

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Remote Meeting

Thursday, April 21, 2022

8:30 am – 10:00 am

Minutes

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Adam Harr	City of Portland	Norm Maze	Shalom House
Jim Devine	HVJ	Ben Martineau	HVJ
Jenny Stasio	Through These Doors	Dan Coyne	United Way
Terence Miller	Preble Street	Ben Strick	Spurwink
Bill Higgins	HA4All	Anne Marie Brown	United Way
Johnathan Sarbeck	District Attorney	Mary Davis	CoP HCD
Sarah Michniewicz	BNA	Isabell McDevitt	Work Works America
Ginny Dill	Office of Behavioral Health	Cullen Ryan	CHOM
Heidi McCarthy	CoP	Anne Prinlge	
Suzanne Randal	HA4All	Ken Caprone	
George Rheault	Bayside resident	Harrison Deah	City of Westbrook Social Services
Meredith Pesce	Amistad	Joe McNally	Milestone
Wendy Harmon	Southern Maine Landlords Association	Sarah Austin	PTLA

Meeting Summary

First time homelessness saw an increase largely attributed to asylum seekers who are experiencing homelessness for the first time. 2019 will be added to our data to compare to pre-pandemic time. Isabelle McDevitt from Work Works presented on her program that seeks to inject new funding while providing temporary housing and employment to people experiencing homelessness. She is currently learning about our continuum of care to see where her resources could fit. The State is working on finding shelter for singles displaced from hotels at the end of May. Our HUB coordinator was hired. The South Portland City Council approved the license renewal of 4 hotels being used to shelter individuals and families.

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- **March Meeting Minutes**

- Suzanne moved to approve the minutes, Terrence second and the minutes were approved with none opposed.

- **March Statistics**

- In the 2019 surge of people from the Southern Border, there was a discussion on families using Portland as a way station and try to head up to Canada. There was a suggestion there were a lot then. Are we seeing this now?
 - Some families are going to Canada, but it is not a large number.
- Intakes: add pre-pandemic data in a different color to compare to.
- How long do CTOs last?
 - 6 months for government owned buildings and 1 year for private addresses.
- First time homelessness saw a large jump. This is largely attributed to asylum seeking families who are typically experiencing homelessness for the first time; we will see a similar increase in April statistics.

- **Isabelle McDevitt from Work Works: presentation and group discussion**

- New nonprofit working with communities to address homelessness from an employment perspective.
 - Founded in NYC in the 90s.
- Provides TA and on the ground assistance on integrating the model local to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- Work Works invests in human capital in a transition opportunity for 1 year.
 - Paid work
 - Transitional housing
 - Supportive services
 - Access to SUD/behavioral healthcare
 - Medical care
 - Financial management.
- Leverages different funding sources.
 - New market tax credits
 - Workforce funding
- Formal affiliates
 - Philadelphia
 - Atlanta
 - Denver
 - Washington DC
- Problem it looks at
 - Rising homelessness
 - Lack of housing opportunities
 - Only 15 units of housing exist for every 100 unaccompanied adults on the street.
 - Racial injustice

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- Economic exclusion
 - Lack of opportunity for formerly incarcerated people.
- Looking to see if the model could work in Portland.
 - Enhance local service continuum.
 - Complement HUB strategy
 - Target newly homeless individuals
 - Add social enterprise and transitional employment
 - Leverage additional funds
- Stakeholders include people experiencing homeless and reentering from incarceration, local government officials, local employers, permanent and transitional housing providers and public/private funders.
- Provides shelter providers an additional exit.
- Work Woks is for the 75% of people experiencing homeless who do not have serious disabilities or mental illness.
- 25% of the population have been unemployed for 5 or more years.
- Many people experiencing homelessness are working including day labor; this model helps secure stable employment.
- Model can be customized to any community. Examples:
 - Business improvement district proving supplemental sanitation.
 - Everyone in the program is paid over minimum wage and able to save a portion of their income.
 - Added housing by repurposing commercial buildings at 20% of average cost.
- Vocations allow for career tracks (CDL driving for example).
- Model enhances the local continuum.
- Next steps are:
 - To meet with providers and learn about what's working and where there are gaps;
 - Is there an opportunity to add an employment component?
 - Make actionable recommendations.
- Questions
 - Is the housing tied to the housing? If they lose the employment do they lose the housing?
 - It is a yearlong program. If it's housing first with the start of the program. The work is with the social enterprise with the goal of finding mainstream housing an employment.
 - Some stabilize and return to family or find market rate housing.
 - It is for people who will not qualify for other types of housing.
 - People are paid above minimum wage with a savings component. Some housing has subsidy but that will vary locally (such as 30% of income, etc)

