

## Maine Recovery Council

January 8, 2026

The meeting was opened by Chair Pat Kimball with a welcome and a round of introductions. She reviewed the agenda for the meeting. No requests for speaking during the public comment portion of the meeting had been received. The minutes were approved (Brackett/Poulin, 8-0-4).

The Chair's report began with a reminder that this meeting was the annual meeting of the Council as prescribed in the bylaws. The first order of business was to elect officers for the coming year. Nominated are: Chair Pat Kimball, Vice-Chair Tess Parks, Secretary Betsy Fitzgerald, and Treasurer Deb Poulin. Deb did ask that co-chair designations be considered going forward to insure the continued functionality of the Council. The motion carried (Vinsel/Stover, 12-0). Committee assignments were reviewed, the Chair appoints the at-large members of the Executive Committee. Paul Vinsel, Joe Everett, and Raegan LaRochelle were approved (Fitzgerald/Stover, 12-0). Membership on each committee remains the same as last year and was approved as presented (Fitzgerald/Stover, 12-0). Committee chairs were asked to discuss a co-chair designation.

Discussion then turned to the Denver Opioid Conference which will feature an administrative portion this year. The conference will be held June 17-19 and early registration closes January 17. Pat confirmed that while she can approve up to \$5,000 in expenses, the expenses for attendance would likely be more. She advocated for attendance regardless. After more discussion, the Council approved supporting the Executive Director and another Council member's attendance (Stover/Vinsel, 12-0).

### Committee Reports:

Finance – Deb Poulin - the group reviewed balances from October (\$30.5m) and November (\$30.6m). The Committee would be developing an operating budget in the coming months showing obligated funds, available funds and other financial details. There is a need to create a mechanism for disbursing emergency funds in a timely manner. Elizabeth is collecting data regarding the first round of disbursements and their usage by awardees and noted that there appears to be some misunderstanding as to what was being asked. It is a fine line, discussing this information in a public forum. No-cost extensions were mentioned.

Programs and Grants – Joe Everett - there has been discussion regarding no-cost extensions. Chasity and Joe are planning to meet to draft a policy, Deb was invited to join them. One of the issues is what would a process look like for projects behind in their spending and what might be considered viable reasons for the delays. Also mentioned was the need for an emergency off-cycle funding framework, Tess is drafting a policy to address these requests. Chasity reported contract negotiations with PCG are on-going. Health Resources in Action (HRIA) will be interviewing and the goal is to release an RFP in March. Assessments are needed for data collection and goal setting, the MOSS Center will be involved.

Governance – Paul Vinsel – The group will be meeting Jan 23 and will elect a co-chair, reported the Chair. The public meeting was not as well as attended as anticipated and another approach probably should be considered going forward. Coffee with the Council” on zoom was suggested.

School Funding Workgroup - Liz Blackwell-Moore and Melissa Hackett – They will be meeting January 16 to prioritize gaps and set strategies.

Staff Reports were next. Chasity asked how the Council wanted to talk about specific agencies, specifically when the topic was of a sensitive nature. Brendan reminded the Council that the bylaws did not allow for executive session regardless. The conversation then turned to the Recovery Wellness Institute whose executive director had to leave and was slated to run out of funding in July. They did not receive a state contract which would be contributing to the funding gap. This center has received widespread support locally. The Council supported the establishment of the Institute, half the funds were directed to the purchase of the building where programming is located. More information is needed and will be available by the April meeting. Additional funding might be possible through amending an existing contract. There was agreement that rural areas need to be supported with services and facilities.

Carol Kelly of Pivot Point Inc. joined the meeting. She had responded to the request for professional facilitation of a strategic planning process and had suggestions for a direction for the Council and a timeline. She proposed two phases for the work, Phase 1 - Feb 15 to March 31 and Phase 2 – April 1 to May 31. Her proposal featured a mix of interviews with staff, meetings with the Council, drafting a plan and developing a toolkit. Council members reacted favorably to the proposal and moved to proceed (Stover/Hackett, 13-0-1).

Rep. Stover asked for clarification regarding Gateway. The confusion comes from two entities, entirely separate with separate EINs and no shared staff, but with very similar names. The LLC is under investigation, the 501 (c) 3 is not and their funding is actually underspent at this time. Chasity updated the Council on the York County contract (requesting some changes) and the recovery high School (delaying a few months). Elizabeth provided a grant summary for the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.