions.