

## Maine Recovery Council

March 13, 2025

The meeting was opened by Vice Chair Chasity Tuell. Introductions were made around the table and online. The minutes of the February meeting were approved (Smith/Mann, 10-0). Coordinator Elizabeth Fortier was introduced.

At a previous request of Chair Pat Kimball, Brendan O'Neill provided a FOIA overview regarding public records and public notice with regards to meetings. He reminded Council members of the public's right to inspect and copy printed or graphic matter related to the Council's business. He suggested members copy the Council inbox on all communications whether text or internet-based. Email is permissible for non-substantive matters such as scheduling meetings or developing agendas. Even if sent from one's personal computer, the email is part of the public record. Meetings of three or more persons require public notice. The underlying premise is that the Council will conduct public proceedings, actions must be taken openly in a transparent manner. It is important to know why the Council made/got to a decision.

Gordon asked to bring an agenda item up before several members left the meeting. He raised the issue of the Aroostook High School funding. He summarized the situation and explained that the delays had necessitated an increase in the costs, going from the original request of \$581,000 to \$616,037. The motion was approved to add the alternative high school project in Aroostook County to the list of grants approved last November (Smith/Brackett, 9-0-1). The question was asked as to whether the Council should pass the Urgent Funding Request first, Gordon explained that the Council had already approved adding two other requests, this action was in line with that action.

The Programs and Grants Committee began with Mary's introduction of Sara Yasner Sara is a non-profit organization consultant who will be reviewing how the Council has been operating the last two years and providing executive coaching. Mary then reported that the contract with Berry Dunn has been finalized. She presented a timeline for contracts that have been grouped by similar scope of work or project deliverables. It is ambitious and stretches from March 17 – May 2. Mary said she would like to have the work completed before her departure date of June 30. She said she would remain part-time in support of the new Executive Director through August.

Mary presented two possible scenarios for hiring the next Executive Director that took into consideration the match of the Council's future direction with the skills and experience of the new hire. There is not a lot of time in which to hire. The Council could continue with in-house grant making with available staff or become a partner in funding opportunities by collaborating with other funders and taking advantage of their expertise. Berry Dun could provide support. State agencies could be partners although it would take a year to organize and staff. Gordon said that in another year most of the original Council members would be termed out. He advocated to take the Recovery Council out of state government and this would require a specific skill set to lead that process. Paul added that it would require a change in the statute, in the Court decree and the consent of the subdivisions. The partner scenario would create a pass-through process which might be more strategic. The position of Executive Director would have to be reclassified. A final decision will be forthcoming in April.

Paul presented a draft of a public comment policy. It described a process to begin with the May 8 meeting. At that time, 15 minutes at the beginning of each meeting would be made available for public comment. He described the process to be recognized, the first come, first serve signup, the three minute limit for comments and that there would not be a signup carry-over to the next meeting. Chasity suggested replacing “voices of recovery” with “people with lived or living experience” which was approved without comment. Ben was in favor of dedicating time at every meeting by said we don’t have enough time now. He also specified any presentation would not request funding, that also was met with approval. Tess asked that there be a clear road map to participate, perhaps with a wait list to know in advance if testimony will be able to be offered. The email option is always available. Paul said the Council could always make changes. The policy was approved (Vinsel/Smith, 10-0).

The Urgent Funding Request process was next. Maggie said it was less than ideal but better than nothing but reiterated her concern that an organization could jump the process. Gordon explained that his process was limited to applications already received. Mary explained that if she received three votes of support from Council members, she would notify the applicant and the item would appear on the next meeting agenda. Questions included if this could be interpreted as an additional invitation to apply. Ben characterized it as a slippery slope that would bog us down in more process. Chasity noted we hadn’t gotten the 2023 funds out yet. After more discussion this was tabled (Smith/Vinsel, 9-0-1).

Liz presented the Prevention group’s work and the motions needed to proceed. Prevention, she explained, is very different from the other pillars. It takes a lot of time to build a coalition which explains the recommendation of a longer time period in which to meet the deliverables. She recommends contracts in cycles, renewable over a ten-year term. The Maine Prevention Network, for example, knows what to do but lacks resources.

Motion 1: To achieve the goal of supporting or expanding culturally relevant, community-led and youth-led efforts that improve the community conditions in communities highly impacted by opioid use disorder, the Maine Recovery Council will allocate \$1.95M to community coalitions through an RFP process and \$50,000 to HRiA to provide technical assistance. Funding can be spent over 4 years. The motion was approved (Blackwell-Moore/Fitzgerald, 11-0).

Motion 2: To achieve the goal of increasing two generation approaches to prevention with a focus on families who have been impacted by opioid use disorder and/or families that live in communities highly impacted, the Maine Recovery Council will allocate \$1M to organizations to implement, expand, or enhance 2 Generation programming through an RFP process. Funding can be spent over 3 years. The motion was approved (Blackwell-Moore/Stover, 11-0).

Motion 3: To achieve the goal of increased funding and evidenced-informed efforts at the State and local level to prevent and reduce high risk substance use among the 18-25 year old population, the Maine Recovery Council will allocate \$1M to the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention to hire a Maine CDC staff person and fund local efforts through the Maine Prevention Network. Funding can be spent over 3 years. The motion was approved (Smith/Vinsel, 9--0-2).

Mary raised the Family Services contract. After much discussion, the item will be added to the agenda for April. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.