

Chippewa County Opioid Settlement Funds Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 10, 2026

A regular meeting of the Chippewa County Opioid Settlement Funds Steering Committee was held on Monday, August 10, 2026, at the Chippewa County Health Department in Sault Ste. Marie, MI with a virtual option. Committee Chair Justin Knepper called the meeting to order at 3:33 pm with a quorum present.

Members present: Justin Knepper, Michelle Benson, Derek Causley, Kelly Freeman, Natasha Halonen, Maggie Merchberger, Mary Michaels, Sabrina Neveu, Jodi Bosbous-Rath, Karen Senkus

Members absent: Melissa Colby (attempted attendance virtually), Shawn Baker (notified Chairman), Lucas Gardiner, Patrick Shannon, Trista LeBlanc

Others present: None

Approval of the Agenda:

It was moved to approve the agenda as presented by Kelly; supported by Mary; on a voice vote the motion carried.

Approval of June 8, 2026, Meeting Minutes:

It was moved by Kelly and supported by Mary to approve the June 8, 2026, meeting minutes; on a voice vote the motion carried.

Public Comment: No public members were present

Agenda Items:

City-County Partnership

Kelly Freeman announced that the City of Sault Ste. Marie entered into a memorandum of understanding with Chippewa County in July to coordinate the distribution of opioid settlement funds. Through this agreement, City Commissioner Jodi Bosbous-Rath has been appointed to the steering committee; her term on the committee will coincide with her service length as a City Commissioner. Ms. Bosbous-Rath introduced herself, providing information on her background and work within the community. All members welcomed her to the committee. The city will issue \$2,500 to CCHD for the administration and coordination of the funds.

Prevention Services Subcommittee Report

Sabrina reported that the subcommittee has been gathering information on prevention programming currently taught in area schools. Committee members are working closely with the EUPISD and noted that Botvins Life Skills is recommended. The goal is to gather information and create an information flyer for school administrators to encourage applications for funding to implement more programs. Discussion ensued regarding sending this information to other groups that provide services to children.

2027 RFQ application process review

RFQ: Committee members were provided with the 2026 application and were asked to review the language and send suggestions for edits to Karen by 8/21/26 so she can add the information for review.

Guide: Discussion ensued regarding separating the legal language that must be included in the application from the guidance, as the legal language may be intimidating for some applicants. The guide should be more user-friendly for applicants.

Scoring template: The committee agreed to use the MAC scoring template with some adjustments to categories

General discussion on RFQ process:

Suggestion to allow the opportunity for applicants to present their application in person to the committee; all were in favor. Once applications are received, the committee will determine how to schedule in-person sessions.

Suggestion to allow mini grants in this round of funding.

Suggestion to allow the option to apply for multi-year funding. Discussion related to this item included: what constitutes multi-year? Continued funding for current awardees should be contingent on the work accomplished thus far.

Discussion ensued regarding outreach/advertising of grant cycle. The local newspaper is not getting the same attention; we need to push information on social media, etc.

There was discussion regarding whether committee members that submit applications should be allowed to score/vote on other applications submitted. It was suggested that either a separate scoring committee be formed or add three members of the general public to the committee for scoring purposes.

****Motion made by Michelle and supported by Kelly to consider forming a committee to score the applications that would consist of steering committee members that are not applying for funds plus 3 general community members. On a voice vote the motion carried.***

Meeting schedule leading up to 2027 RFQ release

****Motion made by Maggie and supported by Derek to hold monthly meetings leading up to the release of the RFQ. On a voice vote the motion carried.***

The next three meetings scheduled:

Monday, September 14, 2026 @ 3:30

Monday, October 12, 2026 @ 3:30

Monday, November 9, 2026 @ 3:30

Committee Comments

Maggie noted that Betsy Hugget with Victims Services Unit will be presenting at the FAN forum on 8/11 and that the SVU is looking for volunteers

Sabrina noted that FAN has openings for CPR/Narcan training on 8/13/26

Mary noted that annual FAN picnic is taking place on 8/23 at Sherman Park – all are welcome

Adjournment

****Motion to adjourn at 4:47 pm made by Mary, support by Kelly; on a voice vote the motion carried.***