**MAINE STATEWIDE HOMELESS COUNCIL**

**March 8, 2022**

**9:30-12:30**

**Minutes**

**Virtual Location** [**https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1494236342?pwd=MHE2NW9vMnV6WWhrNjEzZjlodzZ6dz09**](https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1494236342?pwd=MHE2NW9vMnV6WWhrNjEzZjlodzZ6dz09) **Or Telephone: 1(646)3573664**

**Attendance:** A complete list of attendees and the agencies they represent is attached.

**Minutes:** Betty LaBua (MaineHousing) and Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing)

**Welcome:** Katie opened today’s meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance and pausing to acknowledge all the tribal communities throughout the state of Maine. Cullen Ryan motioned to approve February’s minutes. Josh D’Alessio seconded. February’s minutes were unanimously approved. A moment of silence was observed in honor of those who have passed away while experiencing homelessness.

**CES Update:** Erin Kelly reported a sub-committee complied a synopsis of their evaluations on all feedback responses from the community pertaining to the proposed assessment tool. The CES committee approved the report which has been posted publicly on the Maine Homeless Planning website. The committee is now tackling the access phase starting with defining access points and access partners.

**HUB Update:** Tara started today’s update by mentioning MSHA and Community Solutions will create a curriculum for the onboarding of Hub Coordinators. The Central Hub was the first to hire a Coordinator and it is expected the others to bring people on board by the end of the month.

The Built for Zero application deadline has been extended until Friday, March 11. The amount of applications received indications the five slots will be occupied.

**Council Updates:**

* **Regional Updates Region I-** Cheryl H. updated the council on work being done by Homeless Voices for Justice by pointing out their weekly outreach decolonizing efforts and their testimonies on LD-1968, LD 2003, LD 1961, LD 1860 and LD 756. Cheryl will share decolonizing resources during next month’s SHC meeting. Lack of affordable housing and the need for warming centers were mentioned as major concerns facing the region.

**Region II**- Top issues facing the region are; the need of GA uniformity, increases in over income families unable to find housing, higher numbers of evictions from hotels, hotels requiring deposits, a rise in the numbers of seniors and medically challenged being discharged to shelters, and growing numbers of people seeking fuel assistance. Donna K. shared there has been a 40% increase in people calling Waldo CAP for aid with heating fuel, noting there is assistance available to those who are over the income level however the requests are stretching staffing capacity. Lauren reminded the meeting of the additional funding available through LHEAP.

**Region III-** Tracy H. gave today’s update. Issues facing the region representing the five most rural counties in Maine are the high numbers of people living outside (165 on 2/9/22 was cited as an example) hotel, the growing numbers of people being released from hospitals in need of shelter and concerns over what is going to happen when ERA funding dries up. It was announced Shaw House has joined with HCAP to assist in efforts addressing homeless youth in Hancock County.

* **Legislative Updates: Federal-**Cullen shared his screen to bring attention to the FY 22 budget, noting Congress passed another short-term Continuing Resolution to fund the government through 3/11. The Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act was reintroduced on 2/10 by Congresswoman Pingree which will reduce the 365-day waiting period for Asylum seekers to obtain work authorization to 30 days. The bill makes no changes to law or regulation relating to the asylum process. Senator King introduced a companion bill in the Senate. The Federal update ended by noting on 1/19, President Biden stated at a press conference that the Build Back Better Act will likely be “substantially slimmed down” before it’s enacted.

**State-** 1 Governor Mills announced that the Revenue Forecasting Committee projects an additional $411.6 Million in revenue for the current biennium (FY 22 and FY 23). As such she announced that a Change Package to the Supplemental Budget is forthcoming and will be introduced as emergency legislation for the Legislature to consider. After giving an overview the policy committee’s bill tracker, the Policy Committee priorities and strategies for the 131st Legislature were explained by discussing the following goalsGoal I- Shelters/coordination from homelessness through to housing/sharing of best practicesGoal II Housing and Rental SubsidiesGoal III Support Services for SPMI, SUD, TBIGoal IV Addressing underlying issues of homelessness An open invitation was extended to anyone interested in attending Policy Committee meetings to email Cullen.

* **MSHA:** Lauren started today’s update by announcing all FEMA quarantine/isolation hotels, except for Lewiston will be closing by April 1rst unless a new COVID variant emerges. The 16 million in Home ARP funding will out by March 15th. An email to interested parties will be sent and notice will be posted on the MSHA website. As soon as the state releases the 10 million in shelter funding payments will be sent to the shelters.
* **MSN:** During the February meeting, the network discussed: the onboarding of the Hub Coordinators, how best to handle the increasing numbers of unsheltered folks being discharged from hospitals, how to coordinates the new state navigator services with shelter navigation and what the SHC leadership should look like.

**CDC Update:**

With the national and international numbers in positive cases and hospitalizations decreasing Lisa Letourneau from the Maine CDC is cautiously optimistic. Even though all counties in Maine have been categorized as yellow, Lisa emphasized the importance of masking indoors, getting vaccinated/boosted and social distancing as the best proactive measures in congregant setting amongst high risk populations to prevent severe illness, hospitalizations and death. Lisa will send follow up information on COVID regulations for youth residential settings.

**Meeting Format and Leadership Structure:**

A sub-committee of 16 volunteers met on March 4th to review and update the Council’s governances and leadership configuration. By looking at both historical and contemporary views of the leadership structure, the sub-committee were all in agreement, the burden of requirements for one chair person is too abundant for one person and therefore, an equal co-chair model should be adopted. The sub-committee will met before the April SHC committee to draft the process of electing co-chairs. The following questions will need to be answered before process can be presented: How is the job description of a co-chair defined?

 What is the role of regional councils?

 How can the nomination process be equitable?

 Can two chairs run together on one ticket?

 Are the two highest vote getters elected?

 Who nominates and who votes for the positions?

 Does one person vote per agency or is it one agency one vote?

The sub-committee will bring back a proposal for the process in April, followed by a report on a deep dive into the governances at a future date.

**New Business:**

**MCoC Update:** A timeslot for MCoC updates will be scheduled into future agendas. Cullen gave today’s update by mentioning the MCoC is addressing the following topics: How to best capture everyone’s information into HMIS, the low exits to permanent housing, the format of the PIT count report and the support of tribal communities’ decision over joining the MCOC or forming their own CoC.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 12, 2022.