

## Fall River Opioid Settlement Funds Advisory Committee Meeting

**Location:** \*REDACTED\* (with Zoom remote video option)

**Date:** Tuesday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Time:** 4:15 PM

**Attendees:** Brianna Raposo, Tess Curran, Seth Aitken, Michael Coughlin, Trott Lee, Maria Ferreira-Bedard, Kim Smith, Lynn Iadicola, Keith Parker, Ashley Simons-Rudolph (PIRE), Karen Friend (PIRE), Adam Gilbertson (PIRE), Mayor Paul Coogan, Bridget Almon (Fall River CFO), Mike Dion (Executive Director of Community Development Agency)

**Absent:** Father Rob Nemkovich

### Minutes:

- **Meeting opened by Tess Curran:** 9 members attended the meeting in person and Brianna Raposo and the PIRE team joined via Zoom. Mayor Coogan, Bridget Almon, and Mike Dion also joined this meeting. Tess reviewed the agenda.
  - Update: Two recent payments (received on 3/15/2024) bring the current opioid stabilization fund amount to \$1,854,547.31.
  - One CVS payment (\$65,000) was accidentally distributed to us prematurely by the State and our financial team returned that payment as required.
- **Conversation with Mayor Coogan:** Mayor Coogan outlined some of his priorities for the funds and responded to members questions.
  - He would like to prioritize city-first/"Fall River First" initiatives and try to invest in programs that the City can maintain ownership and/or leadership of.
    - For example, if buying curriculum for schools, the City would like to buy and own the licenses for that curriculum and collaborate with all schools (Public, private, Parochial, charter, etc.) within the City to use the material, rather than pay for individual schools to buy and own their own licenses.
    - For as much programming that the City can invest in itself/internally, Mayor Coogan would prioritize that over moving that programming externally. If there are external partners that have established expertise and it makes the most sense to support them and/or become partners rather than the City to take that on internally, that remains a secondary priority.
  - Mayor Coogan indicated his priority prevention and education. He would like to engage schools (parents, families, students, educators, etc.) to find out what their needs are for drug-related curriculum and support services within schools. Perhaps by engaging local leaders and convening a kick-off event or public day of engagement to invite families to provide feedback.
  - The Timao Center will be closing soon due to lack of funds. The City has invested in updates to the Center in the past. Mayor Coogan indicated a potential interest in investing further into the Timao Center, possibly adding addiction support

programs, to address issues surrounding homelessness around the City. Additionally, the City runs a summer work program for those experiencing OUD or homelessness, or other related behavioral/social needs. Mayor Coogan indicated interest in expanding this program further and collaborating with external organizations like Steppingstone.

- Mayor Coogan expressed the availability to attend any or all future meetings if the Committee would like him to.
- Trott asked a question about the final decision-making process regarding if the Mayor can approve and implement projects without City Council approval.
  - Bridget clarified that because the money is in a stabilization fund, it needs a two-thirds vote of the City Council to at least release the funds. In practice, the Committee will provide recommendations to the Mayor and the Mayor will write to the City Council and ask for approval to release the funds that then can be allocated further, distributed, or spent. The State has indicated that further updates will be coming soon on whether some of the funds could be moved from a stabilization fund to a special revenue account. Seth and/or Bridget will be looking for updates on the financial management aspect.
- **Community Input:**
  - To gather public input the “[Fall River Opioid Settlement Funds Community Survey](#)” was released on 3/29/2024. We have 226 responses (as of 4/1/2024) with a variety of demographics and lived experiences represented by the respondents.
  - Committee members are encouraged to share the link to the survey widely and route everyone who lives, works, and/or attends school in Fall River to take it.
    - Any age group can respond. We are targeting specific populations to encourage those with a range of lived experience to take it.
    - The survey will likely run until early May 2024.
    - The survey is available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese and takes most people less than 10-15 minutes to complete.
    - Link to share: <https://tinyurl.com/FRFundsSurvey>
  - A community health worker for the Health Department will be tabling at the Timao Center, First Step Inn, HealthFirst, to try to get responses there.
  - The Health Department’s epidemiologist will be analyzing the data after the survey closes and will create a report to summarize the collected data.
  - Brianna is organizing a public input open meeting for **Wednesday, May 1st, 2024 from 5:30 to 7 PM in the Government Center Atrium.**
  - If possible, please **save the date for the evening of May 1<sup>st</sup>** as Committee members are encouraged to attend and listen to the public input. Please share the meeting information widely with community members as well.
  - This will follow the structure of the ARPA public meetings. Following the format for open meetings, members of the public will be given 3 minutes to speak. There will be no time to respond to feedback during the forum, but it will be recorded, and we will review it later.
- **Presentation by PIRE Team on RFP Application/Rubric:**

- Seth indicated wanting to specify and add language to address the priority for programming and/or organizations that directly serve Fall River residents. As we would like to prioritize local community impact over a broader regional impact for these specific funds, it would make sense to add it to the RFP or rubric.
- Seth and Bridget mentioned adding language to ensure that organizations responding to the RFP were fiscally and administratively responsible and able to follow through with grant deliverables and objectives. This could be addressed by requiring financial documents like 501 (c)(3) documentation, Form 990, Conflict of Interest declarations, Certificate of Insurance, Subrecipient Agreements, Tax Certifications, System for Award Management (SAM #), etc.
- There was a discussion to add more options to the funding structure/timeline by adding an option to renew and exploring one-time funding options for 1 year and multi-year projects up to 3 years. The Committee would like quarterly updates and reports from grantees to provide regular project updates. A reimbursable grant style versus a one-time or partial advanced payment style was discussed. There seemed to be agreement that a reimbursable grant (grantees pay for costs up-front and are reimbursed from the City
- The RFP release deadline will be adjusted based on when it can be released. The application itself will require additional edits and review by our financial/legal teams. Once released, the application will likely be open for 4 to 6 weeks. The Committee will likely require 1 month to review applications and return with funding recommendations for the Mayor.
- **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:**
  - **Community Engagement Opioid Funds Survey:**  
<https://tinyurl.com/FRFundsSurvey>
  - [Guidance for Municipalities Utilizing Opioid Settlement Abatement Payments](#)
  - [Frequently Asked Questions About the AG's Statewide Opioid Settlements](#)
  - [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](#)
  - [Municipal Opioid Abatement Funds Data Dashboard](#)