

Maine Recovery Council

September 11, 2025

Chair Pat Kimball opened the meeting noting that September was Recovery Month. Following the agenda review, introductions came from around the table.

The first fifteen minutes of the meeting are reserved for public comment. Chelsea Putnam from Peer-to-Peer in Millinocket spoke of their new building. Lisa Everest also provided commentary. Former Council member Gordon Smith, from the Governor's Office, reported a 21% decline in overdose deaths. There were 490 last year, the goal is to get back to pre-pandemic levels of under 400. Joe asked about the impact of the recently issued Executive Order. Gordon said federal funds are not used for syringe programs in Maine. He characterized the language in the Order as "horrifying."

The minutes of the August meeting were approved (Hackett/Stover, 13-0).

Through a slight agenda adjustment, the Chairperson's Report focused first on Franklin County and their request to use a portion of their planning grant funds to support the extended-release buprenorphine (XRB) program in the Jail. LeeAnna Lavoie, Dr. Alane O'Connor, and Sgt. Ryan Close explained while the planning grant had not been completed, they wanted to build on what they had already in place by focusing on a restorative rather than punitive process in the jail. Sgt. Close described the changing attitudes of people currently incarcerated as they saw the benefits of following the rules. After some additional discussion, the motion was made to accept the Franklin County proposal and amend their contract to allow the \$125,000 to be re-allocated for the XRB Program (Blackwell-Moors/Stover, 13-0).

The next topic was the Chairperson's Report. Pat explained that looking towards the future of the Council, goals and objectives had not received any attention and she was becoming more concerned that that Executive Director was operating without a strategic plan for guidance. Over-riding questions, such as when should the next grant cycle begin and what will be the focus of the Council need to be discussed. Liz added that it was important to clarify the needs of the Council and decide on priorities for the funding. Pat suggested a half-day meeting with a facilitator in January or February to start the process. Maggie made the observation and a whole day would allow for more in-depth discussion and better decisions. Any facilitators Council members knew, could the names be forwarded to the ED. Pat explained the Executive Committee had met to consider the RFP for grant management services that had been advertised. Pat then explained that the Executive Committee had met to discuss the grant management RFP. It had been discovered that one applicant's proposal and bid had been missed. It was recommended that the three bidders be invited to re-submit their proposals. The Executive Committee would not act as the reviewers, the submissions would be sent to the Programs and Grants Committee. The three applicants are aware of this adjustment to the process. The motion was made to proceed (Vinsel/McLoughlin, 12-0).

Paul reported for the Governance Committee. The group discussed the grant application process and the fact that the discussions were held in public. Could the discussions be held in executive session was the question. Currently, the Maine Recovery Council cannot proceed in that manner, a change in the

statute would be needed. Pat also added that for effective management of the Council that the Executive Director currently had no ability to approve funds for administrative purposes.

Deb Poulin reported for the Finance Committee and referred members to the minutes of the July meeting. She said the long term trajectory receipt of funds showed a decline and the goal was to maintain a general level of available funds. Joe Everett reported for the Programs and Grants Committee also referring members to the minutes of the July meeting and that the Committee would be meeting September 30. Liz Blackwell-Moore reported the School Funding group was ready to make requests of Superintendents for Special Education specialists to join their working group. While any school can request funding, it is the litigating school districts who can choose the Special Ed specialists.

The Executive Director reported that the Church of Safe Injection (COSI) had their certification revoked by Maine CDC. This affected three sites part way through their first year of funding. Financial reports from COSI were not submitted in a timely manner and when information was requested, it was not provided. The motion was made: To terminate the MRC contract with the Church of Safe Injection for the operation of Maine CDC-certified programs (\$225,000 Year One, \$225,000 Year Two), effective immediately, on the basis of revocation of Maine CEC certification. Additionally, to direct Council staff and legal counsel to pursue appropriate remedies to recover any or all unspent or misspent opioid settlement funds (Vinsel/Stover, 13-0).

Elizabeth and Chasity also updated the Council on the status of contracts. MD3 was transitioning from a municipal EMS agency to a non-profit 501 (c) (3). That process includes some one-time costs. The request has been made to use some of the grants funds (\$9,225 estimated). A contract amendment would be needed. The motion was made: to delegate the authority of the Recovery council to its Programs and Grants Committee to review, and approve or deny, the updated contract budget of Council grantee MD3. This authority is granted on a one-time, case-by-case basis in order to allow for the finalization of the contract before the drafting deadline set by OAG Finance, which is before the next Recovery Council meeting (McLoughlin/Fitzgerald, 13-0). Preble Street and Hope House had combined forces. A contract amendment was needed to update the budget in the contract. The motion: to approve the updated contract budget for Council grantee Preble Street (Blackwell-Moore/Hackett, 13-0). Elizabeth noted instructions for Google Drive to view funding requests.

York County Sent a strongly worded letter requesting their funds. The Executive Director explained some of the challenges of transitioning staff and said her goal was to have contracts to providers of review and signatures by September 29. Contracts do have to be signed in person and that sometimes necessitates driving. The next contract reporting timeline begins October 25.

A mechanism by which to gather meaningful information still has not been clearly identified. Grant management and evaluation are not the same. Pat said it is important to know that grantees are doing what they said they would do. The Council wants them to do the projects that were initially described and were the basis of the awarded funding. There were 30 grants out the door in the first round, 55 contracts in total.

There being no new business and with Pat's announcement that she would not be in the room for the October meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 4:02 pm.