

# **Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee**

## **Meeting Minutes February 19, 2015**

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|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Jeff Tardif</b>          | City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Family Shelter        |
| <b>Aaron Geyer</b>          | City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Support Services      |
| <b>Rob Parritt</b>          | City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter |
| <b>Mary Ellen Welch</b>     | City of Portland, PPD Community Policing                                                         |
| <b>Sara Fleurant</b>        | City of Portland, PPD Community Policing                                                         |
| <b>Amy Grommes Pulaski</b>  | City of Portland, Housing & Community Development Program                                        |
| <b>Amy Geren</b>            | City of Portland, Housing & Community Development Program                                        |
| <b>Tom Ptacek</b>           | Preble Street                                                                                    |
| <b>Donna Yellen</b>         | Preble Street                                                                                    |
| <b>Ashley Gorczyca</b>      | Preble Street/Homeless Voices for Justice                                                        |
| <b>Jim Devine</b>           | Homeless Voices for Justice                                                                      |
| <b>John Monahan</b>         | Homeless Voices for Justice                                                                      |
| <b>Cullen Ryan</b>          | CHOM                                                                                             |
| <b>Vickey Rand</b>          | CHOM                                                                                             |
| <b>Norm Maze</b>            | Shalom House                                                                                     |
| <b>Elizabeth Szatkowski</b> | The Opportunity Alliance                                                                         |
| <b>Wendy Harmon</b>         | Southern Maine Landlord Association                                                              |
| <b>Jenny Stasio</b>         | Family Crisis Services                                                                           |
| <b>Chris Shorr</b>          | Amistad                                                                                          |

### **I. Introductions**

Aaron welcomed the group and brief introductions were made.

### **II. January 2015 Bed Usage Statistics – Rob Parritt**

Rob reviewed the January 2015 statistics ([see statistics](#)). Tom asked about the continuously high number of intakes throughout the city. Rob feels this would be better represented by showing how many bed nights consumed, and how many left before the 14-day mark. Jeff stated that families don't have the same transiency, so this view may not transfer over. Rob agreed, stating that family and youth intakes have different variables playing a part, so it would be harder to look. Wendy would like to see where these individuals are being housed, especially considering the loss of Wilmont and Cumberland Avenue properties. There was further discussion surrounding the evictions at the Danforth on High.

### **III. Shelter Matrix – Update – Rob Parritt, Jeff Tardif**

Rob discussed the OSS matrix and the issues with the need for community case management to follow-up once these individuals are housed. Additionally, he would like to see more case management to prevent homelessness for those at-risk individuals.

Jeff stated that Family Shelter housing placements are up from last year and is hoping to continue the trend. Most of the placements were non-subsidized, Portland placements and most likely not eligible for subsidies.

### **IV. Home to Stay Program Update – Aaron Geyer**

Aaron reported that the new funding was announced. The team is currently working with 109 cases.

### **V. Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program – Aaron Geyer**

Aaron reported that they assisted 8 households in January. TBRA is still looking for referrals, as they need to spend down funds.

All referrals may be sent to:

Aaron Geyer, (207) 482-5131, [aeg@portlandmaine.gov](mailto:aeg@portlandmaine.gov)

Mary Ellen thanked the TBRA team for housing an individual she was working with.

Jeff reminded everyone that TBRA doesn't need to be repaid, so this is good for many individuals who need help with utility and security deposits.

**VI. *Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) – Amy Grommes Pulaski***

Amy introduced herself and explained her position with the city, as well as USM intern, Amy Geren. ESG requires CDBG meet with ESAC and CoC to go over the 5-year plan. Amy reviewed the ESG funding history, including the jump in FY 2011-12 and the HMIS/Admin change with the adding of HPRP funding by HUD. Aaron discussed the loss of CoC funds and how ESG will help fill those gaps. The Family Shelter gained a larger portion due to shifting funds between programs. Amy will work with Aaron on a narrative to explain the way funding has been moved and shifted and will distribute for a vote in March.

Rob asked why there was recent jump in funding. Amy stated this part of HUD's initiative to end homelessness, not necessarily due to previous performance.

