

Maine Recovery Council

September 14, 2023

Noting that this was Recovery Month, Chairman Pat Kimball opened the meeting and asked for approval of the July 13 and August 10 minutes (Smith/Noddin, unanimous vote).

Dr. Kimberly Johnson was introduced. She is considered a pioneer in the field of substance abuse. She prefaced her remarks with a summary of her experience in the field, as a pioneer in street outreach programs and Crossroads for Women. As a Research Associate Professor at the University of South Florida, Dr. Johnson is focused on research work that is data driven. She utilizes local data to do predictive modeling. She suggested that the Council's core function was to turn data into action. What is the story the data tells about overdose deaths in Maine and what does that mean for strategy she asked. Dr. Johnson, who now lives in Brunswick, offered to create specific targeted interventions and bring the suggestions back to the Council next month. In summary, the deliverables in a contract with her would include a data report which she would design, facilitate and deliver in four months. She would manage the resulting contracts for \$16,000. Pat said this was an incredible price.

Liz Blackwell-Moore suggested a focus on building systems and processes to help others. People are ready to tell us what we should be doing. She asked Dr. Johnson if retooling the data collection was possible. Gordon Smith said he knows Dr. Johnson well. Mainedrugdata.org had quite a collection of data, he said; and went on to suggest he had doubts that she could add to what the Governor's Office had been doing for the past 4+ years. It would be helpful to re-work the proposal making it clear whether she would focus on content or the process itself.

Dr. Johnson countered that her suggestion was merely a place to start. Courtney Gary-Allen asked how to prioritize the pages of strategies, the Council was ready to have that conversation. We needed to get the money out into the communities. Pat Kimball asked for a decision whether to hire Dr. Johnson today or wait 30 days. Dr. Paul Vinsel said we had never talked about the priorities and asked that the topic be listed on the next meeting agenda. Dr. Johnson asked if she might bring something to the Council next month. She said it would be helpful to see what the problems are and what is already being done.

The committees have not had time to meet; there was insufficient time today to take a good look at the survey. Miles reminded the group that this was the opportunity to do something transformational and asked if the Executive Committee could hire. Pat agreed that the Executive Committee could meet and adjust the deliverables. General comments followed. The motion was made to allow the Executive Committee to negotiate with Dr. Johnson and go into a contract (Gary-Allen/Ouellette, unan.).

The Coordinator contract position currently has one candidate. The motion was made for the Executive Committee to enter into executive session to consider the applications (Smith/Small, unan.). The following is the text of the motion:

"I move that the Council delegate to the Executive Committee, established and governed by Section 6.3 of the council's Bylaws, the task of reviewing and considering all the application received for

the Council Coordinator contract opportunity as posted to the Council's website on August 31, 2023. The Committee's task shall include determining which applications are complete, determining whether to interview applicants and which ones, and whether to make a recommendation to the Council of a proposed candidate to which the Council could award the contract and any proposed terms of the contract.

I further move that the Council authorize the Executive Committee to meet in executive session to complete this task, pursuant to Section 4.10 of the Council's bylaws and section 405, subsection 6(A), of Maine's Freedom of Access Act, codified in Title 1, Chapter 13, Subchapter 1 of Maine's statutes."

The Conflict of Interest Policy was also on the agenda. Gordon expressed appreciation that the AG had done yeoman work and asked for support of the policy. A question was raised regarding the definition of "direct personal benefit." It was explained that the term was purposefully left undefined, several examples were mentioned. Discussion followed regarding whether an affected member should leave the room while the proposed conflict was considered. The motion to approve the conflict of interest policy as Article 9 of the bylaws and asking a member to leave the room during discussion received unanimous approval (Gary-Allen/Noddin). Additionally, Council members who represent agencies would be removed from the 3/5ths or quorum count. Sheriff Brackett observed that the financial disclosure form was very detailed.

The Grants and Finance Committees need to meet. Dr. Vinsel and Gordon Smith will submit a report on the NASHP Conference report at the next meeting. Liz Blackwell-Moore requested feedback in writing on the survey questions by next Monday so she has time to adjust and resend. This will come to the Programs Committee.

The structure for holding the public hearing was the next agenda item. The details include a time limit for speakers both in person and by Zoom. Written submissions were allowable. Questions included who was recording. The motion to hold a public hearing, renting space as needed for 4 hours during the week of October 23 received unanimous approval (Gary-Allen/Vinsel).

The meeting was adjourned at 4:17 pm.