

Interim Chair Pat Kimball opened the meeting and summarized the meeting agenda. Introductions were given around the table and online. The minutes of December 12, 2024 were accepted as presented (Noddin/Mann, 11-0).

The Governance Committee had met January 3, 2025. At that meeting nominees for officers were identified and approved to be presented to the Council per the bylaws. Each position had to be voted separately. There were short presentations from each candidate:

Chair Pat Kimball: (11-0)  
Vice Chair: Bruce Noddin withdrew his nomination  
Chasity Tuell (12-0)  
Treasurer: Ben Mann (13-0)  
Secretary: Betsy Fitzgerald (13-0)

Following the election process, the Chair then nominated three members to fill the at-large seats on the Executive Committee:

Gordon Smith  
Paul Vinsel  
Bruce Noddin

All three were approved (Fitzgerald/Mann, 13-0). A list of committee assignments was circulated and members were asked to self-select their preferences. Committee chairs were identified:

Governance: Paul Vinsel  
Finance: Ben Mann  
Programs and Grants: Joe Everett

The Executive Committee had met January 6, 2025. Discussion topics there included staffing needs and contracts. Job descriptions for an executive director and coordinator were distributed. Coordinator Mary Coyne explained that the executive director's job description had been built upon her job responsibilities of the past year. Joe Everett commented that the Council should consider an analyst position as well, noting that with the increased work, two people would not be able to manage everything. The job descriptions were approved (Vinsel/Noddin, 13-0 and Vinsel/Smith, 13-0). Continued discussion resulted in a decision to promote Mary to Executive Director and negotiate a contract with her effective January 31, 2025 to October 1, 2025 at \$65.00 per hour for up to a 50-hour work week (Everett/McLoughlin, 13-0). A companion motion extended Mary's current contract to January 31, 2025 (Tuell/Noddin, 13-0).

The Executive Committee was further designated to oversee the hiring process through the following 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 applications 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." (Hackett/Everett, 13-0).

In her Coordinator's report, Mary provided more details regarding contract management and her continued involvement with the Council. By March, the hiring process for an executive director should be proceeding, Mary will be transitioning away towards graduate school next fall. The EDs will overlap to some extent.

Mary strongly emphasized the need for support to write contracts, Gordon supported the point by reminding the Council that in addition to the 43 awards that a backlog of 10 others that already existed. While the AG has to sign the contracts, it is not their responsibility to write them. This is labor intensive he reiterated and suggested there was expertise around the table that could help move the process along. He advocated for communication with the recipients, asking where their projects were shovel-ready, had anything changed and that they are sent the state terms and conditions in advance. Joe volunteered that Programs/Grants was the group who could provide assistance. There was discussion regarding the possible information that would be needed and the order in which to consider the awards (small to large requests for example).

Sensing momentum, as an example, Gordon said the SSP contracts would not have been created and executed without the assistance of Chasity Tuell. He said he would be drafting the contracts for Androscoggin County, Franklin County and Tessa's House because he knew the projects. He will forward the contracts to the AG's office. Brendan clarified the sections of a contract necessary to execute: Rider A (the deliverables) and the Rider B (boilerplate language of the state contract). It is the AG's responsibility to protect the funding.

There is a lot of work ahead of the Council. Pat asked that the Committee chairs develop six-month calendars so they could be listed on the website, a 14-day notice is required for meetings. Programs and Grants would be meeting every other week it was announced. Mary asked that the Milestone contract language be amended to include a "conversion" of beds to include residential care (Everett/Vinsel, 13-0).

A variety of items came before the Council: Pat reminded members to review the committee assignment list. Amber volunteered for Programs and Grants. Pat will communicate with Rep. Stover as to her area of interest. Currently, committees are comprised of the following:

Governance Committee

Paul Vinsel, Chairperson  
Pat Kimball  
Gordon Smith  
Tess Parks  
Joe Everett  
Betsy Fitzgerald  
Maggie McLoughlin

Finance Committee

Ben Mann, Chairperson  
Pat Kimball  
Paul Vinsel  
Todd Brackett  
Tess Parks

Programs/Grants

Joe Everett, Chairperson	Bruce Noddin
Pat Kimball	Todd Brackett
Chasity Tuell	Melissa Hackett
Liz Blackwell-Moore	Amber Pulcifer
Gordon Smith	

Brendan explained the need to have funding available to disburse, referred to as the allotment. The Finance Committee would identify an appropriate amount. He said it would be good to have the contracts out by May. Contracts start dates of May 1 would need to be signed by the Chair by April 1. Gordon expressed skepticism at that timetable. Ben reported as of November 2024 the Fund had \$36.4 million, with a lot frontloaded. The money was generating \$137,000/month interest. Paul remarked that he heard at the public hearing that people wanted the funding spent. Pat announced she would be presenting at DHHS on January 14 at 1 pm if anyone would like or was able to attend.

Gordon raised the matter of the recovery high school in Fort Kent that came to the public forum to request reconsideration of their application for funding. He had been contacted directly by them again asking for a commitment from the Council. He advocated for them, it was a one-of-a-kind program, residential, 8 students and had the endorsements of the college, the 3 schools and the community. Discussion followed. The overriding concern expressed was lifting one project over another by a call to a Council member thus setting a precedent. Council members wanted a process for reconsideration, one that insured equity and transparency. Gordon had made a motion to approve the funding, he withdrew his motion and Paul withdrew his second with the understanding that this issue would be listed early on the agenda for February

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.