



City of Auburn, Maine

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

BOARD/COMMITTEE/WG MEETING MINUTES

Homelessness Committee – Minutes

March 17, 2026 | 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Auburn Resource Center @ 121 Mill Street, ARC Conference Room

Attending Committee Members: Tim Cowan, Bill Lowenstein, David Bilodeau, George

Sheats, Dawn Comeau, Angela Blier, Cecilia Natale, Jennifer Eugley, Peggy Walton, Tom Hibbert

Excused Absences: Rebecca Austin (voting member) – arrived at 10:26am

Attending Ex Officio Members: Jennifer Edwards, Sasha Anastasoff, Tim Cogle, Steve Almquist

Excused Ex Officio Absences: n/a

Attending Guests: Mayor Jeff Harmon, Ward 1 City Councilor Rachel Randall

Agenda Items

1. Call to order & Review of Agenda – 9:30am
 - Tim Cowan: table Comp Plan review until future meeting
2. Review and approval of 2/17/26 meeting minutes
 - Motion to accept - Bill , 2nd – Dave, all in favor
 - Introductions & welcome to Peggy Walton
3. Update: Auburn Resource Center (Mayor Harmon/Jennifer Edwards)
 - Final partner moving in next week (Maine Pre-Trial), then the offices are full (8 total)!
 - My Money Works program is now starting in April, send referrals to Jen Edwards
4. Update: Drop-In Center (Jen Eugley)
 - An average of 123 guests/open day in February (up slightly from 122 in January); still averaging about 6 new guests/open day
 - Moved into the new kitchen on 2/22! Bates & DaVinci's continue to provide food for a few weeks while we work out the flow
 - Old kitchen room has been transformed back into a Training Room, used for providers to have quieter, more private conversations with guests they're working with
 - Some recent losses of a few guests have been hard on our community, but people rally around and comfort each other



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- Last week, MaineHousing awarded 25 Homeless Priority Vouchers to Hub 4 (the most we've ever received at one time!), so Julia Kimball has been working with us, the Warming Center and local CMs to match them to folks who will qualify and be a good fit. (The homeless priority program provides rental assistance on a monthly basis - no time limit, participants must pay 30% of their income towards rent. No support services included. Disqualifying factors for this resource include manufacturing methamphetamine in public housing projects, being on the sex offender registry, owing a housing authority money as well as potential other criminal history barriers.)
 - Jeff: these matches are pulled from HMIS, so people need to have completed CE
 - Tomorrow is the last Foot Care Clinic of the spring, free haircuts & Health on Wheels bus – so, a busy day!
 - Tom: will be restarting All-Recovery groups at the DIC soon (average about 35-40 people); talk about life, bring positivity
5. Update: Warming Center (Dave Bilodeau)
- They plan to come next month to give a presentation
 - As of 2 weeks ago, 648 unique individuals served this year
 - Moving towards becoming 24-hour shelter, waiting on renovations; contact with police hasn't been too bad, police doing walkarounds to have a positive presence; Dave suggested having officers come to the DIC in a similar way and build relationships/trust with guests
 - Tim: Auburn PD have been visiting the DIC property on Saturdays to patrol
 - Dave: Trinity will be here next mtg to share; kitchen, laundry and showers up and running
 - Jeff: Glen Holmes is on the Alter L/A Board (as a requirement with Auburn's funding) – many recent vacancies recently and looking for new members; if anyone is interested, let Jen Edwards know
 - Bill: next year, those Warming Center numbers will likely decrease? Jeff: the intention is still to have 100 spots throughout the winter (40 permanent shelter & 60 Warming Center)
 - Cecilia: last mtg we talked about Trinity's new requirements to access services; Dave: that will get clarified by Erin next month; George: still getting responses that



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- people are being turned away from services; Jeff: they've moved from the Jubilee Center model to a social services model
6. Crisis Receiving Center presentation by Angela Blier at Spurwink
 - Spurwink received a grant for a BH Crisis Receiving Center in Androscoggin County
 - Plan to open late May/early June
 - Replicating the model that was set up in Portland in 2022
 - People can stay up to 23 hours: the goal is to stabilize and do a warm handoff to the appropriate service
 - At 1155 Lisbon Street location, 8 individual rooms with a common space
 - Open 24/7, 365 days/year; ages 14 and up; urgent behavioral health need; crisis is self-defined; voluntary; guests must be ambulatory and alert
 - Key stakeholders are hospitals, shelters, law enforcement, community partners
 - EMS can only transport to an ED, so they can't bring people; law enforcement can drop someone off; any community member can bring someone in who's willing
 - Staffing: peer support greets first (CIPSS): other staff include Crisis Center Director, NP, nurses, clinicians (assess frostbite, wounds, etc, and refer to PCP), etc. – no hierarchy (all staff will do any needed task)
 - Working together with mobile crisis team from Sweetser
 - All staff will be trained to do Coordinated Entry
 - In Portland's center, most people check themselves in and exit back to the community
 - This is a possible alternative for people who don't belong in the ED
 - 5 additional follow-up visits after initial visit
 - Assessment has to be done within 2 hours of arrival
 - Will have food ("hearty snacks"), clothing, laundry, shower
 - Outside of downtown, but on the bus route, just off the freeway (since it's serving all of Androscoggin County)
 - Open House to come (for public and providers)
 7. Sasha: reviewed McKinney Vento data for Auburn School Dept from 2019-present
 - Tim Cowan requested numbers of students who were successfully housed sometime in the future



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(Rebecca arrived at 10:26am)

- Sasha works through the PAL backpack program and does other outreach in the community to make sure students are aware of available services
 - Jeff: reminder that this is different than the general homeless population – different definition of homelessness (includes doubled up, couch-surfing, etc.)
 - Sasha: these #s are underrepresented because some families don't come forward for support because they're afraid of losing their children, having to move to a new district, etc.
8. Discussion of any carry-over items from the February meeting
- Cecilia – Food Pantries and Meals – review of resource guides she provided
 - Reviewed flyer with QR code that directs people to Healthy Androscoggin Food Guide (updated regularly)
 - Weekly schedule (drawing info from the Food Guide)
 - Sasha: pantry services from the PAL Center were utilized a lot, but that program has ended – missing immediate access to that food resource; is there something that low-barrier that will replace that? Jeff: Grab & Go (food for kids at PAL, delivery to Auburn Housing & other sites, pick-up service for food-insecure) funding ran out, City funding bridged the gap and kept it going an additional year; the City still funds food at the PAL center for kids there; Y was going to pick-up the program and operate it out of the ARC, but due to budget cuts (federally and trickling down to Good Shepherd), it fell through; some other programs are picking up some of the need, but not all of it; there's still a gap for immediate food needs for families
 - Cecilia: Gather to Grow, We Feed Us (looking to set up pantries like “Little Libraries”) – programs that might be helpful; she will look into those and see how they could help families
 - Sasha: there's a small food pantry at the school dept., supplied by Good Shepherd, but basic, “supplemental” ingredients (PAL had ingredients that were easier to make meals with)
 - Dawn: Grab & Go bags always had canned staples, protein, vegetables, dairy (incl. shelf-stable) – supplied full meals for the good part of a week; the delivery aspect was crucial for families/residents
 - Rachel: if a new program started, where would the food come from? Jeff: w/o Good Shepherd, it's challenging to find a source



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- Jeff: Covid really revealed the unmet need that existed before; the funding has run out, but the need is still there
- Cecilia: how many students were using the PAL center? (program utilization #s might be helpful); Jeff can get those #s

- Subcommittee for community house warming party (Cecilia, George, Dawn) – haven't met yet, table for next month

- Discussion of a statement of Support for Auburn's Project Support You program – Jeff: 43-44 weeks remaining in the Hannaford grant (won't be renewed), 1st or 2nd council meeting in April there will be discussion about opioid funding and closing the gap, separate discussion outside the budget about opioid funds; upcoming PSY program briefing
- Tim Cowan will draft a letter to City Manager supporting continuing support of PSY; Motion: Bill, second; Dave, all in favor, Angela officially recuses her vote (as an employee of Spurwink and connected to PSY)

- Rebecca: flyer for listening sessions (March 24-26) on how CE/HUD is surveying survivors of DV, stalking, assault – invited those who bring a perspective from the homeless community to participate (contact Rebecca for more info)

9. Public Comment (none)

10. Motion to adjourn at 11:00am by Steve, 2nd by George, all in favor

Resources:

1. Ad-hoc Committee's report: [Addressing Homelessness in Auburn, Maine](#)
2. 2025 Auburn Housing Study: [PowerPoint Presentation](#)

Upcoming Meetings for Homeless Committee:

- April 21, 2026 9:30 AM – 11 AM