**Attending via GoToMeeting:** Jerry Botta (HOME Inc.) Donna Alger (BFAH), Joe Locke (MSHA), Vickey Merrill (CHOM), Awa Conteh (CoB), Mike Shaughnessy (MSHA), Dan Hodgkins (Preble Street), Mike Tuller (BFAH), Karessa Grenier (Hope and Justice Project), Jessica Lincoln (TNLH), Cullen Ryan (CHOM), Erin Kelly (Preble), Amy Holland(MSHA), Lauren Charon (DHHS OBH), Mike Merrill (VOA), Rebecca Hobbs (TTD), Shirley Caron (ACAP), Alice Preble (DHHS), Norm Maze (Augusta Housing), Russ Johnson (Shalom House), Scott Tibbitts (MSHA), Jace Farris(Hub 8), Julia Kimball, (Hub 4), Abigail Smallwood (Hub 1), Linda Plourde (Franny Peabody Center), Nicole Frydrych(Hub 6), Leanne Pomeroy(Preble), Donna Kelley (WCAP), Rich Romero (OHI), Ginny Dill (DHHS), Mattew Wymann (New Beginnings/YAB), Johnnie Walker (Partners for Peace), Anna Robinson (Hub 9), Tracy Allen (KBH), Kari Bradstreet (H.S.A.), Ray Michaud (Vets Inc), Katie Holzwarth ((MCEDV), Tony Giarratano (Shalom House), Tara Hembree (MaineHousing), Hanna Gregory (MCEDV), Boyd Kronholm (BAHS), Michelle B. (Safe Voices), Heidi Rackliffe (ACAP), Chris Bicknell (New Beginnings).Rachel Spencer-Reed (New Beginnings), Jessica Wilson (City of Biddeford), Crystal Hatch (RCAM), Janice Daku (RCAM), Kehli Buck (RCAM), Elaine Grade (KCHC), Tanner Towle (KCHC),Laura Briggs (BOL), Dave McCluskey ( Community Care), Wes Phinney (YCSPI), Ken Capron (Hope Harbor), Beverly (YAB), Holly G, Kate White (MMHS), Sarah Kasun, Kelly Watson (MSHA), Amanda Richer, Aaron Geyer (COP), Jessica Wilson, Rebecca Hobbs (TTD), Melinda Cory (HMGM), Melody Fitch (FVP), Marcie Dean (Next Step), Joe McNally (Milestone), Amanda Richer and Kirk Carlson (Milestone)

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 and

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

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

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**Maine**

**Continuum of Care**

**Meeting Minutes: Maine MCoC**

**Date: January 18, 2024, 1:00 – 3:00 PM**

**Location: Zoom**

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 to let Betty know and she will edit accordingly.

# Approval of Minutes and Moment of Silence**:**  Erin welcomed everyone to today’s meeting. MCOC Minutes from the December 2024 meeting were posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website. ***Laura Briggs*** ***motioned to approve minutes as written. Ken Capron seconded. All in favor. No abstentions. Minutes were unanimously approved as written.*** A moment of silence to honor the passing of people experiencing homelessness was observed.

1. **Big Thinking Topics:**
* **Help Me Grow Maine Presentation:** Melinda Corey attended today’s meeting to provide information on *Help Me Grow Maine,* a central access point designed to connect families to information and services. Help Me Grow will listen, link families to information about child development and community resources and provide follow-up for both caregivers and referral sources. Melinda further explained they work as a centralized access point to assist caregivers and child health providers in connecting children to the grid of existing community and State resources that can help them thrive, through a “warm hand-off” from families to resources.They alsopromote working with families to recognize developmental milestones and utilize the Ages & Stages Questionnaires (to assess development.) If concerns are identified in the screening process, they work with families to connect to early intervention professionals for further assessment. Services are provided at no cost to all Maine children, birth to eight and their families/caregivers. Parents can also ask for assistance during pregnancy. When a referral is made, the family is called within three business days and follow-up calls are made to the family at 5, 25 and 60 days after initial contact. If anyone is interested in more information on Help Me Grow Maine, Melinda provided her contact information (Melinda.Corey@maine.gov or 207-441-1553) and the following links [www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-development](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-development)

