

Opioid Remediation Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 1st, 2022

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

SLC Staff Present: *Jana Blomberg, Molly Cooper, Linnea Mirsch*

Members Present: *Greg Anderson, Elisabeth Bilden, Heather Blue, Patrick Boyle, Pat Conway, Beth Elstad, Jennifer Garbow, Ashley Grimm, Sherry Johnson, Jessica McCarthy-Nickila, Lisa Prusak, Verne Wagner*

Others Present: *Erin Bolton, Gena Bossert, Kyle Heyesen, Mary Lyon, Susan Vitulli*

Members Absent: *Katie Bauman, Laura Bennett, Joseph Bianco, Melissa Dybvig, Brandon Hankey, Bryan Johnson, Danielle Jones, Mike Jugovich, Ross Litman, Kim Maki, Branden Mattson, Jeff Polcher, Susan Purchase, Allison Vanneste*

The meeting began with a moment of silence to honor all of the people we have lost to deaths of despair (suicide, drug overdose and alcoholism), all of those currently struggling with behavior health (substance use disorders, mental illness), those who are bravely walking the recovery path and all of the families, friends, community members and supports impacted.

Jana Blomberg went over the 2022 workplan highlighting where the Committee is at as well as recapping the statement agreement which requires the County to consult annually with the municipalities in the county regarding future use of the settlement funds in the county, including holding an annual meeting with all municipalities within the county in order to received input as to the proposed uses of the Opioid Settlement Funds and to encourage collaboration between local governments both within and beyond the county. These meetings are open to the public.

Blomberg explained that they are proposing a public meeting invite (virtual meeting) to all municipalities covering process, committee work, initial priorities prior to going to the County Board in late December/January. The Subcommittee was asked for input and the following suggestions were made:

- Beth Elstad discussed her experience with public meetings and suggested that there be structure in the form of an agenda, target questions, time limitations and someone to keep things on track.
- Linnea Mirsch agreed with Elstad and explained they'd like to present how the County Board approached this, the work of the committee and where they are at in the process, how they plan to communicate as they move forward with more of a website presence sot that people can follow along with solicitations, what has been approved and eventually sharing. So much should already be in place that will then allow them to solicit feedback and input. She explained that the way the language is written it makes the public sound like the primary stakeholders, but they are saying the committee is and looking of they're recommendations. Overall, she feels the process will reinforce that and invited any of the committee members to attend and participate.
- Verne Wagner recommended that they considering prioritizing exactly where they want to spend the funds and have them spent in such ways that they are supporting programs that work very well and suggest that to the municipalities. He suggested that they consider partnering with

either Douglas County or the City of Superior, who is also receiving settlement funds, so that some of the funds could be saved for other programming.

- Commissioner Grimm stated that she likes the idea of talking with other entities to ensure services are not being duplicated. She also mentioned that in addition to the virtual option that they might consider involving the intentional focus groups with entities the County has relationships with who's members have lived experience.
- Mirsch wanted to clarify that agreement requires them to have meetings with all municipalities within St. Louis County. She also stated that in terms of other municipalities deciding how to spend their allocations, only two municipalities within the County are receiving a direct allocation (the City of Duluth and the City of Proctor). Mirsch has reached out to the City of Duluth regarding their planning, which will be an open conversation, but she mentioned it doesn't sound like they've done much planning yet.

Blomberg returned to the PowerPoint presentation (*which is available upon request*) and discussed the aggregate survey results along with some key take aways. She also discussed some key comments in the survey for consideration and highlighted the following:

- The need for more programming
- Housing supports
- Incentives for business
- Financial supports for current non-profit agencies
- Additional substances for medically assisted treatments (MAT)
- Northern MN (past Duluth) does not receive allocated funding
- Social determinants
- Prevention and stabilization

Mirsch recapped some final written comments that were submitted, highlighting a comment from the DTA, who is also a community partner, and asked that the groups keep the feedback in mind.

They moved on to discuss the goals to work together as a group to figure out how to use the funds based on the John's Hopkins Principles:

- Spend money to save lives
- Use evidence to guide spending
- Invest in youth prevention
- Focus on racial equity
- Develop a transparent process for dicing where to spend the funding

Mirsch highlighted some of the questions the committee used back in June to prioritize and opened the discussion up to the committee members for what questions they want to incorporate as their guiding principles. Ideas included:

- Prioritizing criminal justice intercepts: warm handoffs, safety, new/willing partner in St. Luke's as a medical provider at the jail
- Funding programs that don't have other funding streams (peer support, etc.)
- Prevention – Starts with pregnancy and babies (early prevention, primary prevention)
- Focus on populations that have suffered the greatest – BIPOC communities – as another layer of trauma (do we have lists of the organizations positioned to do this?)

- Support trauma-informed practice, throughout (even individual level)
- School education all ages – prevention, harm reduction – address so we don't have another generation experience this epidemic (don't repeat)
- Broad education (statutes targeted to different audiences)
- Ensure countywide implementation

The committee then broke out into their work groups for the remainder of the meeting. The groups are tasked with taking the feedback and discussion from today as well as professional experience and knowledge to get to the next level of prioritization and specification. The Committee members were allowed to self-enroll based on the group that best aligns with their expertise. Facilitators displayed Jamboard with group specific data and questions to guide group discussion. Each group then completed one survey together.

The groups were as follows:

- **Education & Public Health**
 - Susan Vitulli (Facilitator)
 - Sherry Johnson
 - Heather Blue
 - Verne Wagner
 - Jeff Polcher
- **Local Government**
 - Kyle Heyesen (Facilitator)
 - Ashley Grimm
 - Greg Anderson
 - Linea Mirsch
- **Law Enforcement**
 - Gena Bossert (Facilitator)
- Jess Nickila
- **Intervention & Recovery**
 - Erin Bolton (Facilitator)
 - Patrick Boyle
 - Lisa Prusak
 - Beth Elstad
 - Elisabeth Bilden
- **Community Partners**
 - Jana Blomberg (Facilitator)
 - Jennifer Garbow
 - Mary Lyon
 - Patricia

The breakout groups were closed with three minutes of the meeting time left. Some groups did not finish their surveys. Blomberg suggested that facilitators email the groups thoughts that were captured during the breakout sessions to the group members. From there the group members can email the facilitators their final thoughts so that the facilitators can complete the groups survey and submit it on behalf of the entire group. All agreed with this process. Mirsch let everyone know that the Board was going to be updated on the Committee's progress at their workshop on September 20th and reminded everyone that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 11th, 2022, from 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM.