



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

April 21, 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, Cecilia Natale, Jennifer Eugley, Peggy Walton, Tom Hibbert, Rebecca Austin

Excused Absences: Dawn Comeau, Angela Blier

Attending Ex Officio Members: Jennifer Edwards, Tim Cogle

Excused Ex Officio Absences: Sasha Anastasoff, Steve Almquist

Attending Guests: Mayor Jeff Harmon, Linda Scott, Jaime Caouette, Erin Reed

Agenda Items

1. Call to order & Review of Agenda – 9:31am
 - Tim Cowan: addition – vote to officially excuse Dawn and Angela – motion: Bill, 2nd: Dave, all in favor
 - (Sasha on vacation – Ex Officio)
2. Review and approval of 3/17/26 meeting minutes
 - Motion to accept: George , 2nd: Tom, all in favor
3. Program Overview/Q&A with Linda Scott – Alter L/A -Transitional Shelter
 - Introductions around the table
 - Linda is Administrative Director, and Jaime is Shelter Director
 - Opened Nov 1 just overnight 8pm-8am, as of Dec 1 open 24 hours
 - 771 different guests walked through the door and filled out an intake form
 - Only 358 last winter with the 12-hour Warming Center
 - Seeing many guests on a regular basis
 - Intake questions: how long homeless, need case management, where previously housed (estimate 25-30% from outside Androscoggin County, most by release from hospital/jail or lack of shelters/warming center in their areas, most want to go back home but transportation back is a challenge, they are prioritizing having a fund for transportation back to)
 - Regularly seeing folks discharged from receiving crisis services at hospital to



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- Warming Center (severe health and mental health issues)
- 2 main rooms: small room is older folks with oxygen, walkers, significant medical needs/conditions - lots of calls to 911 because of this, trying to mitigate with Lewiston PD
 - On April 27, dropping down to 40 guests (as per contract for shelter with state of Maine/MaineHousing)
 - Currently capacity is up to 100 (filling that most days – folks don't necessarily stay the whole time, but some have stayed every night since it opened)
 - Cold night last night drove guest #s up again – some pop in for socks, cup of coffee, etc.
 - Last Monday, got approvals for licensing from City of Lewiston
 - May 19 going before City Council for final licensing
 - Warming Center for 40 until licensing to bring in beds, etc.
 - Working on installing 4 showers, washer & dryer, hiring kitchen manager
 - Looking forward to plan for next winter – there are no other warming centers (downstairs room could only fit 30-40 people, in addition to the 40 upstairs, which is approaching the 100 person capacity)
 - Rebecca: how are you ill-equipped in addition to medical services? Linda: jackets and warm clothes, they don't hand out tents because of the concern of encampments and needle waste and other things that go along with that and the recommendation of LPD
 - 1360ft radius around parking lot, WC is responsible for as a good neighbor policy
 - Bill: WC has become the safety net – what do we do to prevent it from becoming the dumping ground?
 - WC has a stock of household items to give to newly housed folks
 - Put 326 folks into HMIS so far, 5 completed Coordinated Entry
 - Bill: is there a time limit for stays? Linda: thinking 3-month period, but fluid with it, wanting folks to succeed
 - Bill: how do you triage vacancies? Linda: first come, first serve (we don't foresee having empty beds for the foreseeable future)
 - Tom: like Portland, sign up again daily? Linda: right now, 40 are chosen to start; provide phone number for providers to call and see if beds are available



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- Jennifer: conversations with hospital systems?; Linda: Kevin/Tonya met with hospitals a few weeks ago; we need to coordinate to prevent gaps and duplications in services, or the cycle of homelessness will just continue
 - Tom: 60-day gap between WC switching to 40-bed and the Spurwink Crisis Center opening
 - Tim Cowan: how many staff?; Linda: 23 regular, not including Directors
 - 11 overdoses in the WC this season – thanks to Narcan and EMTs, didn't lose anyone; it's getting scarier seeing the effects of the drugs out there these days, more psychosis evident
 - Dave: influx of meth mixed with xylazine/fentanyl, people acting more violently and not always treatable with Narcan
 - Rebecca: biggest need right now? Linda: money, more space, housing, supplies (coffee, disposable dishes, etc.)
 - Tim Cowan: network of organizations providing things? Linda: Kevin posting on social media with needs and community members/churches come through
 - Bill: story behind Alter 207?; Linda: brainchild of Kevin – alter state of Maine, change the narrative that it's ok to talk about homelessness, addiction, trauma, not leaving people behind; store on Lincoln street being repaired to use thrift store to fund shelter; still have food pantry at Y on East Ave.
 - Tim Cowan: some statistics for our committee going forward would be helpful, interesting to look at # of folks from other regions and why they come
 - March data for hub 4 will show a huge spike in people entering HMIS, thanks to WC
4. Program Overview/Q&A with Erin Reed on Trinity Jubilee Center
- Opened in 1991, moved into new building Feb. 3
 - 5 main programs;
 - 1) soup kitchen (800 lunches/week), changed service model at end of 2025 due to what needs were already being met in the community and not wanting to duplicate efforts, addressing the gaps: feed seniors, kids, people in recovery (sober houses), people working (Complete Labor), and meals to folks in shelter
 - 2) Food pantry: every Wed morning – distribute 100-180, depending on the season (along with diaper bank which gave out 60,000 diapers/year), just serve Androscoggin County
 - 3) Day shelter 7:30-3 M-F, laundry, showers, eat, sit down with staff member to



