

Maine Recovery Council

June 20, 2024

The meeting was opened and a round of introductions was the first order of business. Pat reviewed the agenda and explained that presentations from organizations were not listed and would be scheduled following the first distribution of funds. In response to a question regarding the upcoming Governor's Summit, Pat said she would be sending information soon.

The minutes were approved (Brackett/Noddin, 13-0).

The Coordinator's report was the first item. Mary noted that any suggestions for educational sessions should be forwarded to her soon.

Liz Blackwell-Moore summarized her Ad Hoc Committee meeting of all ten members. She outlined the plan for the next five meetings. The focus would be on needs assessments where members would identify what they see as gaps. Pat commented that the powerpoint Liz created was very informative.

Brendan reported on contract progress with the Piscataquis County Recovery Center. The contract has been reviewed by the AG's office, Ben had provided feedback, mostly of a technical nature. A draft has been sent to the Recovery Center. Gordon spoke in favor of the continued progress. Courtney asked about a method for tracking outcomes, Brendan explained that contract language could be more specific but cautioned about the risk of failure if too language were too specific. Regular progress and financial reports will be part of the contract. The Coordinator will be able to monitor the spending. Gordon spoke again in support, wanting to give the Center every chance of success. Myles asked how many people they would be reaching. Pat noted they Recovery Center was mandated to be open at least 32 hours a week. Mary said an allocation letter had been requested.

Courtney expressed her concern regarding contract language centered on background checks and criminal exclusion. Bruce noted an appeals process is included language. The discussion resulted in the motion:

To approve the contract with Recovery Wellness Initiative with the following language from section VIX, paragraph P removed: RWI shall not or retain in any capacity any person who may directly provide services to a Participant under this Contract if that person has a record of: (1) any criminal conviction that involves client abuse, neglect, or exploitation; (2) any criminal conviction classified as Class A, B, or C or the equivalent of any of these, or any reckless conduct that caused, threatened, solicited or created substantial risk of bodily injury to another person within the preceding two years; or (3) any criminal conviction resulting from a sexual act, contact, touching or solicitation in connection to any victim. RWI shall not hire or retain in any capacity any person who may directly provide services to a client who is a minor child un this Contract if that person has a record of substantiated abuse or neglect of a child. (Vinsel/Smith, 10-2-1).

Ben reported for the Finance Committee. The Council currently has \$30-plus million and will add \$5.5m in settlement revenue by the end of the year. This \$2m less will mean cash flow adjustments in Year 7. Ben raised the issue of Council capacity. He described a strawman position going forward as the workload increases which led to a discussion of the indirect rate that could be charged. The Finance Committee will take this up soon.

Joe opened the Programs and Grants Committee portion of the meeting. He said their discussion had focused on the letters of intent process and turned the meeting over to Mary. She had prepared a slide deck describing the proposed process for reading and evaluating the letters of intent. Council members will be participating in the scoring.

Brendan called attention to Questions 10 and 11 and their potential wording red flags. He said there should not be references to “protected classes” and was working on alternate wording. Bruce offered to send possible substitute verbiage.

Whether to combine responses from the two questions (10 and 11) or eliminate question 11 altogether elicited more discussion. Chasity wanted to be sure people with ‘lived experience’ were prioritized. Courtney wanted to narrow the questions to ‘lived experience’ and ‘incarceration.’ Brendan added ‘innovation’ had been suggested as something to consider as well. It was agreed that making changes after some LOIs had been received could create issues about a level playing field.

Possible actual or perceived conflicts of interest were considered, the Council has a conflict of interest policy. Liz said that there will likely be some issues perceived as conflicts of interest, not reviewing other LOIs in the same pillar as the reviewer would be the best course. Gordon agreed. Council members were reminded there is no appeal process. Going forward, once the LOI window is closed, Mary will confer with Pat regarding potential conflicts.

The number of LOIs is unknown at this time, making it difficult to know whether additional independent reviewers will be needed. Pat said a training session was anticipated for the next Board meeting. The estimated time per LOI was 30 minutes to an hour (MeHaf). Each submission will receive three scores. The goal is to get these reviewed and the dollars out the door.

Mary referenced the timeline previously presented; LOI reviews in July, scoring in August. Whether to utilize additional reviewers was a decision left for the moment. The process was amended to all full Council review of the LOIs (Gary-Allen/Vinsel, 12-0).

Mary asked for assistance in finalizing the actual grant application and briefly described her conversations with MeHaf and Berry/Dunn. Pat explained that Mary would not be able to manage her workload and get the funding out as well. Working with one of these agencies would be a wise investment and would move the Council forward administratively. Ben noted that this added capacity would probably continue. After discussion, Berry/Dunn was selected to assist in moving this forward (Ouellette/Fitzgerald, 12-0). Mary then said a drop-off account was needed for tracking LOI evaluations. The motion was made to spend up to \$300/month for a file sharing system (Gary-Allen/Small, 12-0).

Gordon mentioned the Governor’s Summit next month. The plan is to have Attorney-General Fry, Brendan, and Mary speak. Pat would facilitate the discussion that would follow. Council members were reminded to register if attending and check off ‘presenter’.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:31 pm. The next meeting is July 11.

