



City of Auburn, Maine

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

BOARD/COMMITTEE/WG MEETING MINUTES

Homelessness Committee

Tuesday, November 04, 2025

Auburn Resource Center @ 121 Mill Street, ARC Conference Room, 9:30-11:00am

In attendance: Bill Lowenstein, David Bilodeau, Rebecca Austin, George Sheats, Dawn Comeau, Angela Blier, Cecilia Natale, Thomas Hibbert, Jennifer Edwards, Sasha Anastasoff, APD Deputy Chief Cogle

Notified Jennifer in advance they would not be in attendance: Councilor Cowan, Jen Eugley, AFD Deputy Chief Almquist

Guests in Attendance: Mayor Jeff Harmon, AFD PSY Worker Casey Chick

Meeting Notes:

1. Dave Bilodeau, vice chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM
2. Bill made a motion to accept the 10/21/25 meeting minutes, George seconded. All in favor.

3. Warming Center/Shelter Update:

Dave: They did open this past Saturday and numbers were lower than expected, but it has not been too cold out yet.

Mayor Harmon: The operators will be running a warming center from 8pm to 8am for the month of November. For Dec. 1, 2025 – Apr. 30, 2026, they plan to run 100 spot warming center 24/7. Auburn is looking to provide transportation on Wednesdays and Saturdays from the warming center to the Drop In Center, but is not anticipating as large a need this year as the warming center will be operating 24 hours beginning on December 1. There will be a meeting on Friday to discuss the warming center and shelter plans further.

Tom shared he has been over to the warming center every morning, starting his day there. Agreed they have had low numbers, but weather has not been frigid yet. Regarding Auburn, Tom has continued to be out in the community in Auburn connecting with people where they are. They will need socks and gloves.

4. PIT Count Planning update: Mayor Harmon

This is something we should be thinking about, as it will come up fast. The RFP came out yesterday from Maine Housing for Home For Good. Lewiston Auburn is not an eligible location for another project because this is based on the reported numbers of unhoused to the state. These areas of eligibility are based on qualifying numbers of homeless, due to the limited amount of funding. Currently L-A is only qualifying for one Home for Good Project. While Augusta and Waterville qualify for two. Our part of the state has not done as good of a good job



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in the past coordinating point in time counts. Julia Kimball will be presenting at our next homeless committee meeting to give us more information about the date, time period for data collection, the tools (app) to collect the data, and how to get people trained. We need to think about how we are going to get volunteers to help, and where are we going to do the counts. Hopefully the warming center will be participating in the PIT count there. Here, in Auburn – it is the Drop in Center, parking lots at big box stores, encampments we know are here. We are going to need different types of volunteers. It is different to come to the Drop in Center on a Wednesday to collect the data than it is collecting the data out in the community where people are staying.

Rebecca added that it is much harder for communities who don't have shelters to collect the data.

Dave added that part of the problem in the past has been that some of our shelters in L-A have not participated in the PIT.

Mayor added that we are going to need to talk to the police department, EMS, our OPTIONS and PSY workers, regarding where are those people who are not staying in the shelters and need to be counted out in the community.

DC Cogle added that PD and our PSY workers do know where these individuals tend to be located. The locations change as people move about the city.

Mayor added we want to be thinking about identifying the locations we want to go to and get a count. What are the organizations we want to outreach to help with the count. There could be a subcommittee that identifies these locations. We can talk to the Drop in Center to capture the most people while there – how many volunteer counters will they need?

Tom asked a question about who the data funnels to, when we enter it through the app on volunteer counter's phones. Mayor Harmon explained it gets funneled to HUD and Maine Housing. It won't go to this committee or to the city directly.

Dave explained that in years past, much of the data was collected at Trinity.

Angela asked how should the committee go about collecting those location suggestions. Is there a place on SharePoint we could do this?

Tom suggests going early in the morning before they leave the encampments. Dave agrees. Dave suggests that a big help is if somebody can talk to places like Hope Haven, Sheltered by Jesus, and St. Martin's to be involved in the count. The Mayor suggests this committee should focus our efforts on what can we do in Auburn. We can ask Julia about Lewiston.

Bill asked how we capture the individuals Sasha is working with, who may not be in the warming centers. DC Cogle suggests park and rides, cars, vans, Lowe's, etc. as one place.



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Cecilia asked if we are allowed to incentivize such as offering coffee, etc. The committee should get clarification from Julia on this.

Tom raised the question about liability, if volunteers are doing the counting. Mayor agreed that this gets back to the point regarding different types of volunteers for different locations being targeted.

Dawn asked how can we explain the benefit of being counted to the individual being counted. Participating in the count will not move them up on any housing lists, so what is their benefit to participate?

Angela then made a motion to create a subcommittee for the Point in Time count.

Rebecca seconded the motion. All were in favor. The following individuals volunteered to be on this subcommittee: Bill Lowenstein, Rebecca Austin, George Sheats, Dawn Comeau, Angela Blier, Cecilia Natale, Thomas Hibbert, APD Deputy Chief Cogle, Mayor Jeff Harmon, and AFD PSY Worker Casey Chick. The subcommittee agreed to hold their first meeting on Tuesday, November 18th, from 11 AM to 12 PM.

Dave asked if we can get a large printed map to use to mark up the locations to be counted. DC Cogle offered to have the APD crime analyst create some maps for the count once locations were identified.

Rebecca asked if we know who is heading up the count in Lewiston. We can discuss this with Julia Kimball at the next meeting when she comes to present.

5. Overview of Auburn's 11/3/25 council workshop on SSPs – Mayor Harmon

Mayor Harmon explained that Auburn currently has a moratorium in place while council works to create an ordinance. Auburn started the process last night at the Council Workshop. We had legal counsel come in as well as Gordon Smith and Anne Sites to set a baseline understanding with the councilors around SSPs and needle exchanges. The next workshop will have some education around needle waste. Then after that, we will develop a list with councilors around what they would like in the ordinance. The process we are going through here is that we will have the education component first, then have the policy discussion with councilors. The Mayor clarified there is also a difference between certified and non-certified SSPs operating in the state.

Jennifer offered that the workshop can be watched on the City of Auburn's YouTube channel and the slide deck and handouts from Maine CDC can be found in the agenda packet for last night's meeting, available on the City of Auburn's website as well.

Mayor Harmon mentioned SSPs have been a frequent topic of discussion at the Maine Mayor's Coalition. He added that a future workshop meeting will have Public Works give an update on what the needle waste situation looks like in Auburn. The Mayor suggests the committee keep



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up with these meetings so they can make recommendations to the council

10:30 AM – Committee Member Angela Blier needed to leave at this point in the meeting.

6. Program Report: Student Homelessness – Sasha Anastasoff

“Fixed, regular, and adequate” needs to be considered for a “housed” status. If someone is living in an environment that does not have electricity, running water, or heat, this would qualify under McKinney-Vento as underhoused. If you have 10 people living in a 2 bedroom apartment, this will also qualify as underhoused. Families living in hotels, in domestic violence (DV) shelters, in teen shelters, & family shelters all qualify for McKinney-Vento, as they are *not* considered being in permanent housing. Individuals staying in tents, campers, also qualify for services under McKinney-Vento. Sasha’s program can also qualify youth under the age of 18 years, who are also not in the company of a parent or guardian, as unaccompanied. This includes students who have chosen to runaway from home and are staying with a friend or family member for various reasons. This may be for safety reasons, as we don’t know the reason why they choose not to stay there. There may be DV in the home, or substance use in the home, or some other reason why they are choosing to leave.

Once students are identified as eligible for McKinney-Vento services, Sasha’s program identifies any barriers to the student having access to getting an education and works to remove those barriers. One of the challenges of her program is getting students and adults to come forward and identify as homeless. Some are concerned that a DHHS referral will be made. Current statute has changed this so there are some protections now. Sometimes students don’t want to come forward because they are concerned peers may treat them differently if they find out, or fear they will lose services.

Rebecca asked for clarification on what “adequate” means. Sasha gave an example of a family who is housed, but has had their water shut off. Or who may have no heat due to a furnace not operating, and now the family is using space heaters to keep warm. Mold, infestation with rats, mice, bedbugs can be a qualifier as well. Overcrowding can be a qualifier – not having adequate places for everyone in the apartment to sleep. Food insecurity DOES NOT count as a qualifier however. It is about what the living environment looks like. Dawn shared that Sasha has been able to assist families moving into Auburn Housing units to remove barriers to housing. Sasha added that McKinney-Vento’s top identifiable category is “doubled up”, a situation where one family may lose their housing and move in with another family. These are families that count for McKinney-Vento program eligibility, but who are not counted as homeless by HUD.

Sasha’s count resets every July 1st. Students only get counted once. They stay identified as McKinney-Vento for the year, even if they get housed in that academic year. This allows students to be supported if they then lose that housing again.



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Covers PreK through 12th grade in Maine.

Sasha shared her numbers with committee, dating back to 2021/2022 school year. Her counts run from July 1st-June 30th, then her numbers reset back to 0.

- 21/22: 113 students
- 22/23: 229 students
- 23/25: 234 students
- 24/25: 241 students
- 25/26: As of 11/5/25, 97 students identified.

Now the state of Maine does free breakfast and lunch for all students, but before this, being identified allowed for students to get free breakfast/lunch. Being identified also allows students to stay in the same school department they were attending when they lost housing, and the school can provide transportation to keep them in that school. Another aspect of the program is a student can enroll in school without the normal documentation (such as a birth certificate or immunization record) required. Sasha can then work with the family/student to get these things, but the student is permitted to enroll without delay.

Sasha clarified that she makes a lot of referrals to partners who can provide services, but she also has had some access to funding to help families in the form of grants in the past. In a pilot program the state ran last academic year, she was getting larger amounts. The program was continued by the state after the pilot, but the funds have been greatly reduced. These funds were helpful in the past to prevent homelessness, provide partial security deposits, prevent electrical shut offs, etc. This is a gap.

7. Discussion of items for next agenda – warming center/shelter update, Julia's presentation, a review of subcommittee's charge, an update on the 11/17 SSP council workshop

8. Public Comment – there were none

9. Adjourn motion made by Bill, second by George. All in favor. 10:58 AM.

Meeting notes were taken by Jennifer Edwards, as secretary Jen Eugley was not in attendance.