**Attending via GoToMeeting:** Jerry Botta (HOME Inc.) Joe Locke (MSHA), Vickey Merrill (CHOM), Awa Conteh (CoB), Mike Shaughnessy (MSHA), Dan Hodgkins (Preble Street), Karessa Grenier (Hope and Justice Project), Jessica Lincoln (TNLH), Cullen Ryan (CHOM), Erin Kelly (Preble), Lauren Charon (DHHS OBH), Mike Merrill (VOA), Norm Maze (Augusta Housing), Scott Tibbitts (MSHA), Julia Kimball, (Hub 4), Abigail Smallwood (Hub 1), Nicole Frydrych(Hub 6), Donna Alger (BFAH), Rich Romero (OHI), Tracy Allen (KBH), Jace Faris (Hub 8), Kari Bradstreet (H.S.A.), Ray Michaud (Vets Inc), Tony Giarratano (Shalom House), Janice Daku (RCAM), Dave McCluskey ( Community Care), Beverly (YAB), Katie Spencer-White (MMHS), Sarah Kasun, Kelly Watson (MSHA), Aaron Geyer (COP), Melody Fitch (FVP), Marcie Dean (Next Step), Noelle Coyne (WMCA), Betty LaBua (MSHA), Jen Weatherbee (HUB 7), Shawna (YAB), Andrew Lardie (Tedford), Johanna Buzzell(MSHA), Amanda Randall, Melissa McEntee (RGH), Mike LaBua (DHHS), Jessica Sanfasin (VOA), Datsy Aponte (CoA), Rebekah Paredes (NHM), Sharon Jordan (WBHW), Emily Richards (Hub 5), Sara Wade (DHHS)*,* Chris Bicknell (New Beginnings), Doug Dunbar (PCC), Jamie Beck (Dignity First), Alice Preble (DHHS), Hanna Gregory (MCEDV), Mike Tuller (BFAH), Linda Plourde (Franny Peabody Center), Tanner Towle (KCHC), Crystal Hatch (RCAM),Amy Holland (MSHA), Michelle Baldwin (Safe Voices), Kehli Buck (RCAM), Lauri Legere (VOA 0, Betty St. Hilaire (United Community Living Center), Jeff Cosgrove Cook(Hub 3), Lauren Bustard (MSHA), Mat Wyman (YAB), Callie Jenkins, Nakesha Warren Colby (Hub 2) and Boyd Kronholm (BAHS)

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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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**Meeting Minutes: Maine MCoC**

**Date: March 21, 2024, 1:00 – 3:00 PM**

**Location: Zoom**

**Maine**

**Continuum of Care**

# **Approval of Minutes and Moment of Silence:** Vickey welcomed everyone to today’s meeting. MCOC Minutes from the February 2024 meeting were posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website. ***Rich R. motioned to approve minutes as written. Noelle C. seconded. All in favor. No abstentions. Minutes were unanimously approved as written.***