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- There is a lot of 62+ housing struggling for staffing.
 - Could this model be integrated to those sectors.
 - It could meet the janitorial and food service needs of housing providers. Some jobs help support the nonprofit offering services.
- How many people on GA are doing workfare.
 - It has been curtailed during the pandemic.
 - HIRE program helped people before the pandemic (as well as apply for state disability)
 - There is also the Portland opportunity Crew that helped panhandlers with day labor and connection to services.
- What are the next steps if someone finishes the program but has not found stable employment of housing.
 - The year is a guideline; some people can stabilize sooner or longer.
 - Follow up and aftercare are part of the services.
- Has the opportunity crew also been suspended
 - That was labor intensive, what will work be like?
 - What kind of staffing would there be for how many clients?
 - Adam will get the info for an update on the POC.
- **Group discussion: Hotel update, including assessment of the outcome of South Portland's city council vote on license renewals for shelters currently housing families (held on 4/19); relevant legislative information and updates (Cullen, others)**
 - The City has been meeting bi-weekly with DHHS Deputy Commissioner Hamm and Gagne-Holmes since October, we requested those meetings increase in frequency to weekly with the announcement of the hotel closure late February.
 - Meetings have included both Deputy Commissioners, Tony Pelotte and Ian Yaffe DHHS, Lauren Bustard MSHA.
 - Search of Greater Portland Area that could be used as a congregate shelter location for the nearly 300 individuals impacted by the South Portland hotel closure.
 - 25,000+ sq. ft
 - Single story
 - Single tenant occupant
 - Showers and bathrooms (if possible)
 - The South Portland City Council approved the license renewal of 4 hotels being used to shelter individuals and families. 3 were approved with conditions that include staffing and reducing calls for service with the 4th approved without conditions.
 - Noted: The City of Lewiston voted 4-3 to pass a temporary moratorium on new emergency shelter.
- **Update on Cumberland County Homeless Response Service Hub (Dan Coyne)**
 - HUB coordinator has been hired and starts May 2, 2022.

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- o Cumberland County HUB selected to participate in the Built for Zero initiative form Community Solutions.
 - Goal is to achieve functional zero of people experiencing homelessness.
 - Learning session next month in Chicago.
- o
- **Federal, State, and Local Legislation update (Cullen Ryan, others); update on ESAC letter to Lewiston regarding proposed shelter moratorium**
 - o FEMA Hotels extended through July 1.
 - o ARPA Funding doesn't play well with local tax credits.
 - o FY23 Budget
 - \$32.1 billion for HCV
 - 3.6 billion increase to Homeless Assistance Grants.
 - HUD has been defunded in the past and this budget sees substantial increases.
 - o Housing for All Act
 - Increases funding across the board including the Housing Trust Fund.
 - o Flexibility in addressing rural homeless has McV funds to better serve those areas.
 - o Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act.
 - Would reduce wait time from 1 year to 30 days.
 - o Supplemental budget was signed into law by the governor
 - 22 million in emergency housing relief
 - Small amount of money to fund other bills.
 - Surplus payments returned to tax payers instead of funding projects.
 - o 1871 extends the human rights commission was signed into law.
 - o 1968 would have targeted people touching emergency system
 - Stripped of everything but the 30 day window for people to get out of jail.
 - Does not have the housing portion.
 - 1822 improves health services.
 - o Recover residence sin rural areas was killed.
 - o Bill to improve intensive behavioral and case management passed by the senate.
 - o Zoning and Land use recommendations passed
 - Allows ADUs to be created anywhere.
 - Up to 4 units (duplexes) built anywhere.
 - o 1673 waiting in appropriations.
- **Other Items and Updates**
 - o How many EHV's have been given and do we need to give any back.
 - We know the number:
 - 60-70% are leased up.
 - We are spending faster than what will last through the end of the year as costs of hotels have dramatically increased.
 - We are doing better than NH and VT that had to hand back vouchers.
 - o HVJ

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- Would like Works Works to join their Monday meeting.
 - Pilot bill on harassment, including employment.
- June 20th, Monday at Tommy's Park in the Old Port is the HVJ Solstice Longest Day of the Year event.
- o Evictions may ramp up with the pandemic waning. ESAC is the placer to talk about capacity issues. Are we thinking what the loss of OSS would look like and where that capacity would be restored somewhere else? It should be a standing agenda item.
- o Cooling Center for hot days.
 - Bill has a Parish connection for a location.
- o HOME Team has expanded services to 9am to 9PM 6 days a week soon to be 7 days a week.
 - Main line is the same: 207-838-8904
 - 114 contacts on 1 day last week with 20 transports.
- o Unsheltered numbers appear to be growing.
- o City of Biddeford sanctioned an encampment last year.
 - Made engagement difficult for outreach workers and a glut of people seeking housing when it got cold without there being housing lined up.
 - Can't set the bar low and say its ok for people to stay outside.
 - It increase isolation and disenfranchisement.