



MAINE STATEWIDE HOMELESS COUNCIL

June 9, 2020

Minutes

9:30-12:30

Virtual Location: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/352415877>
and/or call 1(646)749-3122, Passcode 352-415-877

Members: Stephanie Primm (KCHC, SHC Chair), Tracey Hair (HOME, Inc., RIII), Donna Kelley (WCAP, RII), Cullen Ryan (CHOM, RII), Cheryl Harkins (HVJ, RI), Donna Yellen (Preble Street, RI), Ginny Dill (Shalom, RI), Josh D'Alessio (PCHC, RIII), Dan Brennan (Maine Housing)

Guests: Betty LaBua (MaineHousing), Tracy Allen (KBH), Kelsey Brown (HUD), Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing), Rich Hooks Wayman (VOA), Katie Spencer White (MMHS), Alice Preble, (DHHS/OCFS), Heather Zimmerman (Preble Street), Boyd Kronholm BAHS), Melanie Buber (HSA), Denise Lord (MaineHousing), Joe Locke (MaineHousing), Vicky Rand (CHOM), Laurie Murray (MaineHousing), Lauren Bustard (MaineHousing), Kate Easter (MCEDV), Christi Staples (CHS), Rota Knott (Tedford Housing), Bruce Noddin (DOC), Kathryn Temple (DHHS/SAMHS), Arwen Agee (VA), Sara Wade (SAMHS, DHHS), Teague Morris (Sen. King's Office), Chris Rector (Sen. King's Office), Noelle Coyne (Safe Voices), Jenny Stasio (Through These Doors), Tara Kosma (New Beginnings), Meredith Pesce, (Amistad), Frank D'Alessandrio (MEJ), Jamie Blackburn (CSH), Brian Townsend (Amistad), Susan Giambalvo (Caring Unlimited), Alysia Melnick (Berstein Shur), Rosalani Moore (HOME, Inc), Steven McDermott (MaineHousing), Julie Derzawiec (MaineHousing), Clyde Barr (MaineHousing)

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

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the council meeting held on May 12, 2020 were approved.

CSH Presentation: To mark the official start of the partnership between the SHC and CSH, Christi Staples reintroduced Corporation for Supportive Housing, focusing on purpose, process and our path forward. By being a touchstone for new ideas and best practices, CSH is able to be a collaborative and pragmatic community partner and an influential advocate for supportive housing. The three key drivers guiding their approach are: 1.) a focus on thriving for the individual and the community 2.) working within a racial equity frame work and 3.) harnessing data to generate results. CSH will be supporting the SHC in framing our path to reach functional zero by incorporating these major objectives: a redesign of the homeless delivery system, building a housing pipeline of 160 affordable and 40 supportive housing units, and providing ongoing support and technical assistance. The accomplishment of these objectives will be achieved by first working collectively with all stake holders to insure the creation of a holistic approach to triage and assessment as well as strategic planning. CSH will also lead the process by identifying resources for and estimated costs of supportive housing. Christi introduced her colleague, Jamie Blackburn, to the council and they both opened the floor to discussion on the

first steps that need to be taken. Attendees agreed, the first prioritized step needs to be the recruitment of stake holder representatives from populations working with recovery houses, youth, schools, aging, vets and the DOJ. The question of how to bring in new systems both regionally and statewide to address the diversity in needs of rural and developed areas will be a focal point as conversations on how to reach functional zero unfold. The CSH power point presentation will be posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website.

COVID 19 Urgent Issues: The increased ESG-CV funding available to shelters, the opening of wellness centers and the availability of hotel rooms have assisted in alleviating the immediate crisis brought forth by the COVID 19 pandemic. Working within a shelter system stressed before COVID 19 and with many shelters currently filled to capacity, concerns were voiced regarding what happens when the wellness centers close and how to maintain long-term sustainability as the pandemic continues. The evidence for a shelter system redesign is apparent and investments in long term infrastructure are imperative as plans for the aftermath are molded.

MaineHousing Updates with Dan Brennan: Dan thanked all for their assistance and for the quick actions put in place to insure the safety of those needing shelter during the initial stages of the COVID 19 crisis. Dan shared his optimism for the future based on the current coordinated efforts with DHHS, MaineHousing, the Governor's Office and other agencies to keep the shelter system successfully operating during the pandemic. When asked about how to address future housing needs, Dan answered: bringing local housing authorities as a key to unify regional needs, a revised approach to public housing units is necessary, real estate needs to be found for smaller shelters and advocating for increased funding for affordable and supportive housing needs to continue.

Statewide Updates:

- **Requests for Cares Act Funding:** With input from the shelter leadership group, a proposal reformulated to holistically incorporate shelter funding was submitted to Governor Mills. Any updates will be emailed to all interested parties.
- **DHHS:** Alice shared the DHHS offices are slowly phasing back to work at offices. Workers will be wearing masks when not at their work stations.
- **DOC:** Bruce reported the Maine Correctional Facility in Windham had a COVID 19 outbreak, fortunately the rest of facilities are COVID 19 free. The lack of available stable housing has contributed to a five month back log leaving many participants in the SSCP incarcerated. Bruce will invite Susan Gagnon and Dave Simpson to attend SHC meetings.
- **Regional Updates:**
 - **Region I:** People experiencing homelessness are facing multiple daily challenges due to the closure of libraries and public places. Recruiting additional landlords to accept vouchers continues to be difficult due to low payment allowances.
 - **Region II:** CDC brought an awareness of the vulnerability of staff and the need to be cautious of the spread of COVID 19 among employees in break rooms and during cross over.
 - **Region III:** An abbreviated meeting was held, with nothing new to report other than noting the value of agencies leaning on each other in order to persevere in the current pandemic.

- **Shelter Director's Group/MSN:** The group continues to speak directly in the mode of informal conversations of how to move forward with the redirection of need. Katie asked for anyone interested in attending the meetings held on Thursdays at noon (lunch gatherings) to email her for log in details.

Legislative Updates:

- **Federal:** Both Cullen and Heather highlighted the funding available through the Federal Cares Act and stressed the importance of sustained support of programs will be an ongoing issue. The U.S. House passed a three trillion COVID-19 relief bill known as "Heroes" Act Phase 4 Stimulus Package. It has been sent to the senate where it will likely face criticism. There are two dear colleague letters circulating Congress to get increased funding for homeless youth providers. Both have bipartisan support in both chambers. Homeless youth providers and other advocates are working with Senator Collins to get her support for the Murkowski, Manchin letter.
- **State:** The Legislature adjourned Sine Die on Tuesday 3/17, with any bills remaining to be carried over into any special session of the 129th Legislature.

Priorities:

- **Utilizing the Media:** Strategies on how to use the media as a tool to amplify the urgent issues involved with the housing crisis in Maine are essential. Cheryl will assist in connecting with the Portland media. Lauren and Denise will assist with connections of MaineHousing's bandwidth.
- **Stake holders:** Council is in agreement of the importance of having all stake holders at the table. Bruce will invite DOC players and Lauren will help with including educators.

**Next Meeting:
Tuesday, July 14, 2020, 9:30-12:30**

Maine Statewide Homeless Council | c/o MaineHousing | 26 Edison Drive | Augusta, ME 04333

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