<https://www.facebook.com/HelpMeGrowMaine/>
Toll-Free: 1-833-714-7969
Telephone: 207-624-7969
Email: HelpMeGrow@maine.gov

A copy of the slides from the presentation will be posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website, [www.mainehomelessplanning.org](http://www.mainehomelessplanning.org)

* **Point in Time (PIT) Quarterly Update**: Abagail Smallwood stated the PIT Count will be held next week on January 23, 2024. The Maine CoC Resource Committee is hosting a PIT Count Training Review and Q&A this Friday, January 19, from 12 to 1:30pm. The beginning of the meeting (~40 minutes) will be to view the training videos and the remainder of the meeting will be a Q&A with MaineHousing staff and Hub Coordinators. Additionally, April Reed with MaineHousing will host drop in office hours on Monday, January 22 from 10am to 2pm, to answer any final questions before the PIT Count on Tuesday. Everyone who will be interviewing individuals is encouraged to download the app and register as soon as possible, so that any issues can be solved in advance of the count. The app company, Simtech, can field most questions about the app. Visit this page for all the details on the app: <https://www.mainepit.org/counts-us-mobile-app.html>
1. **MCoC Tri-Chair Elections:**

Erin announced Vickey Merrill has been reelected to serve another term as a tri-chair of the MCoC.

1. **Request for Letter of Support:**

VOANNE submitted a request for the continuum to summit a letter of supportfor theirFY 2024 Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities (Capital Advance) Grant application***. Dan H. put for a motion for the MCoC to write a letter of support for VOANNE’s grant application. Gerry B. seconded. All in favor. No abstentions. No discussion. Motion unanimously passed.***

Ken C. asked for a letter of support for an AARP grant application. Erin asked him to email information regarding the grant to the tri-chairs.

1. **Legislative Updates:**

Vickey updated the continuum by providing these highlights:

**Federal:** Congressional leaders are working to reach a bipartisan agreement to expand the Child Tax Credit and revive several expired business tax incentives. It is unclear what if any tax extenders passed. If a deal is reached in early 2024, the tax package could include resources to expand and reform the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC). Advocates are working to ensure that any new LIHTC resources included in a tax package serve the millions of households experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Members of Congress, including Congresswoman Chellie Pingree have urged House leadership to include S 1557/ HR 3238, the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act in a Tax Bill. In terms of the FY 24 Budget update, Congress passed and the President signed a two-step continuing resolution (CR) bill extending appropriations dealing with veteran’s programs, transportation, housing, agriculture and energy until 1/19/24. Based on new data from HUD, CBPP estimates that the Housing Choice Voucher funding level in the House appropriations bill would cause about 112,000 fewer households to receive help in 2024, and the Senate bill would mean 80,000 fewer families are served. These cuts are substantially deeper than estimated based on the data previously available. Even though both bills include increased funding for housing vouchers compared to 2023, neither provides enough to cover higher costs as the program continues to catch up with steep rent increases.

Attention was then brought to the following bills:

**HR 6696 / S 3463 Eviction Prevention Act**: On 12/11 Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced the “Eviction Prevention Act” in the House and Senate, respectively. The bill would authorize new grants to provide legal representation to tenants, create the country’s first federal evictions database, and mandate a government report on evictions in the U.S. **HR 3848, Housing Our Military Veterans Effectively Act of 2023:** This bill passed the House on 12/5 and was sent to the Senate for consideration. The bill was introduced on 7/26 by Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer, to revive crucial services authorized during the pandemic to provide lifesaving services under the Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD), which funds transitional housing programs for homeless veterans. These services include transportation to doctor appointments and food banks, communications devices for hearing impaired veterans, personal care products along with a dearth of other vital services and resources.

