**Attending via GoToMeeting:** Jerry Botta (HOME Inc.) Donna Alger (BFAH), Joe Locke (MSHA), Vickey Merrill (CHOM), Awa Conteh (CoB), Victoria Abbot (BOL), Mike Shaughnessy (MSHA), Dan Hodgkins (Preble Street), Mike Tuller (BFAH), Karessa Grenier (Hope and Justice Project), Jessica Lincoln (TNLH), Cullen Ryan (CHOM), Erin Kelly (Preble), David McCluskey (Shaw House), Amy Holland(MSHA), Lauren Charon (DHHS OBH), Mike Merrill (VOA), Rebecca Hobbs (TTD), Alice Preble (DHHS), Norm Maze (Augusta Housing), Russ Johnson (Shalom House), Scott Tibbitts (MSHA), Jace Farris(Hub 8), Julia Kimball, (Hub 4), Abigail Smallwood (Hub 1), Linda Plourde (Franny Peabody Center), Emily Richards(Hub 5), Nicole Frydrych(Hub 6), Leanne Pomeroy(Preble), David Sovetsky (MMHS), Andrew Lardie (Tedford), Donna Kelley (WCAP), Doug Dunbar(PCC), Sara Wade (DHHS), Rich Romero (OHI), Zac Moore, Ginny Dill (DHHS), Mattew Wymann (New Beginnings/YAB), Rebekah Paredes (New Hope MC), Johnnie Walker (Partners for Peace) Julian Sherman (PCHC), Holly G. (ACAP), Anna Robinson (Hub 9), Tracy Allen (KBH), Kari Bradstreet (H.S.A.), Ray Michaud (Vets Inc), Katie Holzwarth ((MCEDV), Tony Giarratano (Shalom House), Tara Hembree (MaineHousing), Nakesha Warren Colbry (Hub 2), Hanna Gregory (MCEDV), Boyd Kronholm (BAHS), Michelle B. (Safe Voices), Nickie Cohen (CHCS), Heidi Rackliffe (ACAP), Aaron Geyer (City of Portland), Kari Bradstreet (H.S.A.), Sean Fitzpatrick, Jen Weatherbee (Hub 7), Dan Black and Chris Bicknell (New Beginnings).

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 and

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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**Maine**

**Continuum of Care**

**Meeting Minutes: Maine CoC**

**Date: December 21, 2023, 1:00 – 3:00 PM**

**Location: Zoom**

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.

# **Approval of Minutes and Moment of Silence:**  Awa welcomed everyone to today’s meeting. MCOC Minutes from the November 2023 meeting were posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website. ***Victoria Abbott motioned to approve minutes as written. Gerry Botta seconded. Through discussion Scott Tibbitts mentioned names were missing from November’s roster. Minutes will be amended reflect additional names. Minutes were unanimously approved as amended****.* A moment of silence to honor the passing of people experiencing homelessness was observed.

1. **Big Thinking Topics:**
* **Maine Unsheltered Homelessness/Encampments:**

A conversation on the growing unsheltered populations lead to the exchange of the following comments and questions:

* Last weeks’ storm caused people living in encampments devastating hardships with the destruction of tents and personal property. *How to can we help replace these items?* It was noted there are drives throughout the state and the recommendation was made to look on Facebook for local communities for collection sites.
* A community meal behind Hope House is scheduled for December 31rst at 1 pm.
* More outreach workers are needed*. How do we advocate for more boots on the ground workers?*
* Portland's Homeless Services Center has 98 beds available today. Outreach workers are working hard to bring everyone inside. The goal is to have everyone inside by 12/28 when two major encampments will be swept. The City has surveyed people in encampments and as a result, removed some barriers to help people come inside.
* Concerns were voiced regarding what can is being done to assist people with pets. In Portland some animal shelters are assisting with fostering pets of people staying in encampments.
* **Data and Equity Presentation:**

Erin Kelly, Joe Locke, Scott Tibbitts and Katie Spencer White attended a HUD hosted learning session on Equity and Data Analysis. Foundational work before the training included:

* + - Historical ways people have experienced discrimination in housing
		- White Dominant Cultural Norms – examples and how they are still perpetuated

how to ensure data is being collected with an equitable lense. In order to assist with the collection of equitable data, Erin and Joe provided an overview of the following White Dominant Cultural Norms and examples of how to navigate change away from these accepted norms.

* *White Dominant Cultural Norm-Perfectionism*:

Mistakes are seen as personal, reflect badly on the person.

*Something Different-Appreciation:*

Mistakes are valued as opportunities for learning.

People verbally show appreciation for one another

* *White Dominant Cultural Norm -Competition:*

Taking unearned credit for wins. Treating core campaign issues as more important than issues other people are working on.

*Something Different-Collaboration:*

Taking time to build relationships based on trust. “Build a bigger pie” instead of fighting over a slice. Mutual support of each other’s campaign issues

* *White Dominant Cultural Norm****-****Sense of Urgency*

For funder-driven deliverables but not for community/capacity building or equity work implementation.

*Something Different-Realistic time frames:*

Time allocated for the unexpected.

* *White Dominant Cultural Norm*-Worship of the Written Word

If it’s not written down, it is not valued.

Use of anything other than “Standard American English” is seen as incorrect or less intelligent.

Superiors “correct,” edit and change documents to reflect a particular normalized language.

*Something Different-Simply Communication:*

Communication is treated as simply communication.

Editing focuses solely on communicating with a particular audience and with permission from the writer.

Appreciation for how some communities relay info through relationship networks and spoken word.

* *White Dominant Cultural Norm***-** *Quantity over Quality:*

Transactional deliverables are ranked above meaningful engagement or qualitative goals

Rushing to achieve numbers

*Something different: Meaningful Engagement:*

Working toward meaningful engagement with depth, quality, using qualitative goals.

Timeline for deliverables includes enough time for quality

* *White Dominant Cultural Norm-Progress is bigger, more*

Focus on quantity, less focused on the cost of growth on people, communities, and relationships

*Something Different:*

Cost/benefit analysis includes all costs.

Focus on sustainability

* *White Dominant Cultural Norm*- *Paternalism:*

No consultation or transparency in decision making.

Taking over campaigns, mediating and facilitating others.

*Something Different-**Partnership*:

Decision making is clear, affected parties are consulted.

Evaluations include staff at all levels

* *White Dominant Cultural Norm*-*Denial and Defensiveness:* Nowhere to air grievances. Focus placed on protecting power instead of addressing harms.

*Something Different*

Give and receive feedback non-defensively, have a clear structure to hear and address grievances.

* *White Dominant Cultural Norm-Comprehensiveness:* Continual research and writing that leads nowhere. Creating multiple reports, groups, and committees that are working in isolation. Vision, values and goals that no one can remember nor easily refer to in a meeting

*Something Different*

Simple, memorable, and repeated shared vision, values, visions and goals.

* *White Dominant Cultural Norm-Power hoarding:* Ideas from less senior people are treated as a threat. Information and decision making is confidential. Holding on to resources, scarcity mindset. *Something Different* Ideas at all levels are valued, ideas from others is requested and space made to hear them. Information is made available for viewing and feedback, and resources shared equitably and appropriately.
* *White Dominant Cultural Norm-Individualism:*

Focus is on single charismatic leaders, working in isolation.

*Something Different*

Working together, from a movement lens.

To change everything takes everyone

Upcoming conversations on what norms the continuum have, an awareness of them and how we can do something differently will be a part of future meetings and planning sessions.

1. **MCoC Tri-Chair Nominations:**

Awa announced Vickey Merrill was nominated by Awa Conteh (City of Bangor), Morgan Connolly (DHHS), Laurie Legree (VOA) and Melody Fitch (FVP). Jace Farris was nominated by Amy Holland (MSHA). The logistics for voting and the list of eligible agencies will be posted on the Maine Homeless Planning Website.

1. **Build America Buy America Act for ESG and CoC Grantees:**

Awa shared that HUD Grantees have an obligation to be in compliance with this act. This only pertains to infrastructure and building projects however every grantee must document that they made a decision about applicability of the act in their project files. A chart explaining the obligations will be reposted on the Maine Homeless Planning website.

1. **Legislative Updates:**

Vickey updated the continuum by providing these highlights:

**Federal:** Congressional leaders are working quickly to reach a bipartisan agreement before the end of the year to expand the Child Tax Credit and revive several expired business tax incentives. If a deal is reached, the tax package could also include resources to expand and reform the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. Congress passed (and the President is expected to sign) a two-step continuing resolution bill extending appropriations dealing with veteran’s programs, transportation, housing, agriculture and energy until 1/19/24. Funding for eight other appropriations bills, including defense, would be extended until 2/2/24.

Attention was then brought to the following bills:

**Senate FY 24 THUD** On 7/20 the Senate T-HUD Appropriations Committee released its FY 24 spending bill. Overall, the bill provides $70.06 billion for HUD’s affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs, an increase of $8.26 billion (or slightly more than 13%) over FY23-enacted levels. However, HUD needs to increase funding by approximately $13 billion just to maintain existing levels of assistance. **House FY 24-THUD** The House has yet to vote on the T-HUD; though a vote is expected in the near future. However, three amendments that would have reduced funding for HUD programs and affected access to housing failed. The House FY24 THUD spending bill proposes funding HUD at $68.2 billion, a $6.4 billion (or roughly 10%) increase to HUD programs over previously enacted levels. HUD needs an approximately $13 billion increase in funding over current levels just to maintain existing assistance. The spending bill proposes deep cuts to or even elimination of some HUD programs.

**HR 3848, Housing Our Military Veterans Effectively Act of 2023** Introduced on 7/26 by Rep. Lori Chavez DeRemer, this bill passed the House and has been sent to the Senate would revive crucial services authorized during the pandemic to provide lifesaving services under the Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD), which funds transitional housing programs for homeless veterans. These services include transportation to doctor appointments and food banks, communications devices for hearing impaired veterans, personal care products along with a dearth of other vital services and resources.

