

Maine Recovery Council

December 14, 2023

Chairwoman Pat Kimball opened the meeting. She welcomed everyone and summarized the Council's activities to date mentioning particularly the hiring of Dr. Kim Johnson and Mary Coyne.

The minutes of November 9, 2023 were approved unanimously (Noddin/Crafts).

Per the Council's by-laws, nominations for 2024 officers were announced 30 days in advance. Voting will take place at the first meeting of the new year. The nominees are:

- Chair - Pat Kimball
- Vice Chair - Courtney Gary-Allen, Deputy Chief Eric Small
- Treasurer - Ben Mann
- Secretary - Betsy Fitzgerald

Pat introduced Mary Coyne, the Council's operations manager. They meet every Tuesday. Mary explained her current projects: she has met with most members one-on-one and with members of the AG office staff. She has read and summarized the public hearing comments and has started looking for funding ideas. She has reviewed Dr. Johnson's work and is looking at what other states are doing. She is planning community outreach activities and will be reaching out to the counties.

Gordon Smith suggested reaching out to the 39 subdivisions who were part of the settlement and asked whether the Council could engage them or should the contact be made through the attorneys who litigated the settlements? Brendan said there was no restrictions in the MOU and didn't see any reason Mary could not contact them. He would check with his counterparts.

Paul Vinsel provided the Finance Committee report in the Treasurer's absence. The Finance Committee met November 30 and received an update on the budget. Currently, the Council has \$17.2 million but has only actually received \$2.5 of the \$17.2. The rest is expected in 2024. The funds reserved for the schools are included in the above numbers. Mallinkrodt has declared a second bankruptcy. This has resulted in their payment to the State of Maine of initially \$5.8 million being reduced to \$1.8 million, all of which will be made in a one-time payment in 2024. The Council will receive half of that amount.

Spending decisions for the first year were next on the agenda. The first decision: Whether to support one-time short-term projects v on-going projects and establishing limits on administrative funds (the MOU is silent). Ben Mann had provided funding scenarios for consideration. The Finance Committee recommended to the Council the following spending pattern:

- For on-going projects: \$10 million/\$10 million and decreasing thereafter
- For one-time projects: \$5 million/\$5 million and decreasing thereafter

Pat asked for the Council's approval so the Finance Committee would build a budget for the next seventeen years. The Finance Committee's recommendation was approved unanimously on a motion by Sheriff Todd Brackett and second by Betsy Fitzgerald.

Education is treated separately under the MOU. Three percent of the funds are specifically set out for special education. Pat suggested a special workgroup be created to look specifically at the details and assist in selecting a special education expert to assist in making sure the requirements of the MOU are met. She would be looking for volunteers soon. Joe asked how that would mesh with the Program Committee. The MOU allows that schools can receive the 3% and apply for other funding as well.

Joe Everett presented the Grants Committee report. Following two meetings, the committee had recommendations in four target areas. (1) Harm reduction: provide funds to the 17 existing SSPs of \$150,000 (\$75,000/year). This is the easiest category to address, funds could be out in 30 days without administrative costs; (2) Treatment: fund detox centers in Franklin County (regional) and Androscoggin County - 10 beds in each county. The State RFP is providing funding for 10-detox beds facilities in both Washington and Kennebec counties - applications will be reviewed by State personnel and Council members; (3) Prevention: funding for whole family programs (through CAP agencies): individual, family and community impact - Peter Alfond Foundation and Youth Action Network and the Opportunity Alliance. The formation of another sub-group was suggested to clarify funding in this category; and (4) Recovery: support a recovery center in Piscataquis County (only county without a center). While the State of Maine has committed \$40 - 60 million, the suggestion was made to fund any centers that aren't already receiving state support. A \$50,000 placeholder per county was suggested for organizations that do not fit into other categories. Rep. Crafts suggested mini-grants.

Council action on the above recommendations:

Prior to voting, questions were posed regarding Council members and potential conflicts of interest. It was agreed that disclosure and abstention from voting on that category would suffice. The Council voted to: (1) Approve harm reduction funding up to \$75,000 per year for 2 years to 17 SSPs, adding an additional site in Year 2 and \$200,000 for new syringe program (Gary-Allen/Vinsel, 11-0-2); (2) Approve start-up funding for 10-bed each detox centers in Androscoggin and Franklin counties of \$1.5 mil in Year 1 (Gary-Allen/Fitzgerald, 12-0-1); (3) Approve \$1.5 mil over 2 years to the Peter Alfond Foundation and provide \$1.4 mil over 2 years in direct flexible finding to support family services (Blackwell-Moore/Vinsel, 11-0-2); (4) Approve \$350,000 one-time funding for an open recovery center in Piscataquis County (Gary-Alen/Vinsel, 13-0-0); and (5) Establish a collaboration with the New England Prevention Working Group (Smith/Crafts, 13-0-0).

Press releases regarding the Council's actions today were mentioned, Mary volunteered to draft one for consideration. Dr. Johnson still has final data for the Council. She was thanked for her work. The *NY Times* had an article germane to the Council's efforts reported Gordon. He also mentioned crisis receiving centers, emergency shelters that are seeing 85% substance abuse disorders and special populations of new Mainers, the incarcerated and adolescents. Eric mentioned the 58-bed recovery center being built in York County and asked for support. Pat reminded members of the financial

disclosure forms.

The January meeting will be 1:30 - 4:30 on January 11, 2024. The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm.