

**New Hampshire Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission
Regular Meeting
Fox Chapel, Main Building, 105 Pleasant St, Concord, NH
Monday, July 18, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.**

Attending:

Senator, Cindy **Rosenwald** (Senate)
Representative Dennis **Acton** (House)
Attorney James **Boffetti** (Designee for the Attorney General)
Helen **Hanks** (Commissioner, Department of Corrections)
David **Mara** (Governor's Designee)
Emily **Rice** (Appointed by Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Prevention, Treatment and Recovery)
Peter **Spanos** (County of <100k appointed by Governor)
Jennifer **Sabin** (State Opioid Response Director, DHHS designee)
Traci **Fowler** (NH Charitable Foundation)
Bianca **Monroe** (Appointed by the Attorney General)
Rachel K. **Miller** (Designee for the State Treasurer)
Kathryn **Kindopp** (Governor's Appointment)
Elizabeth **Dragon** (City with < 75k appointed by Governor)

Present via Zoom Platform:

Toni **Pappas** (County of +100k appointed by Governor)
Seddon **Savage**, MD, (Appointed by Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Prevention, Treatment and Recovery)
Robert **Buxton** (Municipal Fire Chief appointed by Governor)
Jason **Henry** (County Corrections Superintendent appointed by Governor)
Patrick **Tufts** (Chair of Governor's Commission on Drug and Alcohol Treatment, Prevention and Recovery)
Thomas **Velardi** (County Attorney appointed by Governor)

Absent:

Benjamin **Gaetjens-Oleson** (Governor's Appointment)
Bobbi **Bagley** (City with 75k+ appointed by Governor)

Kevin **Rourke** (Municipal Police Chief appointed by Governor)

Senator Cindy Rosenwald (Chair) opened the meeting at 10:05 a.m. with a roll call of Commission members. A quorum of the Commission members physically present was established.¹

¹ Eleven members constitutes a quorum pursuant to RSA 126-A: 85, IV.

The first order of business was adoption of the minutes for the meetings of May 2nd, May 23rd, and June 27th. A spelling correction was made to the June 27th draft (“gauge” replacing “gage”). Attorney Boffetti made a motion to accept all three sets of minutes and Commissioner Spanos seconded the motion. All three sets of meeting minutes were approved by a show of hands with Commissioner Monroe abstaining.

The second order of business was a presentation from Commissioner Patrick Tufts, Chair of Governor’s Commission on Drug and Alcohol Treatment, Prevention and Recovery. Commissioner Tufts provided a brief overview of the Governor’s Commission on Alcohol and Other Drugs Action Plan Update. Commissioner Tufts began his remarks with highlights from the progress the Commission has seen over the last few years including a decrease in opioid fatalities, a decrease in excessive alcohol use, and a decrease in all illegal drugs except marijuana. These highlights were followed by reference to many of the key goals in the Plan which align particularly well with the goals of this Commission and a desire was expressed to work together.

Senator Rosenwald asked if the Commission had read the most recent OIG audit. Commissioner Tufts responded that individual members may have read it but if has not been addressed as a Commission. The audit covers 2016 to 2019 and was focused on the State’s approach to opioid treatment only, a subgroup of substance use disorder programs.

The third order of business was a discussion of the Request for Grant Applications (RGA) form as drafted by the grant process sub-committee. Robert Moore, Director of Contracts for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) outlined the draft RGA document, pointing out elements such as the timeline, sequence of events, question and answer period, and addenda process (if needed). He stressed the key questions/ decisions yet to be made were grant term, selection criteria, and funding amount. These as well as other questions to consider are outlined on the last page of the draft RGA. Commission members had a lengthy back and forth discussion on many of these and other elements related to the application process and evaluation.

Commissioner Spanos asked what could be done to accelerate the process. Mr. Moore replied that addressing open questions is needed to come to a final RGA form. Attorney Rice asked which questions need to be answered now before finalizing and releasing a form as opposed to those that can wait. Commissioner Fowler stated that the draft before the Commission did not include comments that Attorney Boffetti responded with earlier in the morning so presumably not all members have seen them. Attorney Boffetti explained that his comments have more to do with the role of DHHS (supportive) versus the Commission, which statute makes clear has the authority to review and decide the criteria and to make recommendations to the Governor and Council, adding this is not a State controlled process, is in large part, the reason behind such a diverse commission membership, and sentiment that we do not want to make the process so complicated as to discourage cities and towns from applying. He also reminded members present that we have \$7 million to get out the door and we are expecting an additional \$5 million as soon as this week, emphasizing the need to approve an application form as soon as possible. Commissioner Savage (joining via Zoom) stated that although unable to hear all the discussion occurring in the room, wanted to respond as follow up that these funds are for the State, DHHS is in a position to determine what is in the best interest of the State, it’s unlikely that major

disagreements will emerge and that it's important to define the relationship between all organizations involved.

Senator Rosenwald made those present aware that SB 275 allowing funding to non-public schools will likely take effect August 6th. Commissioner Hanks commented on the grant process, sharing that based on here experience, the roles are clear: DHHS puts out the bid and this Commission reviews and makes funding recommendations, adding also that it is important to understand what has been funded before in an entity's application. After further discussion on the evaluation process and some suggestions over perhaps predefined percentages of funding "buckets", Attorney Boffetti suggested we do not need to decide how much to fund in each area now but rather suggested we finalize the form, get the process going, see what we receive for applications and navigate from there. There are a lot of uncertainties and good questions but we currently cannot answer and in the spirit of our mission, encouraged the Commission to move swiftly to finalize a workable form, solicit applications for the funds we are holding and want to deploy, see what we get, and maneuver and refine the process from that point.

Discussion continued on topics including: project timelines, grant award terms, funding questions, single or multi-year commitments, budget formats required as part of the application, how long submitted applications are viable for, scoring methodologies and associated pros and cons, whether to solicit applications with stated priorities the Commission is seeking, right-to-know implications, and need for transparency in decision making/award process. Commissioner Monroe asked if a mechanism was needed to communicate to applicants that the entire fund in the current grant round had been awarded. Attorney Boffetti explained that was not necessary as the rules define the grant round time period, including the deadline an entity has to submit an application before a grant round closes. Subsequent grant rounds will be triggered by the existence of funds greater than \$500,000. If additional funds arrive during an open grant round, an addendum could be issued to expand the funding at that time.

Senator Rosenwald summarized what was collectively agreed upon to include the following:

- initial assessment by DHHS on whether applications met minimum submission requirements (pass/fail)
- Scoring to involve no numbers
- Commission to look at whether the application is consistent with the State's 10-year mental health plan
- The exact amount of funding available should be added just prior to publishing grant solicitations
- the DHHS budget template will be used

There was no public comment.

The next scheduled Opioid Abatement Commission Meeting will be held on Monday, August 1, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. at the Brown Building.

Agenda items for discussion include:

- Application form

- Publication
- Proposal for position funding

At the call of the Chair, the meeting adjourned at 12:02 pm.