**VII. *Homeless Voices for Justice Update***

Jim stated that the Annual Homeless Voices for Justice Day at the State House was on February 12. Other chapters located in Lewiston, Brunswick, and Augusta joined in the tour of the State House and meeting with Governor LePage.

HVJ is still working with Portland PD and OSS on storage issues and how to move forward.

The Maine Human Rights Commission has another meeting to discuss fair housing on February 24.

HVJ, Preble Street, The Opportunity Alliance, Amistad, and Rep. Stuckey are working on a bill surrounding the bus pass issue. Ashley stated they are still working on the language of the bill surrounding funding the gap between bus usage and MaineCare reimbursable appointments.

LD 197 requires a photo ID, Feb 25 is when they will be attending the hearing to argue against it.

Donna Yellen Amy Gallant will be leaving PS; a gathering will be held at Maine Hunger Initiative Office at 38 Preble Street on Wednesday, February 25, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm.

**VIII. *Federal and State Legislation – Cullen Ryan***

Federal: The President has released his budget, which looks good. HOME is one area that did take a hit, most likely due to the lack of needed advocacy. The overall budget won't pass, most likely; it will be a starting and reference point during gridlock.

The National Housing Trust Fund has a threat of being overturned, but isn't gaining much traction. It will still be on radar, however.

The Governor's Budget Part E has a hearing today at 1:00 pm. If a nonprofit has over \$500,000 appraised value in one municipality, they would be taxed at 50% the normal tax rate over the \$500,000 mark. This heavily impacts nonprofits, especially those with group homes, shelters, schools, etc. This tax burden is to make up for the lack of funding from the proposed revenue sharing cut. Cullen pointed out that 33% of state representatives are new and don't know how the cost of homelessness that will increase due to facilities closing and causing a higher burden on general assistance. Also in the budget, there is funding to end the waitlist for the elderly and disabled waiting for housing and BRAP is budgeted to be increased by \$1.2.

Vickey discussed the General Assistance proposal and the projected annual cost of \$5-7M to the City of Portland. It is better defined in the Maine Municipal Association's [Legislative Bulletin](#).

The following bills are being put before the State and should be monitored:

LD 368: “An Act To Integrate the State’s General Assistance and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Programs”. Any person having exhausted the 60-month eligibility for TANF would be ineligible for General Assistance.

LD 369: “An Act to Align Municipal General Assistance Programs with the Immigration Status Policies of the Department of Health and Human Services”. Any person ineligible for DHHS benefits will be ineligible for General Assistance.

Cullen pointed out that with all of the proposed changes to tax policies, there may be a decrease in the budget in the next cycle, causing cuts throughout the state.

There was a change in the definition of a homeless individual to cover those who are couch-surfing and imminently at risk. Rob stated that while this sounds great, those who are literally homeless may lose out on resources because scarce resources will be spread thinner. Vickey gave two resources for advocates to use surrounding the topic:

<http://www.cbpp.org/files/3-10-14hous-factsheets/ME.pdf>

<http://www.cbpp.org/files/4-13-11hous-ME.pdf>

#### **IX. Other Business**

Donna discussed where youth are coming from when entering the youth shelter. Jim Martin and Grace Braison from DHHS would like to come to ESAC and discuss this, or a smaller group.

Rob informed the group that Angela Havlin has been appointed the Acting Shelter Director through June 30. She can be reached at (ahavlin@portlandmaine.gov). Many around the table thanked Rob for his time and dedication to the City and the community and wished him luck in his move to MSHA.

Tom announced that for anyone working with clients who are dual eligible (Medicare and Medicaid), the special needs packages will be in Maine next month. Please contact Tom at [tptacek@preblestreet.org](mailto:tptacek@preblestreet.org) for more information.

Vickey presented a thank you letter to Bob Duranleau for his decades of service for signatures.

**Next Meeting:**  
**Thursday, March 19, 2015**  
**8:30 – 10:00am**  
**REFUGEE SERVICES CONFERENCE AREA**  
**190 Lancaster Street**

If you should have any questions, please contact:

Aaron Geyer  
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(207) 482-5131  
[aeg@portlandmaine.gov](mailto:aeg@portlandmaine.gov)

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