1. **Housekeeping items:**
* Meeting with HUD and CoC Leadership and MaineHousing:
* Vickey mentioned that there had been a meeting between CoC Leadership and MaineHousing, in which Dan Brennan stated that Technical Assistance (TA) providers in Maine had brought information to him and he reached out to HUD. Subsequently an in-person meeting was scheduled with HUD and CoC Leadership and MaineHousing staff for Tuesday, 3/26. She stated that the group would be kept apprised of the outcome of the meeting.
* It was requested that the content of the meeting be shared with the group prior to the meeting occurring.
* Vickey stated that they received little information and few details from Dan regarding the meeting with HUD. The overall areas of discussion related to the TA currently being received and include Coordinated Entry, the MCoC governance/structure, and the COC’s response to encampments in Portland. However, beyond that they had no additional information.
* It was stated that this answer was disingenuous and not sufficient.
* Cullen reiterated that this was all the information they had, no additional details were given in the meeting with Dan Brennan about what would be discussed with HUD, and that everyone was eager to learn more at the in-person meeting.
* Erin clarified that the meeting was to address concerns with Coordinated Entry, the MCoC governance/structure, and the CoC’s response to encampments in Portland.
* Vickey reiterated this, that it wasn’t simply a standard visit but due to concerns brought by TA and stated that the MCoC would again be kept apprised of the outcome of the meeting, including additional details learned from HUD.
1. **Big Thinking Topics:**
* **Unsheltered Homeless Discussion:** The conversation pertaining to the topic of unsheltered homeless brought forth the following comments and questions:
* How can we plan with local communities foe people who are unsheltered and ill?
* Is there data showing how many people are homeless by Hub and by region? *There is but there needs to be awareness the data is yet to be qualified.*
* There is worry that with the warming centers closing people will be forced to sleep outside when it is still cold, especially in Portland when the warming center has already closed.
* The CoC grant does not fund shelters. The Emergency Solutions Grant funds ESHAP shelters.
* The new shelter for asylum seekers has opened spaces in the Portland area shelters.
* The system is stuck, too little inflow and too little outflow.
* More housing Navigators are needed.
* There is not sufficient shelter capacity for the demand.
* Current data om the number of unsheltered homeless is mandatory in order

To be able to understand the scope of the problem and work towards solving it.

 The topic of Unsheltered Homeless will remain on future agendas.

* **Amicus Brief:**The U.S. Supreme Court Case of *City of Grants Pass, Oregon v. Gloria Johnson* that will determine whether if, under our Constitution, a local government can make it a crime to involuntarily live outside and unsheltered, when adequate shelter is not available. It was suggested for people wanting to take action against the criminalization of sleeping outside, to sign onto a local Amicus (Friend of the Court) Brief, to help the Supreme Court understand the realities of homelessness and workable, cost-effective solutions.
1. **Updates**
* **Legislative Updates:** Cullen updated the continuum by providing these highlights:

 **Federal:** Attention was brought to the FY 24 THUD Budget. On 3/3, congressional leaders released a final FY24 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) spending bill that provides significant funding for HUD’s vital affordable housing and homelessness programs. Overall, the final spending bill provides HUD programs with $70 billion, which is $8.3 billion more than FY23-enacted levels.

 The final spending bill provides significant resources for the Housing Choice Voucher ( HCV) program, which was funded at $32.4 billion, or a $2.1 billion increase over FY23- enacted levels. This funding level is higher than the levels proposed in either the House or Senate versions, which could have led to a loss of 80,000 to 112,000 housing vouchers, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. As a result of the higher funding level, there should be sufficient resources to renew all existing rental assistance contracts and expand rental assistance to an additional 3,000 households. Congress will be voting on the FY 24 Budget over the next couple of days.

* **State:** Today’s update started with the mention of Governor Mills’ announcement that her forthcoming Supplemental Budget will include $16 million for the Emergency Housing Relief Fund that includes 10 million in shelter funding and 2.5 million for low barrier shelters. An overview on the status on key bills of the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature concerning homelessness, housing and rental assistance, general assistance and food security was provided. Details of the overviewed bills were sent to all names on the SHC list serve and was posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website.
* **HUB Updates:** Amy Holland furnished today’s updates. Jeff Cosgrove-Cook was welcomed as the new Hub 3 coordinator. During an all-day strategy retreat on March 14th Hub Coordinators drafted a six month a 6 month action cycle plan. The main focus of the plan is to reach quality data on people experiencing homelessness with the goal of moving away from antidotal data and towards qualitative and quantitative data.
* **SHC Updates:** Cullen provided today’s update. Embracing the new format, the meeting of the Statewide Homeless Council scheduled on March 12th was open to the public. Gordon Smith provided an overview on Maine’s opioid response, Greg Paine gave an update on housing policy and Amy Holland reviewed Hubs roles in partnership with the system redesign. The Council also discussed the warming centers, SHC terms and membership and suggested action steps for the Johnson v. Grants Pass Case**.** The update ended with Cullen screen sharing an updated draft of the SHC’s 2024 strategy
* **MCoC Board Updates:** The Board met on March 7th. During the meeting, Sim Tech gave a presentation on the collection of data for HMIS with the use of their Show the Way App, and state SPMs were compared with national SPMs. The following three motions were carried by the Board:

 1.The custom field request to add a HUB drop down as a Maine Required Data Element 2. The custom field request to add a drop down field for Current Housing Resources and 3. The annual updates of HMIS Policies and Procedures was approved.

