

EMERGENCY SHELTER ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

REFUGEE SERVICES CONFERENCE AREA
190 Lancaster Street

Thursday, March 17, 2016
8:30am – 10:00am

Minutes

Attendees

Name	Organization
Tara Snider	OSS
Jeff Tardif	Family Shelter
Dave MacLean	City of Portland
Adam Harr	City of Portland
Ali Lovejoy	Preble Street
Kathleen Babeu	City of South Portland
Peter Driscoll	Amistad
Norm Maze	Shalom House
Julia Hubbell	FBC

Name	Organization
Vicky Rand	CHOM
Jim Devine	HVJ
Steve Elis	FPC
Ginny Dill	Shalom House
Chris Stewart	VA
Elizabeth Szatkowski	TOA
Joanie Klayman	Preble Street
George Rheault	Bayside Homeowner
Steve Hershon	Bayside Neighborhood

I. Introductions

II. February Shelter Bed Usage Statistics

Jeff Tardif explained the February 2016 statistics ([see statistics](#)); overall average bed nights were down compared with last year. Jeff explained that TBRA, which has exhausted its funding until July 1st, stands for Tennant Based Rental Assistance. The federal HOME investment partnerships program funds TBRA.

III. Shelter Matrix

The Family Shelter used the warming center for 16 days in February. Jeff said that the 10 housing placements are consistent with the 10-15 average. Most housing placements are made in Portland.

Tara said that average bed night for February was 220 and the warming center was used one night. OSS had 63 housing placements, 9 of whom were long term stayers and 4 were veterans. Most placements were in Portland.

IV. Long Term Stayers Report Update

Vicky started the LTS update. She said the LTS list started April 30th, 2015 with 70 people and is down to 10 individuals. The 10 remaining have severe mental health issues which has been the major barrier preventing them from securing housing or wanting to do so. The new list of 72 started on January 7 of this year and 23 people have already been housed. The new list is comprised of long term stayers who are helped from various service providers: 35 people from OSS, 15 from Milestone and the remainder are people who were unsheltered.

V. Homeless Voices for Justice Update

Jim said tomorrow is HVJ annual statehouse day in during which they will have a half hour meeting with the governor. He said that Bus Pass demonstration effort to make puss passes available to more people included contacting DHHS for support. Jim has met with Pine Tree Legal Assistance and will meet with the Mayor about possible solutions to the mass evictions occurring in the city, including banning no-cause evictions and discrimination against housing vouchers. HVJ would like to see TBRA fully funded, which is expected to occur

in July 1st, and an additional hotel overflow room for the Family Shelter. The city does not have a plan to increase hotel overflow for the family shelter at this time.

VIII. Federal and State Legislation

Federal: The presidential budget proposed increases to Section 8, voucher mobility program and TBRA. Senator King and Congresswoman Pingree have signed on to dear colleague letters in support of Section * and HOME funding which funds Home To Stay and Step Vouchers in Maine. Cullen asked if the group approves writing letters to thank them; the motion was seconded and approved. HOTMA is a bill moving up to the senate. The bill saves the country \$300 million while increasing access to section 8. It is designed to get people moved into housing that has minor issues giving a month for landlords to fix minor issues. There was a hearing on Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act. Senator King's proposed bill for addiction treatment passed the senate. Senator Collins introduced a bill to increase housing services for people living with HIV/AIDS.

State:

DHHS has been putting out rules for Medicaid that has received public pushback. A rule was just abandoned a rule that would change a scoring system for service to individuals with mental disabilities after public responses and hearings. A new change made to section 17 removes several conditions previously covered that could affect 10,000 individuals. This could lead to homelessness of mentally ill individuals when they lose services. There is a \$4 million bond issue for housing homeless veterans.

IX. Unsheltered Report

Peter Driscoll said he thinks an effort similar to the Long Term Stayers initiative and reporting should be made for the city's unsheltered people. Ali will use the survey of unsheltered to start such advocacy and reporting.

X. Mass Evictions

The trend of mass evictions continues with the Libbytown evictions. Norm Maze said that the countryside villa in Westbrook does not follow the trend of low-income housing being replaced with luxury housing; it is closing due to the death of the owner who self-funding the supportive housing there. A rise in homelessness in rural areas is prompted a Cumberland county meeting on rural homelessness.

X. Other Business

- **Public Urination/Defecation**

Steve Hershon from the Bayside neighborhood said there is a significant problem of public urination and defecation he attributes to the shelter client population. He asked the group for suggestions to how to fix the issue. Jim suggested porta potties, law enforcement, and available services. Steve said the portable bathrooms have been denied by the city due to liability for overdose deaths that could occur inside the units. Dave will follow up with the city to see cost and liability associated with having a porta potty. Preble Street and Oxford Street currently post where and when restrooms are available and have regular meetings with clients on behavior and being good neighbors.

- **Family Shelter Overflow**

Dave said that two faith based groups, Yarmouth's Unitarian Universalist congregation and Family Promise, will soon offer host families to families who present when the shelter and overflow is at capacity as an alternative to sitting in warming center.