

## Maine Recovery Council

April 10, 2025

The meeting was opened by Chair Pat Kimball. Introductions were given around the table and online. She announced Gordon Smith had tendered his resignation and Deb Poulin, from the Office of Behavioral Health, had been appointed to fill his seat. She had not been officially sworn in yet so cannot vote at the meeting today. Pat went on to fill Gordon's at-large seat on the Executive Committee with her selection of Joe Everett. He was confirmed by the Council (Tuell/Vinsel, 10-0-1).

The minutes were approved (Mann/Tuell, 12-0).

The Finance Committee report was next on the agenda. Ben reported that the committee met late last month to review the budget with an eye towards how much more could be approved based on estimated settlement payments. The updated reconciliation statements showed \$34 million that would be drawn down based on payments to providers. Spending had been approved over a year ago. For the year 2024, the Council has underspent but will be overspent in 2025 if all the contracts are in place. The bottom line, the Council will be \$1.5 million over by 2027-2029. Would entities assume continued funding after their initial two-year award? Many do, even with no promise of continued funding was the response. Mary suggested endowments. When asked, Ben said that was a question for the Comptroller's Office.

The Governance Committee report was next. Paul described possible organizational models for the Council: (1) we could continue as we do now (2) we could partner with another organization and retain oversight; or (3) the Council could become an independent entity. There were pluses and minuses to each option. Paul recommended #2 as the best option in part because it is difficult to find qualified staff. Joe agreed. Other opinions questioned the efficiency of having another organization run the Council, or whether Option #2 would eliminate the Council's decision-making ability. Brandon clarified that the Council is obligated to direct the disbursement of the funds. The major concern seemed to be the burden of evaluation and data collection overwhelming the present staff. Mary said Berry Dunn was providing assistance right now. The Executive Director's job description was not discussed and in part, Paul said, depended on what option is selected. The reminder – the next Council meeting will feature 15 minutes for public comment.

Programs and Grants was next on the agenda. The job description job description would retain most of the prior version. The focus was on prior experience with operations development, the procedures and process needed to accomplish all the facets of the tasks. A BA degree and prior experience in a relevant field would be expected. Compensation would be listed as up to \$110/hour which is double what is paid now. There would be no time off and no paid benefits for the contract from May 23 with a start date of July 1. The position would be open until May 2. The description was approved (Blackwell-Moore/Vinsel, 11-0-1).

Pat asked for motions to get the process started.

"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's Executive Director contract opportunity which shall be posted to the council's website. 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.” (Vinsel/Hackett, 12-0)

The Executive Committee was further authorized: “I motion that the Council authorize the Executive Committee to meet in Executive Session, to complete the task of reviewing applications for the Executive Director position, pursuant to Section 4.10 of the Council Bylaws and Section 405 Sub-Section 6(A), of Maine’s FOAA, codified in Title 1, ch. 13, sub-chapter 1 of Maine’s statutes.” (Fitzgerald/Everett, 12-0).

Several comments were heard regarding the tight time frame. Pat explained she saw the process consisting of three meetings to reach the selection of a candidate. There was discussion regarding the risks if this process is not completed by May 23, Mary said there would have to be a Sept 1 start date. Brendan was asked if the time frame could be extended. The position will be posted April 11.

Flex funds were the next agenda item. It was agreed that such funding helps families continue to make changes in their lives in spite of a crisis. Joe spoke in strong support of what he characterized as critical funding. The CAP agencies have offices everywhere and Chasity added that all counties are covered by their services. Moving forward:

“Motion to allocate the previously approved flexible funding for prevention to Maine Community Action Partnership (MeCAP), for the purpose of allocation to 10 CAP agencies to distribute for whole family coaching services, up to \$1000/year/family. MeCAP must return any unused funds to the Maine Recovery Council at the end of Year Two.”(Blackwell-Moore/Hackett, 11-0-1)

Grants were next. Elizabeth has sent out questionnaires to the applicants for feedback regarding the process and would be asking for Council feedback as well. Mary added that interviews regarding the process and guidance for the next Executive Director would be scheduled soon.

The contract process and updated information regarding budgets and scope of work were the focus of the Director’s Report. Details regarding the Northern Maine Wellness Clinic and facilities in Franklin County were included in the report. Following extensive discussion, further action resulted in the following motion:

“Motion to approve the updated budgets for: the Franklin County planning grant, which allots \$400,000 for a needs/planning assessment and implementation opportunity, to be approved by the Council; and Lifeline, LLC, for \$500,000 for a treatment center in Aroostook County; and \$200,000 for the Franklin County Recovery Center.”(Tuell/Vinsel, 10-0).

The School Administrative Unit MOU received a short discussion. A committee should be created to over-see the grant process of supplemental funding. The schools have been notified that we are beginning the process.

Pat reminded the Council that the next meeting would start with a 15-minute public comment period. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm