

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes

July 18th, 2013

Bob Duranleau	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division
Douglas Gardner	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept.
Josh O'Brien	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Rob Parritt	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Harrison Deah	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Jeff Tardif	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Family Shelter
Aaron Geyer	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division
Patty Robinson	Preble Street
Phil Allen	Preble Street, Veteran Housing Services
Amy Gallant	Preble Street
Marshall Archer	SSVF/Veteran Housing Services – City of Portland
Val Fitzgerald	Opportunity Alliance
Elizabeth Szatkowski	Opportunity Alliance
Ginny Dill	Shalom House
Tom Ptacek	Homeless Voices for Justice
Jim Devine	Homeless Voices for Justice
Betsy Whitman	First Parish UU
Bob Dodge	LearningWorks
Cullen Ryan	CHOM
Vickey Rand	CHOM
Jenny Stasio	Family Crisis Services
Steve Hirshon	Bayside Neighborhood Association
Amy Faulkingham	2-1-1 Maine
Shana Pike	SteppingStones
Kathleen Babeu	City of South Portland
Michael Damon	Graham Behavioral Services
Samantha Pelletier	Graham Behavioral Services
Heather Rhoda	Franklin Peabody Center
Carol Kulesza	Veterans Affairs

I. Portland Homeless Task Force Action Plan – Overview

Doug discussed the Task Force and the seven themes surrounding the city and homelessness: Case Management, Rapid Rehousing, Outreach, Zoning Constraints, Special Population Housing, Housing First Project, and Regional Approach. Case management will address housing plans. Rapid Rehousing is a smaller version of HPRP to work in conjunction with case management and the Home to Stay program through 40 additional Portland Housing Authority and Preble Street's CLIP program. One more step will include the Housing and Community Development Division and Social Services Division in working with area landlords and tenants on programs and services offered by the city. The City, Preble Street, and Milestone, agreed that any additional outreach funds be used to expand current programs. The Health and Human Service Department has taken the lead and a press conference will be conducted to release the information. Doug discussed the zoning issues in the city with developing new Housing First facilities. HUD will be conducting a study in August or September to look at policies and recommendations. Doug addressed Sober Housing and Homeless Medical Respite for the Special Population Housing theme. The City has entered into an agreement with the York County Shelter as a short-term sober housing option for Oxford Street clients. Meanwhile, there is inadequate support for those discharged from local hospitals that still need respite care for their conditions. The Barron Center

currently only holds two beds for this purpose, but the United Way has agreed to free up more money to help. Doug expressed hope for funding from Medicaid and Obamacare provisions in the new calendar year. Obstacles will include finding locations for these individuals, then looking at follow-up guidelines for continuation of respite services and finding sustainable funding sources. Finally, Doug discussed the Housing First model and Regional Approach. A recommendation to allocate \$50,000 in Housing Replacement funds to create a grant to provide funding in pre-development activities for new housing opportunities, along with working on identifying funding options for support services. The Metro Coalition met in April to discuss and encourage member communities in supporting affordable housing projects in their communities. This could include working with the Housing Authority in setting aside vouchers specifically for those experiencing homelessness. This would create additional housing options for the Portland market. Doug followed by showing housing placement estimates by program and their metrics. He believes the numbers are strong so far, despite the additional housing vouchers and Home to Stay program are not yet implemented. Carol asked for clarification of the respite program. Doug explained that those non-categorically eligible for MaineCare (typically parents of small children) will be dropping off, which totals approximately 25,000. This will be a game changer for the city and will disrupt services throughout Maine. Phil stated that Togus is looking to do more with homeless vets. It has been suggested by Togus that a collaboration be established, as they have the money to help focus on homeless vets. Jim addressed that AA and NA are working with Milestone on sober living alternatives, and Amy addressed the funds availability of these other programs. Betsy asked about the telephone number being established to call about homelessness. Doug explained this will be the 838-number and the call will be forwarded to Preble Street in the morning and then Milestone after noon. While this number will be published on pamphlets and around the city, people can still call 911 dispatch and be forwarded. He also reminded everyone that HOME team funding is gone at the end of FY14 and funds will need to be raised through funds and grants. Doug will be updating the City Council in September. He welcomed everyone to attend the meeting.

II. *Introductions*

Tom Ptacek, ESAC Tri-Chair, welcomed everyone and brief introductions were made.

III. *June 2013 Bed Usage Statistics – New Format – Bob Duranleau*

Bob reviewed the monthly shelter statistics for May 2013 (see attachment). He admitted there are some glitches to still work out for the next month as well. Josh reviewed the Warming Center handout. Tom asked about clusters and patterns; Josh responded these were most likely due to weather conditions (i.e. rain), and not due to a specific day of the week. Group discussed and all stated they like the new format.

IV. *Oxford Street Shelter and Family Shelter Matrixes*

Bob briefly reviewed the matrixes, as they were addressed in Doug's presentation.

V. *Portland CoC Update*

Bob gave an update on the last CoC meeting. The group decided to work with Cloudburst and HUD to address how we want to work with ServicePoint and what would like to be seen for results. This will allow the group to present proposed changes to Maine Housing and Bowman.

VI. *Client Support & Services Plan – Update*

Josh stated that housing placements are up. This proves the collaboration between Preble Street, the City, and VHS to be a strong one. The Florence House and CLIP team is working with individuals to ensure they receive the best services for their needs. Jim and Josh discussed the nice weather challenges on home meetings at the Oxford Street Shelter.

VII. *New Security Procedures – Oxford Street Shelter & Community Overflow Baggage Checks – Update*

Josh stated there are now two uniformed officers from 6:00pm to 12:00am (midnight). HVJ was there the first night to meet with the officers and staff to meet with them and go over orientation. The new policy seems to be successful, as staff members and many clients have stated they feel safer. Check-in times are slower, but the staff will work around the issue. He also stated that there has been some

surprise as to the reactions by some clients. Many thought to have strong reactions, didn't appear to mind, while others not expected to react, did. There have been questions regularly on what is allowable (sewing kits and nail clippers are deemed OK). Rob has done an inventory of the items confiscated, and reported approximately 75 items in three weeks. These items include knives, large scissors, drug paraphernalia, and fireworks. These searches seemed to have prompted fewer serious incidents. There is ongoing training on the new procedure to gain general feedback from clients and staff. The security officers are also doing high visibility walks around the area. As for items cataloged, items like large knives and other high risk items will be flagged and chronic offenders will be discussed. Currently, only prescribed needles are allowed in the building, and others found with contraband will be put on restriction. This contraband also includes loose medication (not in a prescription bottle), and the restriction will be placed based on the amount of the item. The police are still present and offer guidance. Bob stated that Command Security is the tracking of these instances. Betsy asked where individuals are sent if turned away because of needles. Josh stated they are not given a specific place, but it is explained why they cannot stay. Amy asked about the belief that Oxford Street is doing body searches. Rob stated that no body searches are being performed. The closest may be to ask a client to turn their pockets out. He and Josh stated that this is probably being stated due to observed behavior of those turning pockets out. Jim stated that he has heard of many women wanting a female security guard at the shelter and wanting to be able to retrieve their knives in the morning upon leaving the shelter. Rob and Josh stated it is something they can address and see what can be done.

VIII. *Preble Street Clinical Intervention Program (CLIP) – Update*

No one was present from the CLIP team to present.

IX. *City of Portland ESG Program – Update*

Harrison stated there was not much to update, other than the ESG program is out of money, but is actively working on getting funding, including Rapid Rehousing funds.

X. *Home to Stay Program*

Bob stated the City of Portland Home to Stay will work collaboratively with Preble Street. Bob and Maria Tripp are coordinating start dates. They will hire a total of four staff, including Aaron Geyer as the Program Coordinator. Aaron stated they are hoping for a July 29th kick-off date and hoping to hire those individuals soon.

XI. *Homeless Outreach Group Discussion*

This is tabled until next month.

XII. *Federal and State Legislation*

Cullen stated that he, and a few others, would be going to Washington DC next week to meet with delegates and discuss new legislation. He informed everyone that 213,000 individuals could get housing with the new \$2.831B on the table, rather than the \$1.9B currently being received. Sequestrations have caused a cut in the ESG program by 25% and CoC by 7-8%. They could cause the loss of 140,000 Section 8 vouchers, which could be offset by the mortgage interest reduction from \$1M to \$500,000 in home equity. The reduction could raise \$197B and could double the current Section 8 funding to approximately \$40B and house all homeless individuals in Maine. Cullen stressed the significance of the sequestrations, as they are for nine years and will affect, Section 8, Home to Stay, and ESG. He is looking to collect stories on how individuals and agencies are affected by these cuts, as things are only going to get worse. Cullen directed those with stories to Vickey for compilation. Jim stated the Senator King would be meeting with Preble Street on July 31st to discuss HVJ and other homeless initiatives. Cullen stated this is a positive sign, as he has been working with King's office on education about the homeless population.

XIII. *Other Business*

Bob discussed his meeting with Metro and their need for office space for three to four days during the first few days of the month to work on bus passes for MaineCare recipients for rides to appointments.

Anyone with available office space to offer Don Gerrish, Acting Director of Metro, should call him at 774-0351. RTP no longer has the contract, and CTS out of Lewiston is trying to centralize the process. Individuals would call one number and show up with identification to pick up their pass. This seems more desirable, rather than people lining up at 4am at the beginning of each month to secure these bus passes.

***NEXT MEETING:
Thursday, August 15, 2013***

8:30 – 10:00 AM

Refugee Services Area, 190 Lancaster Street

*Please contact Robert Duranleau, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division at 482-5124;
or Tom Ptacek, HVJ at 775-0026; if you should have any agenda items for the next meeting.*