**Attending via GoToMeeting:** Jerry Botta (HOME Inc.) Donna Alger (BFAH), Betty LaBua (MSHA), Joe Locke (MSHA), Elaine Grade (KCHC), Vickey Merrill (CHOM), Awa Conteh (CoB), Laura Briggs (BOL), Mike Shaughnessy (MSHA), Dan Hodgkins (Preble Street), Mike Tuller (BFAH), Kobi Chase (WMCA), Kelly Watson (MSHA), Karessa Grenier (Hope and Justice Project), Jessica Lincoln (TNLH), Jessica Wilson (City of Bangor),Cullen Ryan (CHOM), Joe McNally (Milestone), Melody Fitch (FVP), Erin Kelly (Preble), David McCluskey (Shaw House), Amy Holland(MSHA), Laurie Charon (DHHS OBH), Bill Higgins (HA4ALL), Mike Merrill (VOA), Wes Phinney (YCSPI), Rebecca Hobbs (TTD), Cheryl Harkins (HVJ), Alice Preble (DHHS), Norm Maze (Augusta Housing), Russ Johnson (Shalom House), Scott Tibbitts (NSHA), Jace Farris(Hub 8), Julia Kimball, (Hub 4), Abigail Smallwood (Hub 1), Linda Plourde (Franny Peabody Center), Emily Richards(Hub 5), Nicole Frydrych(Hub 6), Leanne Pomeroy(Preble), Ken Capron (Hope Harbor), Beverly (YAB), Sadri (YAB), Katie Spencer White (MMHS), Leslie Brown (MDO), Andrew Lardie (Tedford), Donna Kelley (WCAP), Noelle Coyne (Safe Voices), Clyde Barr, Doug Dunbar(PCC), S. Jordan (WWC), Blake Hatt (TNLH),Sara Wade (DHHS), Rich Romero (OHI), Zac Moore, Ginny Dill (DHHS), Mattew Wymann (New Beginnings/YAB), Bonnie Gagnon-(Caring Unlimited), Rebekah Paredes (New Hope MC), and Johnnie Walker (Partners for Peace)

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and

Stephonie Gregg (YCSPI) and Kari Bradstreet (FVP).

[Reminder – If you call in, please email [blabua@mainehousing.org](mailto:blabua@mainehousing.org) to let us know you were there!]

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Disclaimer: These notes are not intended to represent direct quotes, things may not be in chronological order, and ideas may not always be accurately attributed. If you have corrections or comments, please email [blabua@mainehousing.org](mailto:blabua@mainehousing.org) to let Betty know and she will edit accordingly.

# **Approval of Minutes and Moment of Silence:** Vickey welcomed everyone to today’s meeting. MCOC Minutes from the October 2023 meeting were posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website. ***Awa Conteh motioned to approve minutes as written. Gerry Botta seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved as written****.* A moment of silence to honor the passing of people experiencing homelessness was observed.

**Maine**

**Continuum of Care**

**Meeting Minutes: Maine CoC**

**Date: November 16, 2023, 1:00 – 3:00 PM**

**Location: Zoom**

1. **Big Thinking Topics:**

* **Coordinated Entry Presentation:**

Erin Kelly and Joe Locke provided the continuum with an overview/update on Maine’s Coordinated Entry System. After reviewing the purpose of Coordinated Entry as being: *the shift in the focus from project focused system to a person focused system and prioritize participants in the most need of assistance*, it was explained what CE does and does not do.CES organizes housing resources in your community to simplify the participant experience, facilitates systems to house people assessed to most vulnerable and promotes access to housing resources that is easier to understand and navigate. CES doesn’t solve resource gaps, provide increased staffing to operate the system or control or supervise the performance of programs. Additionally, Erin pointed out that Coordinated Entry is the CoC’s approach to organizing and providing services & housing resources to people experiencing a housing crisis within a geographic area by:

1. Rapid, effective, and consistent matching of participants to housing resources

2. Shifting from a program-centered to person-centered system 3. Not being just “entry” but creating pathways with participants to exit to stable housing

The four phases of CE (access, assess, prioritize and refer) were defined and put into context of where they are at the current point of the piloted system. The presentation ended by mention of the following barriers: There isn’t enough staff capacity, for both access and after people are referred and there are not enough resources. For reference, the presentation’s slide deck will be posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website.

* **Group Brainstorm on MCoC Meeting Agendas and Big Thinking Topics**

After no comments were voiced when asked for ideas on future trainings, big thinking topics and agenda items folks were invited to send suggestions to the tri chairs of the continuum.

1. **MCoC Tri-Chair Nominations:**

Vickey explained the Maine Continuum of Care has three Tri-Chairs, each elected to serve a three year term on a rotating basis. Her seat is currently up for election. Awa explained the logistics of the nomination process. Nominations should be sent via email to Scott Tibbitts (stibbitts@mainehousing.org), Betty LaBua (blabua@mainehousing.org), Erin Kelly (ekelly@preblestreet.org), and Awa Conteh (awa.conteh@bangormaine.gov ) no later than 5:00 p.m. on 12/19/23. Names of nominees and who nominated them will be announced at the CoC meeting on 12/21/23.Voting will be conducted electronically prior to the January 25, 2024 MCOC meeting so that the winner can be announced at that time. Only Eligible Voting Members may vote in the elections. A list of all Eligible Voting Members will be posted after the Dec. 21, 2023 meeting. Awa nominated Vickey for a tri-chair position and Vickey accepted it.

