



# City of Auburn, Maine

60 Court Street | Auburn, Maine 04210  
www.auburnmaine.gov | 207.333.6601

## BOARD/COMMITTEE/WG MEETING MINUTES

### Homelessness Committee – Draft Minutes

Tuesday, January 6, 2026 – 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Auburn Resource Center @ 121 Mill Street, ARC Conference Room

In Attendance: Steve Almquist, Sasha Anastasoff, Rebecca Austin, Dave Bilodeau, Dawn Comeau, Tim Cowan, Jennifer Edwards, Jen Eugley, Tom Hibbert, Bill Lowenstein, Cecilia Natale, George Sheats, Angela Blier, Tim Cougle

Guests: Jeff Harmon

1. Meeting called to order at 9:33am & Review of agenda by Tim Cowan
2. Review and approval of 12/16/25 meeting minutes:
  - Correction from Jeff – under Shelter Update, funding from Auburn should have been \$153,000 (not \$53,000)
  - Motion to accept minutes as amended: Bill, Second: George, All in favor
3. Scheduling monthly meetings:
  - Jen Edwards: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues of the month was best for most (except for Sasha and maybe Rebecca in Feb and Apr for school vacations)
4. Regular update – Drop-In Center
  - Jen Eugley distributed fact sheet about the Drop-In Center and graph of attendance of total guests and new guests for 2025; 11,767 total visits in 2025, 1,259 unique individuals served since Thanksgiving 2024
  - Dave commented on seeing the effect of the DIC making people feel more like people again (especially showers!)
  - Bill asked what the biggest needs are; Jen: housing resources, men's clothes; Jeff: Coordinated Entry assessments can help get people into housing, there needs to be greater frequency of services and coordination of services in this area
  - Rebecca: could the DIC be open more days/week?; Jen: the DIC Board is aiming for a 3<sup>rd</sup> day, but needs more money and more volunteers



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- Tim Cowan will talk to Liz about using the 2/1 anniversary of DIC moving into ARC (and maybe completion of the kitchen?) as a media push for volunteers
- Jen Edwards: internal partners being aware of sending people requiring volunteer hours to DIC; Cecilia: companies who require employees to volunteer might be a good resource; Angela: United Way, Ronald McDonald House, Preble Street have creative volunteer models (can connect Jen Eugley with those organizations for ideas); Bill: student murals in the Community Room?

5. Regular Update - Warming Center
  - Jeff: not another mtg with the state yet; would be beneficial to reach out to Linda Scott and get monthly stats shared (Dave will do that)
6. Regular Update – Auburn Resource Center
  - Jen Edwards: 2 small offices and 1 big office still available, possible partners touring this and next week; Dave: building is always clean, other staff are friendly/collaborative, useful having a space for clients who want to meet privately, partnering/referring with other agencies with offices in the building and tabling at the DIC, feeling of “community”
7. Point-In-Time Count:
  - 6 PIT volunteers for the DIC on 1/28, plus Sasha to free up a regular volunteer
  - Jeff: put someone on the bus that morning with the pitch to guests (coordinate pick-up of that volunteer)
  - Cecilia was able to get a collection set up at CMMC for socks, hats, handwarmers, etc. (will check them this week – around 60 items)
  - George has a group that could assemble the kits the Sunday before (& has box of hats and gloves) – Jen Eugley will connect with him
8. Sasha on funding:
  - in 2023, pilot program for homelessness in the state (1.5 million) – distributed to school districts (reimbursing, so districts had to front the cost, deterring some from joining in, meaning funds distributed to fewer); Sasha focused on prevention, using funding for security deposits, rent, back rent, home repairs, utilities, food, clothing, hygiene, beds, pots & pans, transportation to school; allowed to distribute \$750/student (with a need, not required to meet McKinney



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Vento qualifications), first year - \$62,000 to our district, used up by May 2024

- the following year when more school districts opted in, our funding dropped to \$38,000, given another almost \$3,000 from districts who didn't spend their full amount, July 1, 2025, LD384 (?) passed to make pilot program permanent but program funding dropped to \$125,000; estimate getting about \$1500 this school year
- 24-25 school year limited funding meant first checking to see if students were accessing community resources (useful church resource ended for families not attending); other private organization funding ended, one private organization is providing \$18,000 in funding this school year; currently \$0 in state funding left to utilize
- Sasha noted that it costs less to keep someone housed than to get someone re-housed (often losing belongings, as well, and have to start from scratch); Tim Cowan: important to make sure people know that keeping someone housed is much less costly, having anecdotal stories to inspire people to give; Jeff: it's a discussion of housing PLUS students having a good/positive education experience, important to include this is the committee's recommendations about the City's homelessness budget
- Bill: prevention was one of the 4 pillars that the original Ad Hoc Homelessness Committee talked about
- Tom: what resources does Sasha need? Sasha: household items are biggest expense (mattresses, laundry detergent, toilet paper, hygiene, etc. – things not covered by other resources), mental health (currently a year-long wait list for counselling services at EL, lost counsellors due to St. Mary's closing), no housing navigator in the City to refer to anymore (sending some to Preble Street, GA, etc. but not quite)
- Jeff: funding outside of Coordinated Entry has gone away, scores aren't meant to prioritize chronically homeless, but connect level of need with the right resource, we need to push the state/Hub
- Dawn: Auburn Housing doesn't use coordinated entry, but can people be updated if their situation changes? (Jen Eugley: yes, they can be updated, and should be updated every 6 months, at least)



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- Sasha: looking for MaineCare-funded programs for those who qualify
- Bill: resistance from immigrant population to engage with Sasha's program?  
Sasha: there are cultural and language barriers to accessing help

9. City of Auburn's Homeless Services budget: do we want to provide recommendations?

- Jeff: deadline of end of January if we want to get it in under this budget; he and City Manager would welcome this committee's thoughts; possibly create a subcommittee; having a line item in the budget is difficult for council to deal with (like drinking from a firehose); last year, spent on Warming Center, bus service, etc.; last year's funding was not sufficient for the whole year – evaluate whether to continue those and are there any new things?; appropriated \$200,000 last year (about \$75,000 short of what was needed), roll current unused balance forward to next year?
- George: motion to form a minimum 3-person subcommittee to meet with the mayor to bring recommendations back to the committee on 1/20, second: Rebecca, all in favor
- Volunteers for subcommittee: Tim Cowan, Tom (look to APD and AFD for feedback and support for certain projects, but not roll those funded programs into our recommendations), Tim Cougle, Bill, Jen Edwards (if time allows), Steve, Sasha – send mtg. invite out to all interested
- Put out a doodle poll for next week; other committee members, feel free to send your thoughts

10. Does the committee wish to provide a statement of support for the PSY Program?

- Jen Edwards: currently spending down some ARPA funds to fund PSY, but having support to make sure it's supported/funded in the future; PSY likely doing presentation for City Council in mid-March
- Jeff: advantageous to have someone from Committee come during PSY presentation and summarize our letter of support, recommendation that PSY is an ongoing program, currently funded on 3<sup>rd</sup> party sources – we need to plan for when that funding runs out so that the City would be more likely to include it in the City budget



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- Tim Cowan: frame it as a good return-on-investment, helping the citizens it touches as well as our first responders
- Tom: looking at PSY as a community safety benefit
- Angela: for other municipalities, liaisons installed in a region, 3-year process of ARPA funding, then cities started taking on part of the funding for that position up to full funding over 3 years; Lisbon lost their PSY person because funding ran out and the City wasn't able to take it on
- Tim Cowan: would there be an opportunity to share funding with Lewiston for our region?; carry discussion forward to future meetings

(No public present for public comment)

Motion to adjourn: Bill, Second: George, All in favor

Meeting adjourned at 11:03am