**State:** The Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature began on January 3, 2024. Statutory adjournment is April 17, 2024. The update started withbringing clarity to the following two bills:

[**LD 2136**](https://legislature.maine.gov/LawMakerWeb/summary.asp?ID=280091548)**: An Act to Provide Financial Support for Shelters for Unhoused Individuals**: This bill provides ongoing funds for homeless shelters – allocating $10 million beginning next fiscal year. The $10M is intended for low-barrier shelters.

[**LD 2138**](https://legislature.maine.gov/LawMakerWeb/summary.asp?ID=280091552)**: An Act to Improve Funding for Homeless Shelters:** This resolve directs the Department of Health and Human Services to increase its overnight bed rate of reimbursement for low-barrier shelters to $90 per night. It also directs the Department of Health and Human Services to pursue a waiver from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to access Medicaid funds to serve unhoused persons with substance use disorder or mental health disorders or who are elderly persons with medical needs or persons with disabilities with medical needs. This bill is intended to fund all shelters.

An overview of Bills relating to Housing and Homelessness was also provided and attention was brought to **LD 226, An Act to Address Maine’s Affordable Housing Crisis**. Sponsored by Rep. Millet, this bill provides one-time funds to MaineHousing in the amount of $100,000,000 in fiscal year 2023-24 and in fiscal year 2024-25 to increase affordable housing stock in the State.

1. **Hub Update:**

Due to time constraints there were no Hub updates provided.

1. **SHC Updates:**

 Cullen provided today’s update. Embracing the new format, the meeting of the Statewide Homeless Council scheduled on January 9th was for voting members only. In response to the encampment crisis, a sub-committee will draft a White Paper to zero in on a concise and uniform message defining the SHC position on how best to address the unsheltered population in Maine. Since the terms of all council members will be expiring during 2024, Scott, Shawn and representatives from each regional council will meet to clarify the procedure and set a time frame for the appointment process. In order to consolidate methods on how the SHC will both support and track progress of the System Redesign it was decided Lauren, Tara and Cullen will meet with the State Team and report back to the council. The meeting ended with a presentation by Elizabeth Funk, founder and CEO of Dignity Moves on their work to end unsheltered homelessness in communities on the west coast by building Interim Supportive Housing.

1. **MCoC Board Updates:** Cullen provided the continuum with today’s update. The Board approved MSHA’s HMIS custom field request for Housing Problem Solving. The Board looked closely at System Performance Measures through three different lens- Hub Data, Rapid Rehousing Data and Emergency Data. A Board retreat will be held in lieu of February’s Board meeting.
2. **CES Updates:**

Due to time constraints there were no CES updates provided.

1. **Collaborative Applicant:**

Scott Tibbitts stated MSHA is willing and able to continue as the MCoC’s 2024 Collaborative Applicant. ***Wes Phinney put forth a motion for the continuum to approve MSHA as the MCoC’s 2024 Collaborative Applicant. Katie Spencer White seconded. All in favor. MSHA abstained. Motion unanimously passed.***

1. **Youth Action Board Update:**

No updates provided.

1. **Creating a Diversion Committee:** As a follow up to the continuum’s discussion last month of the need to address how to prevent a cyclical homeless response system, ***Nicole F. put forth a motion for the CoC to form a Diversion sub-committee with the purpose of providing space for housing providers, municipalities and front line workers to gather efforts and collaborate to prevent people from reentering the homeless response system.*** ***Mike S. seconded.*** ***All in favor. No one abstained. Motion unanimously passed.***
2. **Brief Committee Updates:**

Due to time constraints there were was just one committee update today.

* **Resource Committee:** The committee is in the process of scheduling trainings for 2024. In addition to HUD required trainings, the committee will hold trainings on topics specially related to Maine.
1. **Big Thinking Topic:** Shelter Funding

All in attendance were asked to send agenda suggestions to the tri-chairs, Scott or Betty for the

next MCOC meeting scheduled for February 15 , 2024 from 1:00-3:00 pm on ZOOM!