

Fall River Opioid Settlement Funds Advisory Committee Meeting

Location: Fall River Government Center *REDACTED* (with Zoom video call option for those who were unable to attend in-person)

Date: Wednesday, November 29th, 2023

Time: 4:00 PM

Attendees: Brianna Raposo, Seth Aitken, Michael Coughlin, Maria Ferreira-Bedard, Father Rob Nemkovich, Kim Smith, Lynn Iadicola, Keith Parker, Raquel Pellerin, Ashley Simons-Rudolph (PIRE), Karen Friend (PIRE), Adam Gilbertson (PIRE)

Absent: Tess Curran (on parental leave), Trott Lee (scheduling conflict)

Minutes:

- **Meeting opened by Brianna Raposo:** Welcomed all members to the meeting. 7 members attended the in-person meeting and 1 member plus the PIRE team joined via Zoom video call. Reviewed the meeting agenda.
- **Attendee Introductions:** All attendees provided a brief introduction to the group.
- **Presentation by PIRE Team on Evaluation Report Findings:** Adam Gilbertson from the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) presented the Evaluation Report they conducted for Fall River in June 2023. The report is titled “Opioid-Related Public Health Responses in Fall River, MA: Goals, Current Capacity, and Future Directions.” The report and presentation will be sent out with the minutes.
 - Members are encouraged to review the full report before the next meeting.
 - Members were given the opportunity to ask questions or make comments on the presentation, report, and/or findings. Should any questions or comments arise after the meeting, please reach out to Brianna Raposo at braposo@fallriverma.gov and she will pass along the message to the PIRE team.
 - Please note that key terms, phrases, and concepts presented in the report are findings from interviews and are intentionally presented in language that allows the providers’ voices to shine through. Opinions and ideas presented in the report are not necessarily representative of any specific organization or entity but are helpful in constructing an informed range of participant views.
- **Presentation on Settlement Funds and Committee Structure/Expectations:** Brianna Raposo presented an overview of the statewide opioid settlement, settlement funds payment structure, general fund commitments, allowable fund expenditures, and committee structure and expectations. The presentation will be sent out with the minutes. Briefly reviewed a document provided by MA DPH (Department of Public Health) titled “Massachusetts Abatement Terms.”
 - Members are encouraged to review the document, paying special attention to Section III: Municipal Use of Abatement Funds for an outline and examples of allowable expenditure categories.
 - If any questions or comments arise after the meeting, please contact Brianna Raposo.

- Ashley Simons-Rudolph (PIRE) presented the tentative timeline for the next 6 months. The spreadsheet will be sent out with the minutes.
- **Q&A/Discussion:** Members were provided with an opportunity to ask questions or make suggestions given the information that was presented.
 - Seth Aitkin asked to confirm if members can provide input in the rubric and other tools used to determine if RFPs (Request for Proposals) are approved or denied. Ashley assured the group that there will be opportunities to provide input and feedback on the rubric as it is developed to ensure a fair, equitable, and unbiased approach.
 - Michael Coughlin suggested an opportunity for public input from citizens. Seth suggested a presentation at a City Council Meeting or City Council Committee on Human Services, Housing, Youth, Elder and Veterans' Affairs Meeting as it would adhere to open meeting laws, allow for public input, be recorded, and could be made widely available. Another suggestion was to hold public meetings at various buildings (Options include schools, Government Center, community centers) across the City. This had previously been done for the ARPA funds where members of the public were invited to attend and offer their input regarding the use of the funding. Ideally, these meetings would take place before the RFQ release date or deadline and after new City Councilors are inaugurated on January 2nd. Additional members underscored wanting to prioritize the voices of those with lived and personal experiences throughout this process – even those who are currently impacted.
- **Future Meeting Schedule:** *REDACTED*
 - Barring any conflicts, future dates will include:
 - *REDACTED*
 - All meetings will be held in the *REDACTED* Government Center.
 - Members are encouraged to attend the meetings in-person; however, we will have a Zoom video call option for those unable to meet at Government Center.
 - Below is the **standing Zoom link** that should work for every upcoming meeting:
REDACTED
- Important Links:
 - [Guidance for Municipalities Utilizing Opioid Settlement Abatement Payments | Mass.gov](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions About the AG's Statewide Opioid Settlements | Mass.gov](#)
 - [Learn about the AG's Statewide Opioid Settlements with Opioid Industry Defendants | Mass.gov](#)
 - [Massachusetts Abatement Terms document \(mass.gov\)](#)
 - [Municipal Abatement Payments | Mass.gov](#)
 - [3.7.2023 MA Statement Opioid Settlement Funds Forum.pdf \(mass.gov\)](#)
 - [Appropriation of Opioid Settlement Funds - MAHB](#)