**State:**

The update started withbringing clarity to the following two bills:

**LR 2714** **An Act to Support Shelters for the Unhoused** PASSED. The 10 million will be funding current shelters through the regular funding formula.

**LR 2767** **An Act to Improve Funding for Homeless Shelters** PASSED. The funding proposes additional funding for the low barrier shelters throughout the state.

Public hearings are currently being scheduled for all carry over bills.

1. **Hub Update:**

Amy H. started this month’s update by noting all Hub Coordinators are collaborating with Warming Shelters in their catchment areas. Jenn W, was highlighted as an example for in Hub 7 she has been working with 5 warming shelters in her area to discuss trends, numbers and coordinate outreach workers with guests. Comprehensive planning efforts are underway for this year’s PIT count. The HCs are busy not only recruiting volunteers and training volunteers for the 24 PIT count but are also soliciting donations to distribute to the unsheltered folks being surveyed and planning community meals. Hub Coordinators are working together with PHAs as a way of addressing the need for adding additional resources into Coordinated Entry. Additionally, HCs are conducting case conferences, assisting with document readiness, adding CE access points and problem solving a range of housing barriers. HCs from Hubs 2 and 6 gave a presentation at this year’s ESHAP training.

1. **SHC Updates:**

Cullen provided today’s update. Embracing the new format, the meeting of the Statewide Homeless Council scheduled on December 12th was open to the public. The council discussed the impact of State Home Funds being cut, GA part of the long term solution for shelter funding, waives for Housing Payment standards and what’s working throughout the Hubs and regions of the state. Beth Hamm and Greg Payne attended to update and hear concerns regarding Sections 13 and 91of LD2.

1. **MCoC Board Updates:**

Scott and Awa provided the continuum with today’s update. During the December meeting Scott gave an overview of SPM Data. Next month Scott will present the Board with how Maine’s SPMs

compare with national numbers reported by other CoCs. Identifying gaps in the system, creating a data warehouse, growing encampments and the increasing numbers of people living unsheltered were also discussed.

1. **CES Updates:**

The committee is in the process of engaging in a HUD designed self-assessment of the four phases of CE. Generally, the CE process doing very well, however there are a few areas that need to be upgraded, for example, marketing. A to do list is being drafted to address opportunities for improvement. This month the DHHS presented their updated referral policy for Permanent Supported Housing. The committee continues to gather feedback from frontline workers and providers on assessment and plans to synthesize responses into the Coordinated Entry Process.

1. **Youth Action Board Update:**

Mathew W. started this month’s update by announcing with the addition of a new Lewiston Member named Aslan, the Board is officially full again in terms of our Lewiston seats! Some folks who helped provide TA for coordinated entry back when Mathew W. first started reached out recently and asked the YAB to provide technical assistance to other states so they can set up their own YABs! The YAB members are on the hunt for 2024 conferences to attend.

1. **Brief Committee Updates:**
* **Data Committee:** Did not meet in December due to the storm. Maine HMIS requested electronic approval of two forms, one concerning fields for CE and the other for Permanent Supportive Housing.
* **Template Score Card Committee:** The committee will start meeting again early in 2024. Dan H. asked for people to consider joining the committee which helps complete the score card for the NOFA.
* **Monitoring Committee:** Didn’t meetdue to power outages. The committee will meet next on January 8, 2024. The committee increased their meeting times to twice a month due to TEC assistance on creating a new monitoring process. The committee still needs a co-chair to replace Mike S.
* **Resource Committee:** PIT count is currently a major focus of the committee. Flyers have been published on the Maine Planning website. Anyone interested on volunteering were asked to register on [www.mainepit.org](http://www.mainepit.org). The committee is scheduling trainings for 2024.
* **PWLE:** The committee will meet the second Friday in January. December’s meeting was canceled due to lack of attendees.
1. **Other Business:**
* Scott updated to the continuum on the status of Wellsky reporting. Wellsky is still updating their systems to the new HMIS Data Directory Standards. The CoC level APR is expected to be ready by the end of December. If you have an APR due between now and then it was suggested to contact the local field office to notify them your reporting will be late.

The System Performance report is expected to ready by mid-February and the PATH annual report will tentatively be ready by mid-March. Any new updates on Wellsky reporting will be posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website.

* Nicole F. put forth the request for the CoC to form a Diversion sub-committee with the purpose of providing space for housing providers, municipalities and front line workers to gather efforts and collaborate to prevent people from reentering the homeless response system. The establishment of a Diversion Sub-Committee will be considered at the next CoC meeting as a Big Thinking Topic.

All in attendance were asked to send agenda suggestions to the tri-chairs, Scott or Betty for the

next MCOC meeting scheduled for January 18, 2024 from 1:00-3:00 pm on ZOOM!