

# Chippewa County Opioid Settlement Steering Meeting Minutes

August 7, 2025

A regular meeting of the Chippewa County Opioid Settlement Steering Committee was held on Thursday, August 7, 2025, at the County Health Department in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Committee recorder Kelly Church called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. with a quorum present.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Shawn Baker, Michelle Benson, Derek Causley, Melissa Colby, Kelly Freeman, Lucas Gardiner, Natahsa Halonen, Justin Knepper, Maggie Merchberger, Mary Michaels, Sabrina Neveu, Karen Senkus and Patrick Shannon

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Brook Bergsma, Trista LeBlanc, Ciara Saint

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Kelly Church, Lynn Farnquist, and Amy Dolinky

Roll call was taken and the Committee made introductions to one another to start the meeting.

## Approval of the Agenda

**It was moved by Member Kelly Freeman, supported by Member Maggie Merchberger, to approve the agenda as presented. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.**

## Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair

The Committee briefly discussed the procedure for nominating and voting on motions to electing the Chair and Vice Chair and the role of the positions and term of offices.

**Member Sabrina Neveu nominated Justin Knepper to be Chair of the Steering Committee, which was supported by Member Melissa Colby. No other nominations were offered. On a roll call vote Member Justin Knepper was unanimously voted Chair of the Opioid Settlement Steering Committee.**

**Member Natasha Halonen nominated Patrick Shannon to the Vice Chair of the Steering Committee, which was supported by Derek Causley. No other nominations were offered. On a roll call vote Member Patrick Shannon was unanimously voted Vice Chair of the Opioid Settlement Steering Committee.**

## Public Comment

No public comment was offered.

## Agenda Items

### Opioid Settlement Funds – Power Point Presentation – MAC’s Amy Dolinky, MPPA

Amy Dolinky gave a brief review of the Opioid Settlement Funds, and her role providing no cost technical support; she reviewed the spending requirements of the settlement, approved uses, allowability, and spending principles of the settlement. Amy has been an integral piece of getting the County to this point helping with questions, documents and her expertise.

### Opioid Settlement Steering Committee Bylaws

The Committee reviewed the Bylaws as presented with recent changes made by Chippewa County Board of Commissioners Committee.

**It was moved by Member Mary Michaels, supported by Member Karen Senkus to approve the Opioid Settlement Steering Committee Bylaws, as presented. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.**

### **Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

The Committee reviewed the Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure and discussed how and when certain members would need to opt out of voting due to their conflict.

**It was moved by Member Melissa Colby, supported by Member Shawn Baker to approve the Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure, as presented. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.**

### **Opioid Settlement Planning Worksheet**

No action was taken as the Committee was updated on the action plan, steering committee, funding, monitoring and accountability checklists of items that have been completed.

### **Resolution To Execute Opioid Settlement Spending**

#### **Request for Proposal Received and Funding Agreements**

**CC Mental Health Court - \$23,600.00 (Cost-based Reimbursement)**

**Face Addiction Now (FAN) - \$30,690.00 (Fixed Price Lump Sum)**

**50<sup>th</sup> Circuit Drug Court - \$30,700.00 (Cost-based Reimbursement)**

**No Cost extensions for the reimbursement agreements, if needed.**

The Committee was updated on this year's process and how it will differ from FY2026; and how we focused on getting funds out the door to support the organizations and community members; while the pieces were all being put together and making sure the proposals were properly vetted by legal counsel to ensure alignment with the settlement. The Committee reviewed the three funding agreements, two with cost-based reimbursement, CC Mental Health Court for \$23,600.00 and 50<sup>th</sup> Circuit Drug Court for \$30,700.00 and one fixed price agreement for Face Addiction Now (FAN) for \$30,690.00. Discussion followed.

**It was moved by Member Patrick Shannon, supported by Member Natasha Halonen, to offer support of the funding agreements as stated to the Board of Commissioners for approval; amended by Member Patrick Shannon and supported by Member Sabrina Neveu to have the three funding request representatives attend the next Committee meeting to make a presentation. Discussion followed.**

**It was then moved by Member Patrick Shannon, and supported by Member Karen Senkus, to move forward with the recommendations to the Board of Commissioners, with roll call votes for each of the separate funding agreements. On a voice vote the motion CARRIED.**

**For CC Mental Health Court - \$23,600.00 (Cost-based Reimbursement) a voice roll call vote was taken supporting the recommendation for approval (15-1 with Member Halonen abstaining).**

**For Face Addiction Now (FAN) - \$30,690.00 (Fixed Price Lump Sum) a voice roll call vote was taken supporting the recommendation for approval (14-2 with Members Benson and Michaels abstaining).**

**For 50<sup>th</sup> Circuit Drug Court - \$30,700.00 (Cost-based Reimbursement) a voice roll call vote was taken supporting the recommendation for approval (16-0).**

### **Agreement For Opioid Settlement Fund Management Services to CCHD - \$2,500.00 annually**

The Committee reviewed an agreement for Chippewa County Health Department to receive \$2,500.00 annually to manage the oversight of remediation services by managing and tracking the distribution of the opioid settlement fund and coordinating and leading the Opioid Settlement Steering Committee. Discussion of \$2,500.00 being enough to cover the expenses; the Committee spoke about possibly changing the amount in the future if it fell within the guidelines of the settlement.

**It was moved by Member Patrick Shannon, supported by Member Shawn Baker, to approve and authorize support for the Agreement for Opioid Settlement Fund Management Services to be provided by the Chippewa County Health Department at the annual cost of \$2,500.00, starting October 1, 2025. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.**

**MSU- Data Sub-Committee (non-Public) Data Sharing and Input via MSU Zoom (1 ½ hour session)**

Member Karen Senkus updated the Committee on the Community Assessment survey being completed by MSU for Chippewa County, which held focus groups, sent out surveys and additional outreached gathering information. The next step is reviewing the data and determining how the Committee wants the data to be presented at the end. Discussion followed.

**It was moved by Member Patrick Shannon, supported by Member Natasha Halonen to establish a data sub-committee, which would be all members of the Opioid Steering Committee. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.**

**It was determined that August 22, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. would be the best time for the Committee to participate in a Zoom call with MSU, to determine how the data should be presented.**

**Process for FY2026 Funding**

The Committee discussed the steps for the FY2026 funding and timing of release, receipt and recommendations to the Board of Commissioners for the 2026 Funding. The Committee asked that the Request for Proposals be sent to the Committee for review and potential change. Discussion followed.

Throughout the meeting there was lots of shared information on public engagement, public perceptions, treatment or lack of treatment options, setting priorities, establishing goals for the Committee and the use of funds.

**Discuss next meeting time**

The next Committee meeting will be on September 15<sup>th</sup> via Zoom or in person at the Chippewa County Health Department.

**Committee Member Comments**

Nothing additional was offered.

**Adjourn**

**It was moved by member Patrick Shannon, supported by Member Natasha Halonen, to adjourn.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:49 p.m.

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Kelly J. Church, Recorder

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Justin Knepper, Chairman