**MAINE STATEWIDE HOMELESS COUNCIL**

**March 9, 2021**

**9:30-12:30**

**Minutes**

**Virtual Location** [**https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1494236342?pwd=MHE2NW9vMnV6WWhrNjEzZjlodzZ6dz09**](https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1494236342?pwd=MHE2NW9vMnV6WWhrNjEzZjlodzZ6dz09) **Or Telephone: 1(646)3573664**

**Members:**  Donna Kelley (WCAP, RII), Cullen Ryan (CHOM, RII), Cheryl Harkins (HVJ, RI), Tracey Hair (HOME, Inc., RIII), Lauren Bustard (MaineHousing), Alice Preble, (DHHS/OCFS), David McCluskey (Shaw House, RIII) and Donna Yellen (Preble Street RI)

**Guests:** Betty LaBua (MaineHousing), Tracy Allen (KBH), Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing), Melanie Buber (HSA), Rota Knott (Tedford), Jamie Blackburn (CSH), Jenny Stasio (TTD), Bill Higgins (Homeless Advocacy for All), Anna Smith (CSH), Sarah Gallagher (CSH), Chris Bicknell (New Beginnings), Sara Wade (SAMHS, DHHS), Vickey Rand (CHOM), Christina Dingus (MaineHousing), Erin Kelly (Preble Street), Shawn Yardley (Community Concepts), Katie Spencer-White (MMHS), Norm Maze (Shalom House), Boyd Kronholm (BAHS), Patty Lovell (WMCA), Teague Morris (Senator King’s Office), Noelle Coyne (Safe Voices), Richard Hooks Wayman (VOA), Emily Flinkstrom (Fair Tide), Rindy Fogler (City of Bangor), Kate Easter (MCEDV), Heidi Rackliffe (ACAP), Lisa Letourneau (CDC), Bill Crandell, (WMCA), Natalie Evans Blake (Bridges of Hope), Kelly Watson (MaineHousing), Anne Pringle (Friends of Deering Oaks), Denise Lord (MaineHousing), Cara Courchesne (MaineHousing), Ann Martin (HUD), Giff Jamison (Tedford), Joe McNally (Milestone), Lindsay Ryan (UMaine), Ginny Dill (DHHS), and Sarah Michniewcz (BNA).

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

**Welcome:** Tracey Hair, Chairing today, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance. Katie motioned to approve February’s minutes. The misspelling of Fair Tide was noted and repaired. Donna Yellen seconded the motion. February’s minutes were approved.

**Pandemic Related Issues:** The discussion started with concerns over equitable vaccine distribution by mentioning the difficulties in both rural and urban transport, the need for peer navigational support, and the barriers of hesitancy. Hunger is an increasing problem within the

GA and FEMA hotels, complicated by the sheer distance to food sources and lack of appliances. The delivery of non-perishable or prepared foods from local food pantries and shelters as a means of hunger prevention is underway throughout the state. The number of evictions due to reasons other than nonpayment of rent is on the increase. The Maine Shelter Network (MSN) has been discussing options on how to handle evictions, the court system and GA denials. In addition, MSN has started to address what ‘returning to normal’ will look like, in 6-9 months from now, ‘how to safely increase bed capacity and how to efficiently implement workforce plans’. Donna Yellen cited Strengthen ME as a resource for front line staff support and trainings. Information on Strengthen ME will be mailed to contacts on the SHC mailing list and posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website.

**CDC Update:** Dr. Lisa Letourneau reminded all in attendance that even though the number of new cases in Maine seems to have plateaued, diligence in prevention, especially amongst vulnerable populations remains imperative. The distribution of vaccines is no longer a strictly aged based strategy but is now open to people of any age who are employed in childcare and education. The release of the J and J vaccine will increase the number available. With the emergence of new variants, strict protocols should continue to be followed. Lisa ended with a new CDC update that allows people who have been 2 weeks post-vaccinated to congregate together inside without masks.

**CSH Update:** The two hour presentation started with the reminders that both the needs and costs are based on current available data and for all to keep in mind the numbers can and should be refined overtime. The first portion of the presentation discussed the assessment of the existing

state of homelessness in Maine in order to determine the inventory and resources needed to support the goal of ***homelessness as rare, brief and one time*** in Maine. The key components of the Redesign are:

Data Driven and Accountable Person Centered Design Grounded in Housing First Balances statewide standards with a tailored, localized response Move from “Models” to “Systems” with the right array of interventions Build Thriving Communities that Foster Educational Connections, Build Career Pathways, Integrate Healthcare and Ensure Food Security Addresses Race Equity

Utilizing data from the 2019 PIT, the 2019 ESG Utilization Report and HMIS System Performance Measure Reports, resulted in these focal assumptions: **Diversion** Target people experiencing homelessness for the first time 40%of people calling 211 60% of people who show up at shelter **Self-Resolution** 20% of people served in shelter self-resolve with limited assistance through shelter and community based services - Calculated by percent of people in shelter <14 days **Transitional Housing**  Improve outcomes Target subset of people exiting SU tx, prison, - Case Workers are involved families and youth **Emergency Shelter** Functioning at 50% capacity since COVID 19 Greater use of hotels and diversion options Need to address public health and safety needs related to congregate settings **Rapid Rehousing** Target 80% of clients in shelter > 14 days **Supportive Housing –Homeless** 90% of chronically homeless population 20% of all people experiencing homelessness Current turnover rate is 28%. Reduce to 9%.

After a robust conversation of the assumptions and needs, the following next steps were outlined: Confirm assumptions and refine and finalize model Begin design and launch of local Service Hubs Identify strategies to leverage existing and/or acquiring new resources Work with Leadership Committee to develop strategies to address mainstream supportive housing need of 3027 units

Today’s CSH power point presentation (including detailed numbers, maps and graphs) will be sent to all contacts on the SHC mailing list and made public on the Maine Homeless Planning website.

**Council Updates: Regional Updates Region I-**Emily stated the region is experiencing barriers to vaccines, lack of available housing and the ongoing challenges in applying for General Assistance. Cheryl reported HVJ has been busy advocating for LD2. **Region II-** Cullen commented on the regions continued struggle to house people due to the lack of affordable housing. **Region III-**Tracy mentioned the regions last meeting discussed the need to prepare for the increasing numbers of evictions due to reasons other than nonpayment of rent. **MSHA:**  Lauren explained with the deluge of request for Rent Relief CAP agencies are in the process of hiring additional staff to handle the backload of cases. The deadline for agencies to let MaineHousing know of their interest in Diversion Funding is by the close of business on March 10, 2021. RFP Applications are being accepted from consultants to oversee the implantation of the System Redesign working in hubs at the grass roots level. **Legislative Updates:**. **Federal-** Cullen’s synopsis highlighted the American Rescue Plan Act (HR 1319), a $1.9 trillion COVID relief bill, passed in the House on 2/27, which will provide urgently needed resources, especially for America’s lowest-income renters and people experiencing homelessness. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration, where it is expected to be amended, then sent back to the House for approval. **State-**There are a plethora of bills presented before the legislature addressing homelessness, housing, rental assistance, general assistance and food insecurity. Cullen outlined the steps involved in the process of testifying virtually in front of state legislature. This month’s legislative packet was posted on the Maine Homeless planning website and mailed to all contacts on the SHC list.

**Tracey adjourned the meeting with an invitation for all to attend next month’s council meeting scheduled for April 13, 2021**