

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Remote Meeting

Thursday, November 19, 2020

9:00 am – 10:30 am

Minutes

Name	Organization
Adam Harr	City of Portland
Cullen Ryan	CHOM
Elizabeth Jackson	Greater Portland Health
Aaron Geyer	City of Portland
Jim Devine	HVJ
Oliver Bradeen	Milestone Recovery
Bill Higgins	Ha4aLL
Mary Cook	PATH/TOA
Donna Yellen	Preble Street
Anna Brewer	Preble Street
Katie Seelen	United Way
Tome Natalie	Milestone Recovery
Dan Coyne	United Way
Fred Bever	Maine Public Radio
Ben Strick	Spurwink

Name	Organization
Norm Maze	Shalom House
Ginny Dill	Shalom House
Vickey Rand	CHOM
Rota Knott	Tedford Housing
George Rheault	Hanover Street homeowner
Brian Townsend	Amistad
Rob Liscord	MEJP
Randy Billings	Portland Press Herald
Mason Norton	Amistad
Joann Bautista	Preble Street
Riley McNeil	HVJ
Meredith Pesce	Amistad
Amy Geren	Portland Downtown
Jacqui Deveneau	People's Housing Coalition
Sydney Avitia-Jacques	Maine People's Housing Coalition

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Peter McLaughlin	Maine People's Housing Coalition	Jess Falero	Maine People's Housing Coalition
Orlando Perez	Maine People's Housing Coalition, T.O.S.S. Client	Ken Capron	
Courtney Priest		Sarah Michniewicz	resident
Jenny Stasio	Through These Doors	Ben Martineau	HVJ

- **Introductions**

- George asked about meeting minutes and if there is a recording now that we are on Zoom; he is concerned that minutes aren't captured accurately including grammatical errors and is interested in a record to check.
 - Meetings aren't recorded.
 - There was a mistake in the September minutes.
 - Corrections can be submitted and voted on at the December meeting.
- Amy moved to approve the meeting minutes from October, Brian seconded and the minutes were approved with:
 - George abstained as there is not back-up;
 - Ken Caprone opposed.

- **Meeting Norms**

- Executive committee has been meeting to set agendas including time; any discussion cut short can be readdressed at the end of the meeting.

- **Concerns not on the Agenda**

- Bill Higgins spoke about guidance from HUD on the Point in Time Count (PIT).
 - Bill sent the guidance out via the ESAC listserv.
 - Norm said the PIT planning is continuing and volunteer requests are going to be sent out. The first Wednesday in December is the last meeting before January.
 - There is one webinar training this month and two in December and two in January.
- Orlando said his biggest concern with homelessness is availability and access to resources and accountability at OSS, which he calls T.O.S.S..
 - Clients get CTO'd; from the client perspective, the criteria for what constitutes a CTO seems to change.
 - Maine Peoples Housing coalition told him about a community policing advocate that helps turn over CTOs.
 - If he sees a staff member not doing their assigned position, there is no one to report to.

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- Supervisors are scheduled 6:30 AM to 11:00 PM and one of four on-call supervisors is always available.
- There is unaccountability with assaults.
 - He described a situation where he was assaulted but staff did not witness it and said they could not act.
- The courtyard should be staffed by at least one or two people.
 - There is security during the day and there should also be at night.
- He described a client being discharged from the hospital and denied access to the shelter.
- Radio communication is an issue.
 - Staff turn walkie talkies down to the lowest volume while still being able to hear.
 - Orlando clarified that the issue is that people are joking on their radios at night when people are trying to sleep.
- By Portland fire code, mats should be a minimum of 6 inches apart. When this isn't followed, who do you report to? With social distancing, they should be 6 feet apart.
 - Hygiene complaints are met with being told to take a walk or threaten CTO.
- There is a lack of relationship building between staff and the people staying there.
- Staff should not be on their phones watching movies at night.
- Rob said he heard the issue is a lack of transparency on accountability.
 - Orlando agreed but said the issue is communication and wants:
 - Access to phone numbers;
 - A suggestion box that would lead to active, visible change.
 - Aaron to follow up.
 - Jess Falero said the lack of accountability is the issue and that Aaron has been dismissive to get conversations in private. They think it should not be just a suggestion box.
 - Dan said this issue highlights the work of the governance committee and executive committee.
- Peter McLaughlin asked if there will be an update on the county way location and Winter shelter?
 - It will be talked about in Status of Shelter and Unsheltered Homelessness.
- **Rapid Re-Housing Program Update**
 - Fully staffed and have enrolled 20 people and working to get the remaining 20 enrolled.
 - 2 families housed with 2 on deck to follow.
 - Bill asked what is being done to prevent homelessness as the eviction moratorium doesn't have adequate rental assistance.
 - MaineHousing has funds for November rent but will only have funds in December if they are authorized from the governor.

