

# Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

## Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2015

|                 |                                                                                                  |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| David MacLean   | City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division                        |
| 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, Home To Stay          |
| Angela Giordano | City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter |
| MaryEllen Welch | City of Portland, Police Department, Community Policing                                          |
| Sara Fleurant   | City of Portland, Police Department, Community Policing                                          |
| Vickey Rand     | CHOM                                                                                             |
| Cullen Ryan     | CHOM                                                                                             |
| Ali Lovejoy     | Preble Street                                                                                    |
| Jim Devine      | Homeless Voices for Justice                                                                      |
| William Higgins | Homeless Voices for Justice                                                                      |
| Kathleen Babeu  | City of South Portland                                                                           |
| Tom Natalie     | Milestone                                                                                        |
| Wendy Harmon    | Southern Maine Landlords Association                                                             |
| Ginny Dill      | Shalom House                                                                                     |
| Angela Sequoia  | Shalom House                                                                                     |
| Don Harden      | Catholic Charities Maine                                                                         |
| Sarah Worthing  | Family Crisis Services                                                                           |
| Nicole Evans    | United Way of Greater Portland                                                                   |
| Branden Parker  | Frannie Peabody Center                                                                           |
| Steve Ellis     | Frannie Peabody Center                                                                           |

### I. Introductions

Aaron welcomed the group and brief introductions were made.

### II. May 2015 Bed Usage Statistics – Jeff Tardif

Jeff reviewed the May 2015 statistics ([see statistics](#)). He pointed out that the nightly numbers are slightly higher from last year. Additionally, Joe Kreisler had another high month in housing placements, but no one from the shelter was in attendance to explain the uptick.

He explained the high number of first time homeless was due to the high number of intakes from out of country and has never been to a shelter. He pointed out that this seems like the first month, in some time, where there was not a single night above 500 individuals.

### III. Shelter Matrix – Update – Jeff Tardif and Angela Havlin

Jeff pointed out that this is typically their busiest time of year, as schools are letting out. In regards to housing, it is still proving difficult to house visa families due to political and funding policies still in the air.

Angela stated that it is nice to see numbers on the decline this month, and the warming center was used only once last month. Housing placements are moving along with the long-term stayers initiative and they have made strong community contacts to help in those placements.

### IV. OSS Long Term Stayers Report Update – Angela Havlin

Angela discussed the subcommittee's goal to house those longest term stayers and mitigate the overflow closure impact. She extended an invitation to all individuals in the room to participate in the initiative. So far, they have been able to house 56 of the 70 originally listed and proving to be on track to house the entire 70 by December 31<sup>st</sup>. After those individuals are housed, the subcommittee will reevaluate and see where to go from there.

Cullen stated commended the group in their efforts. Angela pointed out that Amistad and Milestone have been very active in follow-up care after placements and she thanked them for their commitment. She also pointed out that this weekend, the shelter number dipped down to 195, showing a trend in the right direction. Cullen stated that Steve Ellis and Norman Maze spent time at the OSS on Monday and located many clients that are eligible for Section 8 and helped them apply for the vouchers.

**V. Home to Stay and Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program – Aaron Geyer**

Aaron announced that Kelsey Tanning has left the City and her replacement will be Amber Bowman, who is shifting over from the Family Shelter. Amber's phone number is the same as Kelsey's, so as not to cause confusion on what number to call.

Aaron discussed the financial allotments for both programs. He appreciates and thanked the community for the increased number of referrals to the program.

All referrals may be sent to:

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

Amber Bowman, (207) 482-5208, [ajb@portlandmaine.gov](mailto:ajb@portlandmaine.gov)

**VI. Homeless Voices for Justice Update**

The payment plan at the Oxford Street Shelter is on hold until the budget passes and seeing how that portion is worked out. Ali asked what message is being delivered to the clients. Angela stated it has been word of mouth at this point, as the community asked not to tell clients yet. Dave explained that this is something that the Division was asked to do and prepare for implementation.

Coming up is the Bus Pass demonstration project in conjunction with Rep. Stuckey. This is to let people with enough appointments to receive Metro passes. Steve stated this is also for other low-income individuals, not just those on Medicaid. They are waiting to schedule the next meeting.

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

Cullen reported that the federal is still at an impasse with the T-HUD bill. This will cut most voucher programs significantly, and the word is that it is so bad that it may die or get vetoed, which will get them to relook at the numbers. Additionally, there are some bills trying to make it illegal to fund the housing trust fund, and with cuts to the state home funds, this could have a larger impact.

There is a group of about 13 going to the National Alliance for Homelessness and have been meeting to discuss what they would like to talk to delegation about. He will report back on those.

On the State level, a budget was approved by the leaders, and the governor has vetoed four lines so far. They thought this was veto-proof, but that turned out not to be true. Cullen believes there was about \$2M for shelters, but no funding for asylum seekers. There was also a 9-month time limit proposal on GA, which seems to be gaining traction. The revenue sharing cut was not passed. The homestead exemption was decreased as well. The GA reimbursement has been flattened to 70%, rather than the 50%/90% system currently in place.

In tax reform changes, sales will stay at 5.5%, and lodging will go from 8% to 9%, and meals will stay at 8%. Income tax brackets have been shifted and only impacts those in the middle and lower-wage income. They are changing the standard deduction, causing a lack of revenue that may result in cutting services to the homeless and poor of Maine.

Ali discussed the impact of the lack of funding for those who may no longer be eligible for General Assistance. Cullen stated that City Council will start talking on June 24<sup>th</sup>. Bill pointed out that without paying for those individuals, it is already a 2.9% increase, and this would be an additional 3% increase to taxpayers. Steve stated that LD 369 has passed the House, but not yet the Senate. Ali asked what the group would like to do.

Cullen motioned for ESAC to support LD 369. Ginny seconded. Unanimous vote.

Dave discussed how the state is using the term Illegal Alien and stressed to urge your legislature to stop using that term. Vickey inquired about the lawsuit, and how the ruling has changed. Dave discussed the transitional funds being discussed at the City Council level. There is a meeting tomorrow afternoon with community leaders to work on developing a transitional fund and how it should best be used with this group. He did address the topic that it may be illegal for Portland to continue to assist these individuals, which is still being discussed between the legal teams. Wendy asked that certain rental situations be considered and how it can impact those who do work or are eligible for assistance.

Bill pointed out that this comes from a welfare reform act in 1998 and suggested people approach federal representatives to change this.

#### **VIII. Other Business**

None at this time.

**Next Meeting:**  
**Thursday, July 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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