

Maine Recovery Council

August 8, 2024

The meeting was opened by Chair Pat Kimball. Introductions were made around the table and online. There were several announcements. She thanked everyone for their attendance at the Governor's Summit and thought the session had gone well. The newly-created Prevention sub-committee, chaired by Liz, will be making a presentation soon. The AG's office has funding for data collection which the Cutler Institute will be conducting. Brendan clarified that the funding was to be directed at the subdivisions who had also received funding from the settlements and would make available technical expertise for them to ascertain the best uses of the funds in their own communities. Lastly, the Executive Committee would be meeting in September in Executive Session. Technically all the Council members' terms run out in November, specifically Nov 21. Paul asked the process for continuing and indicated he would like to do so. Deputy Chief Eric Small has already informed Pat he will not be able to continue.

The minutes of June and July were considered. Because several members had not been present at the previous meeting, the motion failed (Noddin/Crafts, 7-0-4). The minutes will be added to the September agenda.

Pat turned the meeting over to Brendan. He noted that this was Haley's last meeting with the Council and thanked her for her work. He introduced Katrina, who would be participating in the meetings going forward. Turning to the LOIs, the plan is to make them available on the web after the application deadline has passed. The motion was made to do so (Vinsel/Noddin, 11-0). Concerning contracts, the first money is out the door to the Recovery Wellness Initiative in Piscataquis County. The Berry Dunn contract is nearing completion. Gordon reported Tess' House will open in September.

Ben reported for the Finance Committee. Some settlement funds have been received (\$2,926,556.21), and there was no update from the AG's office. The Council had \$30 m at the end of June. He questioned the funding per pillar, no changes were suggested.

Mary and the Grants Committee began their presentation. She summarized the next steps in the grants process and what information the applications should provide: the purpose, who was interested, how much was requested, and what work would be done. She recommended a multiple tiers approach focusing on the amount requested, the project type and the side of the organization. The budget request should match the scope of the project and the funding amount requested she stressed. She provided statistics to support the recommendations and provided a chart showing the rating results of each LOI. Ratings ranged from under 10 to 17. Funding requests had been received from all sixteen counties.

There was significant discussion regarding a cutoff for invitations to continue with a full application as there are many more applications than can be funded. Comments and concerns included: the feasibility of the proposals (the LOI did not require significant detail at this time); the sheer number of the proposals and the time it will take to review; disbursing more funds now will create funding problems in two to three years as decreasing amounts will be received to replenish the accounts; and lastly, more money out now would mean more contracts and more staff. Possible options were suggested, including: one award only per organization and/or partial funding of the requested amounts. The motion to

eliminate the applicants with scores under 10 was successful (Vinsel/Smith, 13-0). That left 208 applications to move forward. A second motion to eliminate those applications below 13 (Noddin/Gary-Allen, 11-2) further reduced the number to 163.

Gordon asked who would be doing the scoring. External reviewers and council members is the expectation. Yet to be determined was how many reviewers per application. It was agreed that the application should be based on the information provided initially in the LOI. Mary wanted to be sure the language of the denial letters was reviewed by Brendan, Joe and Pat. Mary said she would be sending notices next week.

The discussion returned to the suggestion of a tiered system. The following was approved for a total over two years:

Tier 1 - mini-grants up to \$50,000

Tier 2 - \$50,001 to \$200,000

Tier 3 – 200,001 to \$500,000

Tier 4 - \$500,001 to \$1 million (max)

The motion to proceed with these tiers passed unanimously (Gary-Allen/Vinsel). Gordon did not want to invite the notion that applicants could apply for more. Ben noted that 15 applicants would have to adjust their requests, Pat added that in the application there would have to be an explanation as to how the applicant would be adjusting to a lower amount. Mary asked about target numbers for each tier, Paul suggested \$3 million for each. Several members suggested there was not enough information to need setting a cap initially. Joe added that the number of staff would be key. Gordon stressed that more information could be requested if necessary. Pat said revenue and expenses was important information. Gordon wants a timeline, budget and who is leading the work.

A related discussion was initiated by a letter from Liz who suggested that for-profits not be awarded funds. Pat observed that most MAT programs are for-profits. Gordon added that this decision had already been made, treatment centers are for-profits. This could be reconsidered for the next round of funding. Myles added that if organizations are making \$10-20 million, the additional funding was not needed but did support for-profits applications. Brendan re-focused the discussion by reminding the Council that funds were to address approved uses, with a focus on how best to help people with OUD, what kind of an organization was offering the assistance and that the Council's concentrate its' thinking on the impacted population.

Additional thanks to Haley were expressed by all.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm