

Chippewa County Opioid Settlement Funds Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 8, 2025

A regular meeting of the Chippewa County Opioid Settlement Funds Steering Committee was held on Monday, December 8, 2025, at the County Health Department in Sault Ste. Marie, MI with a virtual option. Committee Chair Justin Knepper called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm with a quorum present.

Members present: Justin Knepper, Shawn Baker, Michelle Benson, Derek Causley, Melissa Colby, Kelly Freeman, Lucas Gardiner, Natasha Halonen, Trista LeBlanc, Maggie Merchberger, Mary Michaels, Sabrina Neveu, Karen Senkus, Patrick Shannon

Members absent: Brook Bergsma

Others present: None

Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of December 1, 2025, Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Mary and supported by Kelly to approve the December 1, 2025, minutes with the following change: Note that Melissa Colby is a voting member of the committee regarding the 2026 opioid funds applications. On a voice vote the motion carried.

Public Comment: No public members were present.

Agenda Items

Follow-up and Score 2026 applications for Opioid Settlement Funds:

Applications from St. Mary's School, Medical Examiner's Office, CLM Community Action, EUPISD, GLRC, Mental Health Court, and FAN were reviewed and scored.

Applications that scored the highest are as follows: Great Lakes Recovery, CLMCAA, FAN, Mental Health Court. Score sheet is attached.

Discussion ensued as to whether applicants met the committee's priorities for funding. Karen reported that legal review of the applications was requested to ensure that all activities and budgeted items are allowed.

Discussion ensued as to the amount of funding that was available for this current distribution; Karen noted that since initial funds were not awarded when received by the county, some additional monies are available for distribution.

It was moved by Kelly and supported by Derek to fund the following applicants for the amounts noted, pending legal review: CLMCAA: \$45,000; GLRC: \$45,000; FAN: \$29,500; Mental Health Court: \$18,500; all in favor; motion passed.

Next steps:

Karen will reach out to CLMCAA to notify them of the reduced offer of funding.

The recommendation of the committee will be sent to the Board of Commissioners' Finance meeting scheduled for December 16th and decided by the full board on December 18th. Should any concerns be noted by legal counsel, Karen will notify the committee.

Next Meeting Date and Time:

February 9, 2026, at 3:30; virtual and in-person options.

Committee Member Comments:

It was suggested to re-work the scoring of applications for 2027 as well as setting goals that are evident to applicants.

Adjournment: It was moved to adjourn by Pat and supported by Kelly. On a voice vote the motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.