

Chippewa County Opioid Settlement Funds Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2026

A regular meeting of the Chippewa County Opioid Settlement Funds Steering Committee was held on Monday, June 8, 2026, 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, Melissa Colby, Kelly Freeman, Natasha Halonen, Mary Michaels, Karen Senkus, Patrick Shannon, Michelle Benson, Trista LeBlanc, Maggie Merchberger

Members absent: Derek Causley, Sabrina Neveu, Lucas Gardiner

Others present: None

Approval of the Agenda

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

Approval of April 13, 2026, Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Mary and supported by Michelle to approve the April 13, 2026, minutes; on a voice vote the motion carried.

Public Comment No public members were present.

Agenda Items

City-County Partnership

Kelly Freeman reported that one meeting was held in May with County and City Administration. All present agreed to keep city and county funds separate but combine the application process so only one application would be released to the public. Suggestions for distribution included separate funding applications or implementing a mini-grant option. A request to form a partnership will be going to the City Commission for review in July.

Report on Opioid Funds Meeting held in Escanaba

Karen and Michelle attended the meeting on May 1st. The power point and other information from MAC was shared with the committee. It was noted that our committee is functioning well; other committees are running into the same issues as us regarding scoring applications and committee members apply for funds. Karen will research information regarding this process in preparation for the August meeting. It was noted that the committee is an advisory body, not a decision-making body. To be transparent to the public, meeting announcements and minutes are posted on the county website. Beginning the next funding cycle, county commission members will receive all applications for funding, along with committee recommendations and justification for awards.

Michelle noted that some steering committees have an outreach subcommittee to help promote the purpose of the funds and announce awardees to the public. All committee members were in favor of forming an outreach subcommittee; Justin and Michelle volunteered to be on the committee.

The May 12, 2026, statement from the Attorney General was presented, which states that all funds must be spent on remediation. Discussion ensued regarding Exhibit E and Prevention services directed at youth.

Updates on Prevention Subcommittee: Natasha reported that the subcommittee met; Helen Craig from the EUPISD was invited to speak about health education programs in schools. Discussion included protective factors and evidence-based programming and how schools can implement programming into their lesson plans. The committee plans to distribute information to schools prior to the next funding round, so school administrators are aware that funding is available.

Committee Member Comments: None

Next Meeting Date and Time:

August 10, 2026 at 3:30; virtual and in-person options.

Adjournment: It was moved to adjourn by Mary; support by Kelly; on a voice vote the motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm.