

## **Freeport Working Group to Welcome New Mainers**

Town Chambers

Tues., August 13, 2019, 5-6:25 pm

In attendance: Melanie Sachs (chair), Councilor Doug Reighley, Sallie Smith, Dean Paterson, Beatrice Perron Dahlen, Johanna Hanselman (Town general assistance manager)

On phone: Councilor Tawni Whitney, RSU5 School Board member Maura Pillsbury  
Notetaker - Liza Moore, FCS Board Member

### **1. Changes to minutes** from 7.30.19 -

A. #3a- update the Host Homes contact address: <https://www.host-homes.com/>

### **2. Updates to Resource List** -

A. Dean contacted Freeport Medical Center of 23 Durham Rd Suite 201 to determine if they should be included in the Resource list. Answer - No. They are a boutique medical clinic, limited in scope.

B. African Grocery Stores will be added to the list: A few to include:

The African Super Market, 44 Washington Ave, Portland

Moriah Store, 360 Cumberland Ave., Portland

Halaal Market, 269 St. John St., Portland

Peace Food Market, 21 Chestnut St., Portland

C. Melanie contacted 6 local churches (3 of which don't have "settled" pastors) and shared link to Resource List. They are grateful to have. None have specific programs supporting asylees, but many expressed they support FCS with donations.

### **Action Items:**

- Sallie will contact Northern Light Mercy Primary Care, 385 Rt 1 Yarmouth (formerly MercyYarmouth Express Care clinic) to see if they should be included in Resource List.
- Dean will contact Partners in World Health, Portland to see if there are free medical resources they could provide.
- Melanie will send Resource List to Brunswick Hospital contact.
- Johanna will check with sharing List with Portland via Social Service Director, Aaron Geyer (who has been overseeing the Expo and the shelters); Johanna might send out a mini bulletin in August to alert residents of the Resource List posted on the town Home page.

### **3. Current status/coordination of welcoming families to Freeport**

A. Tawni w/ Freeport Friends is looking for a 2-bedroom apartment for family. Member will be applying for a position as a French teacher at Freeport High School, working as a volunteer substitute until he gets his work permit. Lots of donated items have been collected locally for him and his family. Big challenge, in

addition to finding an apartment, is having a guarantor sign the lease (ie for Preservation Management). Local family may end up being the host family.

B. Family of 2 from the Congo will be housed with a Freeport family.

C. First month General Assistance vouchers will be covered by Portland. After that clients will go to Johanna. BTW- Bow Street will take vouchers.

D. Dean wondered if there might be temporary housing available at Wolfe's Neck Center (former Recompense Campground).

#### **4. Event planning update, Beatrice**

A. Abdi and Maura are planning a storytelling event that we could help with. Focus on immigrant experience and raising awareness.

B. FCS could hold an event in the community room which has equipment for taping and live streaming the event. Could be a panel with a focus on cultural training, information on opportunities for getting involved.

C. Sallie - Greater Portland Family Promise hosts cultural awareness events; we could use them as a resource.]

D. Johanna suggested events be part of a series that may continue beyond just one or 2 events.

#### **Action Items:**

- Beatrice will seek more input from event planning sub committee.
- Melanie will connect with Greater Portland Family Promise about community/professionals training opportunities

#### **5. Fundraising**

A. Town could create a "Fill the Gap" fund (rather than "Housing" fund that was first discussed) to cover expenses beyond what GA covers. Funding housing has several barriers which are still being sorted out. Additionally, if asylees receive cash or gift cards, that counts as income and against GA they would receive. Town might be willing to approve a fund of private donations to be administered by Johanna, similar to how she administers GA and fuel assistance. Johanna would work with a small group to develop criteria. To consider - would it be for just asylum seekers or open to other residents? Could it be included with annual Town appeal letter for Library, Fire Department, etc. Idea to pilot for a year, focused just on asylees. We still don't know how many asylees will be in Freeport.

#### **Action Items:**

- Committee to reflect on options for fund:
  - Pilot program for a year?
  - Asylee only or all residents?
  - Purpose as a "fill the gap" fund? To benefit an outside agency that works with asylees (i.e. Maine Access Immigrant Network)

**Next Meeting - Tuesday, Aug. 27, 5-6:30 pm.**

Adjourned at 6:25 PM

Respectfully submitted  
Liza Moore