* **CES Updates:** Erin K. updated the continuum by noting the committee has been drafting a tie breaker policy for people who core the same prioritization score. The drafted policy will be piloted for 90 days then reevaluated through feedback from users. Sub-committees are working revamping the length of the assessment, accounting for data with the new YCES procedures and how best t access asylum seekers.
* **Youth Action Board Update:** Mathew W. noted YAB members will be facilitating two three hour trainings one will focus LBGTQ issues and the other will be on neuro diverse youths. YAB is actively recruiting members who will have the opportunity to be paid 45.00 to attend meetings for up to 10 meetings a month.
* **Brief Committee Updates:**

**Document Review:** The committee will reconvene on Friday, March 29th> Committee members will be looking at governances and written standards. The committee is currently in need of a chair.

**Monitoring Committee:** The committee, with TA assistance, has started to draft a new policy and procedure manual. When a draft of a new monitoring tool is completed, the monitoring committee will be scheduling feedback session with providers and the MCoC.

**Data Committee:** Awa announced thatIn order to be in compliance with HUD regulations pertaining to data security and PPI, Wellsky will be contracted to purge all data if the Client has no entry/exit activity or service activity for seven years for seven years. There will be an initial onetime fee of 5,600.00 followed by a yearly maintenance

 Fee of 1,680.00.

**Resource Committee:** The committee published two surveys one for feedback on this year’s PIT count and another to gain a sense of desired training topics. The surveys are due back by March 22, 2024.

**Diversion Committee:** The committee continues to work on their charter and are establishing goals with an action orientated focus.

1. **Agenda Items for next month:**

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

1. **Good Stories:**

Today’s meeting ended with the sharing of the following stories reflecting goodness witnessed across the continuum:

* HOME Inc. kindly and efficiently assisted with bringing a payee facing eviction into their

shelter.

* A new baby was born into a family staying at RCAM. Crystal assisted with child care with the family’s other children until a grandfather from out of state arrived.
* Learned I can assist a family member who has mental health issues by submitting medical health records in lieu of a PP505
* Two youth from New Beginnings TLP won gold medals at the statewide Skills USA competition last week. The first youth entered the competition in the Advertising and Design category. She prepped for several weeks before the event. On the day of the competition she was given 4 hours to create and present a project. To get to the state contest, she competed against twenty plus students at her school. On the state level she faced 15 competitors. The second youth was in the Job Application Process event, which entailed asking for an application, filling out the application, and then having a fifteen-minute interview. There were 5 state competitors in this category. The two youth will be going to the nationals in Atlanta, GA for a week in June.
* In my recent efforts to get all of our committee charters updated, I started counting how many folks we have involved in CoC committee work: so far I have counted 80 different individuals from 36 agencies. Thank you all for your work across our CoC!
* A new baby was born into a family staying at RCAM. Crystal assisted with childcare for the family’s two children until a grandfather from out of state arrived.
* The monthly community meal and gathering at the encampment behind the Hope House in Bangor. The gathering is usually the last Sunday of the month at 1:00, except this month...it's this coming Sunday, March 24th.
* Bangor Public Health nurses are helping in encampments and making the difference in the people they serve lives.
* Also thank you all PATH/Outreach Caseworkers for going out to help the unsheltered homeless, no matter how severe weather conditions are! They show a lot of care and empathy towards their clients!
* I had to be in Portland for several days last week, going back and forth from Maine Medical Center to hotel and saw Preble street outreach first-hand as I witnessed folks being engaged under bridges, on sidewalks etc.

**The next MCOC meeting scheduled for April 18, 2024 from 1:00-3:00 pm on ZOOM!**