

## Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

### Remote Meeting

Thursday, June 16, 2022

8:30 am – 10:00 am

### Minutes

| Name              | Organization                | Name             | Organization           |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Adam Harr         | City of Portland            | Norm Maze        | Shalom House           |
| Jenny Stasio      | Through These Doors         | Dan Coyne        | United Way             |
| Terence Miller    | Preble Street               | Anne Marie Brown | United Way             |
| Bill Higgins      | HA4All                      | Cullen Ryan      | CHOM                   |
| Johnathan Sarbeck | District Attorney           | Mike Guthrie     | CoP Family Shelter     |
| Sarah Michniewicz | BNA                         | Brian Townsend   | Amistad                |
| Ginny Dill        | Office of Behavioral Health | Mathew Jarrell   | HUB coordinator        |
| Vickey Rand       | CHOM                        | Jim Divine       | HVJ                    |
| Rachel Ohm        | Portland Press Herald       | Isabel McDevit   | America Works          |
| Taylor Cray       | Preble Street               | Mike Merrill     | Volunteers for America |
| George Rheault    | Bayside Resident            |                  |                        |

### Meeting Summary

The May statistics saw a sharp increase in single asylum seekers presenting to OSS at 65. The Warming Center slide returned due to the self-directed GA housing search policy change; the FS explains GA and gives clients landlord forms and MIRC has been assisting finding hotel rooms. Finding hotel rooms for ERA placements is difficult with the rate reduction intended to keep ERA running through October; there will an increase to the rate in July which may help secure rooms. The City of Portland is unable to move forward with the space identified for congregate shelter due to required costs and time delays to meet building requirements; the City of Portland is meeting with South Portland to see what can be done be able to keep people sheltered in South Portland hotels. Our HUB Coordinator explained the goal getting quality data to inform a comprehensive By-Name List (BNL) of people experiencing homelessness in Cumberland County, both sheltered and unsheltered as well as the Built for Zero Quality Data Score Card being used to assess our data. The group to add ESAC to the list of groups thanking Senator

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Collins for signing on as an original cosponsor of the LIFELINE Act. The meeting ended with a discussion on overdose instances and fatalities, that there is a disconnect with what we are observing anecdotally and public perception/reporting.

- **May Meeting Minutes**

- Jim moved to approve the minutes, Taylor seconded and the minutes were approved with none opposed.

- **May Statistics**

- OSS intake: 63 out-of-state clients and 2 unknown reported coming to shelter for “refugee services” and are likely asylum seekers.
- Added warming center slide back.
  - Policy change in May to self-directed housing search for GA.
  - No one has had to sleep outside.
  - Warming Center is a misnomer; it should have an asterisk or be renamed to describe that it is family shelter overflow.
    - Noted: “The Warming Center is an overflow space in the City of Portland Family Shelter used year round as needed.”

- **Community Emergency Shelter Capacity for Families and ERA Changes Update and Discussion**

- Family Shelter clients have had difficulty finding ERA hotel placements due to the lesser rate.
  - Suresh has been taking the \$109 to help shelter families.
- On June first the ERA rate went to the federal guideline of \$109 which will go up to \$170 in July for Portland; they differ by location.
  - It changed because the money was running out fast would help last through the October.
- Maine Immigration Rights Coalition (MIRC) is assisting with hotel placements.
- The City of Portland and
- 59 households in South Portland will be affected with more in surrounding communities.
- City of Portland is making up the difference between ERA rates in Portland but other communities haven’t chosen to do that.

- **Imminent Hotel Closures and Congregate Space Planning Update and Discussion**

- The congregate shelter location the City was looking will not work.
- The City of Portland is meeting with South Portland to work out the supports and infrastructure needed to keep the hotels open in South Portland and not displace people at the end of the month.

- **Cumberland County Service Hub update**

- Mathew Jarrell, [mjerrell@UWSM.org](mailto:mjerrell@UWSM.org), Cumberland County HUB Coordinator
- Looking to get quality data by the end of the year.
  - A by name list of everyone experiencing homelessness in the county.
  - Capturing people who are unsheltered.

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- The list is a means to an end, not the goal.
- Cumberland County HUB is working with the Built for Zero Initiative to help define and get to quality data.
- Quality Data Score Card assesses our data quality.
  - Outreach:
    - Where teams go and who they come into contact with.
    - Coordinated to avoid duplication.
    - Documented outreach.
    - Reach 90% of the unsheltered population and documented to the best of our ability on the by-name list (BNL).
  - BNL Participation
    - Covers all subpopulations.
  - Inactivity
    - Policy on defining and documenting inactivity.
  - Consent
    - Find a way to track who does not want to participate.
- Data team convened by the end of the month. (Formerly outreach team)
  - Draft policy for next ESAC meeting.
- **Federal, State, and Local Legislation Update**
  - **Federal**
    - FEMA hotels funding stops July 1, 2022.
      - Some hotels did not renew their contracts at the end of May outside of the Portland area.
    - Housing Supply Action Plan
      - Affects many ways to increase the production of housing but they would require bills from Congress.
    - LIFELINE Act put forth in Senate to make it easier for Coronavirus State Recovery Funds be used to increase the supply of affordable housing.
      - Statewide Homeless Council sent a letter of thanks to Susan Collins.
        - Add ESAC to the list of groups collectively thanking her.
          - Norm MOVED to add ESAC to the list of groups thanking Senator Collins for signing on as an original cosponsor of the LIFELINE Act; Jenny Seconded. The MOTION was approved with none opposed.
  - The Eviction Crisis Act
    - A diversion bill to prevent people falling into homelessness.
  - Coordinating Substance Use and Homelessness Act of 2022
  - Flexibility in Addressing Rural Homelessness
    - Gets MC-Kinney Vento funds into rural areas.
- **State**
  - Legislature adjourned.

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- LD2003 went through which made changes to land use and zoning restrictions with will make it easier to build affordable housing.
- \$20 MaineHousing plan to expand rural housing development.
- **Other Items, Updates, and Announcements**
  - Longest Day of Homelessness: Friday, June 17th at Tommy's Park
    - 8:00 AM to 5:00PM.
    - Open forum including people with lived experience, political, and community groups.
    - Homelessness is an emergency anytime of the year; heat is deadly too.
  - HVJ Newsletter has started again.
  - Rachel Talbot Ross Bill to investigate discrimination based on housing status by the Maine Human Rights Commission outreach is underway.
    - Leading to a Homeless Bill of Rights.
  - Overdose fatalities.
    - Several recent deaths in the community: in Bayside and heard there was an overdose in Deering Oaks.
    - Is there an uptick in fatalities?
      - Not aware of a spike of fatal overdoses, but we have anecdotally seen an increase in overdoses since May. This could be due to fentanyl in heroin.
    - PPD has put out alerts when there are abnormal spikes observed in OD Mapping but can only see what gets documented.
      - There is an OD spike alert text system.
        - It hasn't been going off recently.
    - This was a topic at the Statewide Homeless Council.
      - 2 overdoses at id Maine Homeless Shelter.
      - The number of Maine overdose deaths are similar to Maine's Covid deaths.
      - Director of Opioid Response Gordon Smith will be at the next meeting.
    - It isn't reported or in the public consciousness as much as it should be.
    - Overdoses versus overdose deaths are conflated an imprecise.
    - The Health & Human and Public Safety Committee have taken up overdose as a priority and reviews needle exchange and overdoes statistics.
    - Overdose data is lacking for many reason including nondisclosure.
      - There is a disconnect between what we are observing and the data we can collect.