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- make a housing plan, break goals into bite-sized pieces (ie. make an appt at GA, apply for ID, apply for a job, etc.)
- 4) Resource Center: free health clinic (folks without insurance), sign up for assistance programs, glasses prescriptions, referrals from GA to get medical waiver form signed, high BP, wound care – just one provider now, but now on the list to expand; FCFS; winter gear, clothes and bedding, toiletries, receive mail and use the phone, mental health referrals, rooms for case managers to meet with clients confidentially, Holiday Wish List Project, help filling out paperwork; Clinic open Wed 8-10:30am (4 people seen in that time)
 - 5) Immigrant Integration Program: client-directed, help about 600 people/year, fill out job paperwork and immigration paperwork, GreenCard medical exams for several more hours after clinics on Wed
 - Alice Haines works pro bono, no billing involved, referred back to Trinity to apply for Free Care (if rejected from Maine Care)
 - Day Shelter sees about a dozen folks per day, don't require CM, but encourage it; first day: fill out intake form/release, schedule for housing mtg that week to go over where they're at and goals and pick housing plan to pursue; if they're not willing to work towards housing, then they cannot continue using the shelter (tried that model in the old building and it didn't work, became more of a social center, don't want to help people stay in the situation they're in); requirement is doing one thing/week
 - Case management referrals change based on waitlists; right now: ASI, Ascentria, B-Street
 - Don't do HMIS, but Bernie comes in to do CE with folks once/week, and stops by other times
 - Jeff: we don't get as many resources in our county if we can't show the need through our numbers in HMIS
 - Tim Cowan: what can we help you with (CE-wise)? Bernie is entering people at Trinity into HMIS; Erin: intake form collects a lot of the info (& includes a release) that HMIS collects and Erin can provide that data to Julia Kimball when she asks
 - New building pros: 4x as much space, appliances that actually work, lots of walk-in refridgeration space, Good Shepherd delivers pallettes directly, can take spontaneous donations that need refridgeration, food pantry now operates indoors (client choice model so people can choose their own food), showers, laundry, private spaces to meet



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5. Regular update on Auburn Resource Center (Mayor Harmon/Jennifer Edwards)
 - none
6. Regular update on Drop-In Center (Jen Eugley)
 - Slight increase in guests over the last month; this past Saturday, 4/18 was our highest numbers so far in 2026 – 145 total guests and 13 new guests
 - As of April 13, the Drop-In Center hired longtime volunteer Erin Lamb as the Kitchen Manager
 - Constantly using up all the food we have (between breakfast, lunch & to-go meals)
 - The kitchen will start cooking almost all meals in-house starting in May (Bates & DaVinci's will continue to each provide one meal per month to give the kitchen/the budget a break – and we're looking for more local restaurants to follow suit!)
 - Increase in requests for volunteer hours to qualify for/keep SNAP benefits (from new volunteers and guests)
 - Comment on cigarettes being given out at the DIC (Jeff: looks bad politically; Tim Cowan: rather see nicotine patches being given out; Dave: feeding addiction)
7. State budget update from Jeff on shelter/housing points/summary of the supplemental budget
 - The Shelter Operating Subsidy, received: \$1,500,000 in ongoing funding for FY27; \$1,012,617 in new ongoing funding for FY27 from LD 2124; \$2,000,000 in one time funding for FY27
 - The Stable Home Fund (Emergency Eviction Prevention Program) received \$11,000,000 in one time funding for FY27
 - The Emergency Housing Relief Program (supports emergency, transitional shelters and permanent supportive housing) received \$12,000,000 in one time funding for FY27
 - The Maine State Housing Authority (to support the creation of more than 300 affordable homes for ownership and rental) received \$37,500,000 in one time funding for FY27
 - The Affordable Housing Income Tax Credit was extended (LD 2116)
8. Update on Warming Center (Dave Bilodeau)
 - (covered in Linda's presentation)
9. Regular update on Auburn Comp Plan (Tim Cowan)



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- none
- 10. Discussion of any carry-over items from the March meeting
 - a. Subcommittee for community house warming party (Cecilia, George, Dawn) – submittee hasn't met yet
 - Tom: talk about concerns around shelter transitioning to 40 beds; Jeff: discuss what the plan is for the fall – if there will still be an additional 60 warming center spots; more unhoused folks coming over to Auburn in the summer
- 11. Discussion of items for next month's agenda
- 12. Public Comment (none)
- 13. Motion to adjourn at 11:00am by Bill, 2nd by Dave, 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:

- May 19, 2026 9:30 AM – 11 AM