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- General Assistance has the emergency provision to provide assistance above guidelines in case of emergencies including imminent loss of night time shelter, but this is unlikely to be used in other communities.
- Is there still money in the city's CDBG funding.
 - Aaron to get an update from Mary Davis.
- Accountability for towns administering GA; people should be applying in their own towns.
 - Rob's contact information for help from Pine Tree:
rliscord@mejp.org
- Federal moratorium is an unfunded mandate. MaineHousing has renewed its rental assistance program but it is likely to run out again unless federal assistance comes.
- Assistance provision is likely to include diversion and RRH.
- Coordinated Entry will promote additional diversion to help folks not fall fully into homelessness.
- Rapid resolution is great, but Rob is concerned with COVID-19, couch surfing is another type of congregate setting where social distancing isn't possible.
- **Status of Shelter Accessibility for Adults**
 - o October Shelter Statistics
 - GA hotels means our actual numbers are higher.
 - New slide to show voucher distribution of housing placements.
 - Please send the placement types your program uses and note which are permanent and which are transitional.
 - George spoke about reduced capacity at Milestone. Are we tracking the capacity of shelters?
 - Can we see pre-COVID-19 versus current capacity?
 - This used to be tracked.
 - o Can add capacity totals at the top of our shelter count by night slide.
 - o Report current capacity and pre-COVID-19 capacity.
 - o Peter asked for an update on the Joyce House emergency shelter at County Way.
 - Access is confusing for people who need shelter; needs more communication.
 - Weekly provider meetings to get contact information to distribute to people in need of shelter.
 - Joyce House has gone back and forth between the County and City working out an agreement.
 - Continue to use hotels during this time.
 - Aaron is not aware of anyone who stayed at the Expo who were not able to move to a hotel.
 - Peter has connections to people who stayed at the expo who are now on the street and thinks the people who were at the expo in the

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final days are in hotels but people who happened to not be staying in the last few nights are not on the street.

- o Orlando said his current experience with GA hotels vs OSS: why is there a segregation of the two?
 - Intake is done at OSS and when OSS reaches capacity people go to hotel.
 - Orlando clarified while he was at the Days Inn, a GA recipient visited him. He went through OSS, when the shelter director saw his friend enter his room, the shelter director said having guests was not allowed. He said the policy is OSS guests can't have guests from GA.
 - There are searches with or without guests being present.
 - o A search resulted in what was confused for alcohol and there was no recourse or someone to report the issue to.
 - o It is not ok and a violation of privacy.
 - Doors are not able to lock and people should be outraged at this treatment and violation.
 - There needs to be more information and access to resources including the RRH program.
 - There should be oversight.
- **Unsheltered Homelessness**
 - o Jess said there is a fear of entering shelter and of not being able to access resources.
 - o What is the number for contacting for GA hotels? A line outside where you can lose your place because you had to leave to find a bathroom is not good.
 - General Assistance: 207-482-5122
 - Noted: in the chat, Rob said if you have questions about your individual rights and eligibility for GA, please also reach out to Pine Tree Legal: <https://ptla.org/contact-us>
 - Oxford Street Shelter: 207- 761-2072
 - o There are discussions on these pieces at the provider meetings.
 - o Should there be a working group to hash out the issues shared?
 - Take what is a shared and then bring back solutions to the meeting?
 - Rob is happy to be a part of that group and thinks a physical space is important.
 - Rob thinks a weekly update on available resources could be a part of this.
 - o Debt payment to general assistance is not really a barrier in terms of how much people accumulate in GA expenditures preventing access.
- **LTS**
 - o Long Term Stayers (LTS) is a weekly meeting of providers with a list of the people who stay in shelter/outside the longest. It has been in place for 5.5 years.
 - o 15 organizations have collaborated to house and keep housed 277 out of almost 500 people with 94.86% success rate in housing.
 - o Covid has slowed things down as staff were diverted to emergency tasks and meetings stopped for a time.

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- o Lists combined into one and will start a new list of people who have emerged as long-term stayers.
 - Focus on people with complex issues.
- o Up to half the pace of housing that we had before the pandemic; RRH will help.
- o Examining folks staying outside who will be part of a new list.
- **Policy Update**
 - o **Federal**
 - Moratorium on evictions; still looking for resources on rental assistance from the feds but not there yet.
 - HUD funding has increases being looked at by house and senate.
 - Looking at omnibus funding bill.
 - House and senate are far apart on stimulus funding.
 - o **State**
 - Unlikely to see the legislature reconvene.
 - Good time to reach out to representatives on why it's important to prioritize homelessness funding.
 - Looking at FUSE.
 - o **Local**
 - Referendums A through E passed.
 - Concerns there may be a negative effect in affordable housing.
- **Governance Committee**
 - o Governance committee continues to meet; please email with questions.
- **General Organization Updates**
 - o Jim said on Friday at 11:30 AM, HVJ is having a zoom meeting with new City Councilor Andrew Zarro and is looking to have one with April Fournier.
 - o Adam Rice works with the People's Housing Coalition and does outreach for people staying at Motel 6 using GA said a lot of people are reporting the hotels removed appliances for cooking and do not know when meals are being delivered.
 - What food resource information can be shared or who can assist with this issue?
 - Peer Outreach Program is doing some food deliveries; Amistad has more information.
 - Joanne of Preble Street is working with Rob on a food map.