

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes March 19, 2015

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, Support Services
Kelsey Tønning	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Home To Stay
Angela Havlin	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Dawn Stiles	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept.
Amy Grommes-Pulaski	City of Portland, Community Development Dept.
Amy Geren	City of Portland
Jon Bradley	Preble Street
Sean Fitzpatrick	Preble Street
Ashley Gorczyca	Preble Street/HVJ
Jim Devine	Homeless Voices for Justice
John Monahan	Homeless Voices for Justice
Jeff Vane	Homeless Voices for Justice
William Higgins	Homeless Voices for Justice/Semper Resurgam
Vickey Rand	CHOM
Cullen Ryan	CHOM
Elizabeth Szatkowski	The Opportunity Alliance
Jenny Stasio	Family Crisis Services
Chris Shorr	Amistad
Carol Kulesza	Veterans Affairs
Steve Ellis	Frannie Peabody
Branden Parker	Frannie Peabody
Tom Natalie	Milestone
Shana Pike	SteppingStones

I. Introductions

Aaron welcomed the group and brief introductions were made.

II. February 2015 Bed Usage Statistics – Jeff Tardif

Jeff reviewed the February 2015 statistics ([see statistics](#)). Jon pointed out that it is clear the decrease of housing placements is indicative of a tight housing market in Portland. Angela stated that housing placements are down at OSS due to the efforts to keep individuals in the Wilmont apartments housed in other locations, rather than new housing placements. She clarified the few that are not rehoused are back at the shelter and are close to being housed. Angela thanked other programs for their help.

Dawn asked for clarification on the shelter capacities, where the highest night was 531. It was stated that while the city-wide capacity is higher than 531, due to logistics to room men and women, as well as individual adults vs. families vs. adolescents, many of the shelters max out.

III. Shelter Matrix – Update – Jeff Tardif

Jeff discussed the lower average number of families per night at the Family Shelter. Lower intakes helped, but that number was offset by lower housing placements. For instance, he noticed that seven (7) families left due to reasons unknown and without warning, so that also decreased overall numbers at the shelter. In reviewing where people are going, he stated any out of state placements are due to reunification with families, as they do not bus people to other shelters.

Angela reviewed the Oxford Street Shelter (OSS) matrix. The reason numbers are most likely going higher is due to those short-term stayers becoming long-term stayers, as it only takes 180 to be in that field. Now, all new clients are required to attend daily housing and shelter orientation, where expectations and community

resources are discussed. Angela stated that while housing placements were down for the month, an additional five (5) were rehoused due to apartments being sold and tenants being evicted. OSS has been working with new landlords in the area to work with their clients, in hopes to offset the tight housing market.

IV. OSS Long Term Stayers Report Update – Angela Havlin

Ginny stated that since OSS has started focusing on chronically homeless, she has seen significant stability with this clientele and a smaller number of turnaround of clients, as Shelter Plus Care is a one-in/one-out program. Angela agreed, stating that these clients are receiving more services to help them stay housed. She went on to discuss the lower threshold to determine their top 30 stayers: it was originally set at 2,000 bed nights and is now down to 180 in just one year. Currently, no women have over 1,000 bed nights.

V. Home to Stay Program Update – Aaron Geyer

Aaron reported that they currently had 121 clients served, with 4 housing placements for February. Jon stated he would like to see how Home To Stay is performing city-wide, as this is just a snapshot of the City's program.

VI. Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program – Aaron Geyer

Aaron reminded everyone that Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) is short-term rental assistance with deposits, rent, and utilities.

In February, TBRA assisted 16 individuals with \$6,800. Jeff pointed out these shelter clients can use TBRA with their subsidies, and asked which shelters housing clients are using the program. Kelsey pointed out that the deposit comes back to the client, not the program. Aaron offered up his team to do more outreach and explaining their services more for case managers to learn about the program.

All referrals may be sent to:

Aaron Geyer, (207) 482-5131, aeg@portlandmaine.gov

Kelsey Tanning, (207) 482-5208, kt@portlandmaine.gov

VII. Shelter Consolidation Update – Jon Bradley

Jon discussed the shelter consolidation process between the City and local agencies. He admitted the process moved faster than anyone expected. The taskforce will now include individuals from agencies and any interested parties, and is schedule to take eight (8) months to review options. Jon discussed the different ideas behind scattered site and single site ideas.

Dawn pointed out the taskforce is not looking to make recommendations, but rather pull various options from city staff, providers, and vested parties, and how to best meet all options presented. She reminded everyone that none of these can be fully viewed and understood until the state budget is passed and we know where the City stands financially with General Assistance (GA) and revenue sharing. She is optimistic that the public process will yield positive results.

Dawn stated the City is looking for a neutral third party with experience in feasibility studies to staff the selection committee and draft the report. She also asked for further recommendations for the site selection committee, including HVJ, and other agencies. William Higgins suggested business entities to donate their experience in project management.

Please send all recommendations to Dawn Stiles at dcs@portlandmaine.gov

VIII. Homeless Voices for Justice Update

LD443 hearing was this week, everyone testifying was in support

LD 197, requiring individuals to provide IDs to vote, was not passed.

LD 841, the bill surrounding bus passes, will be heard next month. Ashley will distribute more information as it becomes available.

IX. Federal and State Legislation – Cullen Ryan

Federal:

Sen. Collins opened THUD committee discussed homelessness and the need for continued focus on homeless veterans and youth. She was concerned that VASH vouchers were cut from the President's budget. This is most likely because the President's plan to end homelessness ended in 2016. Collins was also concerned about youth homelessness and the need for more Section 8 vouchers. Sen. King discussed the need to end sequestration, which is likely to happen this year. The President's budget includes funding for McKinney housing assistance, around \$8.4 billion.

State:

There has been testimony surrounding the state budget and bills, including the increase in funding for homeless shelters. Only \$300,000 is currently appropriated, while this bill will bring it to \$3.5M, allowing shelters to stay open.

Last week, there was testimony against cuts to GA and the way it is administered regarding revenue sharing. Additionally, there were talks surrounding cuts to MaineCare-paid methadone treatment.

There was also testimony surrounding the nonprofit property tax. Cullen explained why nonprofit status is so important to housing programs, since they are able to provide lower rental prices since they do not pay taxes.

There was a proposal to cut the HOME fund, which funds housing development, by half. It leverages \$10 for every \$1 that is in the fund.

X. Other Business

Amy Grommes-Pulaski discussed the ESG program with the City. CDBG, HOME, and ESG are federal grants received by HUD. She brought the shelter standards to the CoC yesterday, which were passed. She reviewed the new budget and shelter performance standards (see attached). Amy clarified that the standards were put together by Oxford Street and Family Shelter staff.

Cullen motioned to pass. Tom N. seconded, unanimously approved.

Aaron discussed the next Mainstream Resources training on April 16th from 10:30 am -12:00 pm. (see attached)

Next Meeting:

Thursday, April 16, 2015

8:30 – 10:00am

REFUGEE SERVICES CONFERENCE AREA

190 Lancaster Street

If you should have any questions, please contact:

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