**The Region 1 Homeless Council** met on March 22 from 1:00-3:00pm via Zoom.  Minutes from the February meeting were approved.  Cullen Ryan gave an overview of the discussion at the March Statewide Homeless Council meeting and then provided a State and Federal legislative update.  Cheryl Harkins from Homeless Voices for Justice provided an update on the work of HVJ over the past month. We then moved on to discuss our standing agenda items related to the shelter system, public health, and updates regarding the MCOC.  The meeting concluded with program and organizational updates. Many partners shared hiring opportunities, the status of current programs and resource discussions.

**Information that the Region 1 Homeless Council would like shared with the Statewide Homeless Council:**  The council spent a considerable time discussing the need for warming and cooling centers for people experiencing homelessness and stressed the importance of being proactive instead of reactive.  The closing of the ERA program and the hotels was also discussed, and concerns were shared about the large number of people who will become homeless as of April 31.

**HVJ Update: Cheryl Harkins**

HVJ has been continuing with outreach, finalizing our edits in our handbook, and trying to help those Still stuck outside. We are strongly concentrating on Legislative testimonies, our latest, LD2. I recently was invited to a Webinar through the National Alliance to End Homelessness entitled Criminalization and Counting ( a communication training). Jerry Jones sent a copy of the hour-long talk (with permission) and I plan to share it with HVJ with discussion following to assist us with our work on decriminalization. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v31Mz1KBxycs>).

I'm working with Margaret Cushing from Maine Emergency Management to give input to develop a statewide Emergency Response Plan for our state. We met on Federal Street in Portland and invite input. It was awesome to have Dr. Katie Spencer White at the table with us! I'll let Betty know when I get a new date so she can share with you all. I've also been working with GPCOG in Portland to enhance the Metro systems in Portland and surrounding areas. I asked Kat Violette to join in the collaboration with Emergency Management to develop a plan to be ready for a disaster BEFORE it happens rather than trying to figure out what to do once it's hit. Kat has graciously agreed. Again I will share any meetings information with Betty to post. When GPCOG asked us our purpose for being in this group I told them my purpose was not only to enhance the service in my area,  but I was there to represent the unhoused, especially regarding the newly opened Riverside Street, city of Portland operated Services Center approximately 5 miles out of the city. There have been shuttle buses promised but as of yet there is no regular transportation for people. I am trying to make sure they have a regular bus line if possible to make stops so nobody is killed by the fast traffic on the busy street they have been forced to stay on.

And finally I would like everybody to know that our long time Advocate Jim Devine is in Maine Medical Center. His clothes caught on fire and he was quite badly burned. He has undergone some skin grafts. I'm not sure how long he'll be there  but I'm sure he would enjoy an email or call or visit if you're nearby.