1. **Legislative Updates:**

Cullen updated the continuum by providing these highlights:

**Federal:**  Congress passed a continuing resolution (CR), funding the government and it has been sent to the president for signing. Attention was brought to updates on following bills:

**House FY 24 Appropriation Bills (including THUD)** The House is poised to vote on its FY 24 T-HUD spending bill the week of 10/30. The bill includes amendments which would reduce funding for HUD programs and affect access to housing.

**House FY 24 Agriculture Appropriations Bill – *Update* –** The House FY 24 Agriculture Appropriations bill includes three amendments that would take SNAP benefits away from more than 1.3 million individuals with low incomes. This includes Amendment #27, which would eliminate the bipartisan agreement to exclude people experiencing homelessness from the work requirement for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Fiscal Responsibility Act’s (PL 118-5) exemptions for veterans and young people exiting foster homes would also be eliminated by Amendment #27. Other amendments would limit or eliminate waivers from the work-reporting requirement to counties with unemployment rates over 10 percent. Advocates are urging Members of the House to oppose these amendments.

**State:**  A brief review of key pieces of carry over and emergency legislation pertinent to the housing and food insecurity was provided. All legislation connected to housing that failed and are being appealed were explained. A full synopsis of the status of legislation was posted on the Maine Homeless Planning Website: [www.mainehomelessplanning.org](http://www.mainehomelessplanning.org).

1. **Hub Update:**

Amy H. started this month’s update by noting all Hub Coordinators are busy not only recruiting volunteers and training volunteers for the 2024 PIT but are also soliciting donations to distribute to the unsheltered folks being surveyed. Hub Coordinators are in the process of collaborating with PHAs as a way of addressing the need for adding additional resources into Coordinated Entry. Additionally, HCs are conducting case conferences, assisting with document readiness, adding CE access points and problem solving a range of housing barriers.

1. **SHC Updates:**

Cullen provided today’s update. Embracing the new format, the meeting of the Statewide Homeless Council scheduled on November 14th was for voting members only. The December meeting will be open to the public. In November, the council discussed the growing numbers of encampments state wide, Section 13 TCM and Section 91 HOME Services, QAP and building networks for PSH collaboration, Unsticking the system and Shelter Funding. A press packet for the media will be created in order have the same unified messaging.

1. **MCoC Board Updates:**

Cullen provided the continuum with today’s update. During the November meeting Scott gave an overview of SPMS-FY22.Total PIT Counts in 2022 and 2023 were about twice what they were in 2020 and 2021, mostly due to the increased use of hotels/motels as ES, particularly for Asylum Seekers, and our ability to capture that data. Growing encampments and the increasing numbers of people living unsheltered were discussed and will be a standing item on future agendas. Cross Cultural Community Services’ Regina Phillips and Liz Kovertsky joined today’s meeting to present their DEIB Consultant Final Report on if the Continuum of Care’s Coordinated Entry Documents, the Board of Directors Bylaws, and their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policies are inclusive and everyone, especially members of the black indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) and LGBTQ+ communities have equitable access to homeless services. Time was spent elucidating the report which, once updated, will be sent to each member of the Board. The next steps to be taken will be addressed during future meetings.

1. **CES Updates:**

Updates were included during this month’s Big Thinking Topic.

1. **Long Term Stayers**

Cullen mentioned there has been 20 LTS placed in the Portland area. Overall, there has been a total of 486 placed and the success rate is currently at 89%.

1. **Youth Action Board Update:** The Youth Action Board is currently seeking three new members for their Board in all parts of Southern Maine except for Cumberland County. Members need to be from 14-24 years of age and have experienced housing instability. The YAB is currently wrapping up work with But Still I Am One (org in Waldo County). YAB did a presentation at their Empty Bowl Dinner on Monday and another at their contest awards ceremony tomorrow on Friday. The YAB created a presentation that was given at the Maine Youth Leadership Conference on Tuesday. Members of the YAB Board are taking on a new project with ParentPowered, a national organization that develops content for family engagement and will be helping them create their curriculum for high school and higher education families.
2. **Brief Committee Updates:**

* **Data Committee:** Did not meet in November due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Will meet next on December 19th on Ring Central.
* **Monitoring Committee:** Mike S. resigned as chair of the committee. Wes Phinney and Kobi Chase have been nominated to replace the vacated chair position. The committee increased their meeting times to twice a month due to TEC assistance on creating a new monitoring process.
* **Resource Committee:** A VAWA training will be held virtually on December 1, 2023 at noon. The committee is in the process of reviewing its charter, designing a new member orientation and creating a new member packet.
* **PWLE:** The committee will meet the second Friday in December. Gathering resources offered statewide and mapping resource locations will be on the agenda.

1. **New Agenda Items:**

* Encampments will be a standing agenda item.
* All in attendance were asked to send agenda suggestions to the tri-chairs, Scott or Betty.

**Next MCOC meeting is scheduled for December 21, 2023 from 1:00-3:00 pm on ZOOM!**