

MINUTES

Region 16 Opioid Abatement Council Meeting

23 July 2025

2:00 – 5:00 PM

4th Judicial District Attorney's Office

105 E. Vermijo Ave, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

4th Floor Main Conference Room

First Name	Last Name	Title	Present(Y/N)
Voting Members			
Lynette	Crow-Iverson	Colorado Springs (COS) City Council	Y
Erik	Stone	Teller County Commissioner	Y
Stan	Bishop	Proxy for Teller County Sheriff	Y (Proxy Lt. Jake Markus)
Lauren	Nelson	El Paso County (EPC) Commissioner	Y (*Holly Williams)
Carrie	Geitner	EPC Commissioner	Y
Michael	Allen	Fourth Judicial District Attorney	Y
Mark	Chacon	COS Police Department	Y (Proxy Brad Pratt)
Randy	Royal	COS Fire Chief	Y (*Proxy Jayme McConnellogue)
David	Leinweber	COS City Council	Y
Chris	Deisler	Woodland Park Police Chief	Y
Joseph	Roybal	EPC Sheriff	Y (Proxy Deborah Harris)

Dr. Emily	Russell-Kinsley	EPC Coroner	N
Mark	Cristiani	Fountain Police Chief	Y
Patrick	Regan	Monument Police Chief	Y (Proxy Tim Johnson)
Non-Voting Members: Municipalities who will cycle onto the voting membership in future years			
Frank	Salvato	Cripple Creek City Manager	N
Troy	Johnson	Fountain City Attorney	N
Denise	Howell	Manitou Springs City Manager	N
Current Non-Voting Members			
DeAnn	Ryberg	EPC Public Health Deputy Director	N
Kim	Mauthe	Teller County Director of Human Services	Y
Michelle	Wolff	Teller County Public Health Director	Y
Bridgette	Fuson	Department of Human Services (Monument Representative)	N
Non-Voting Members Appointed by Council as SMEs			
Dr. Eric	Stein Bronsky	Physician, Medical Director CSFD AMR EPC/Teller 911 Authority	Y
David	Albrecht	Cardiologist, lived experience	N
Jason	Jorgenson	COS School District 11	N
Matt	Riviere	Advocate, lived experience	N
Laura	Ridenour	EPC Behavioral Health Manager	Y
Staff Support, Members of the Public, and Subject Matter Expertise			
Amanda	Grant	EPC Deputy Director – Financial Services	Y
Kenny	Hodges	EPC County Attorney	Y
Sunny	Bryant	Deputy County Administrator	N

** Indicates both proxy and member present*

Others Present:

- Heather Miller, Life Continues; dba SafeSide Recovery
- Rod Baker, Fountain PD Z-School
- Megan Colwell, Face It TOGETHER
- Rob Miller, Life Continues; dba SafeSide Recovery
- Sheri Trahern, Serenity Recovery Connection
- Angela Rose, CASA
- Danny Pedotto, Hope COS
- Jesse Sandlin, Hope COS
- Mellisa Wallace, Hope COS
- Trae Sones, Hope COS
- Rachel Fowler, Serenity Recovery Connection
- Todd Jones, The Phoenix
- Brooks Robinson, Lyda Hill Institute
- Sara Walgenbach, Diversus Health
- Stanley Conley, Open Hearts & Open Doors
- Allison Dodge, One Chance to Grow Up
- Liani Murphy, Serenity Recovery Connection
- Frank Montesano, Serenity Recovery Connection
- Michelle Beysle, El Paso County Public Health Director
- Ruth Lyons, NME Recovery Residence
- Juakin Mobley, Community Anchor Academy
- Dominique Thompson, Wealthy Unlimited
- James McLaughlin, UPRHSD
- Chelsia Baker, NME Recovery Residence
- Steven Snutly, NME Recovery Residence
- Thomas Noporano, FullCircle Program
- Julia Barry, FullCircle Program
- Kaydance Averill, FullCircle Program
- Bryce Bastibeau, FullCircle Program

1. 2:02 PM - 2:07 PM | Welcome and Introductions

- a. Conducted by Council Member Allen.
- b. Quorum met.

2. 2:07 PM - 2:09 PM | Consent Calendar

- a. Minutes were approved.

3. 2:09 PM - 4:21 PM | Applicant Presentation Q&A

a. Diversus Health

- i. Diversus Health offers programs to individuals involved with drug court, probation, and parole. Their newest virtual program, SUD, focuses specifically on outside referrals. The goal of the program is to ensure clients exiting corrections know what to expect, who to contact for resources, parole and probation officer contacts, and how to proceed. Diversus Health also acts in a “therapy role” and simply offers services without reporting to police. Diversus also offers a ride service for its clients to get to and from appointments and court dates.
- ii. Council Member Stone asked what the current intake rate was, referencing the “3-7 days” noted on the slide.
 - 1. The intake rate of 3-7 days per client is current, but Diversus would like to expand to get sub-clients.
- iii. Council Member Wolff asked which programs are available in Teller County, and if clients would receive that service should they come to Teller County.
 - 1. Diversus stated only the virtual program exists in Teller County currently. Mental health clinics exist in smaller regions that people can go to in order to do a virtual intake to receive service.
 - 2. Clients are helped online if they choose, and the virtual option exists at all participating clinics.
- iv. Council Member Williams asked what specialists would be retained.
 - 1. Three new specialists, all referenced in the application.
- v. Council Member Roybal asked if there were other sources of funding.
 - 1. Yes, currently receiving CDOC clients to get them Medicaid and services.
- vi. Council Member Geitner asked Diversus to expand on its transportation service.
 - 1. Diversus has two vans that go to all groups and new intakes to get them set up for transportation. Currently, the available radius is 12 miles. They encourage clients to get to a drop off spot. The purpose is to provide transportation because the buses and city vans stop prior to 8pm.
- vii. Council Member Geitner asked if the cost of this service was known.
 - 1. Diversus knew pre-Covid, but afterwards stopped tracking. It is viewed as a necessary expense because without transportation, most clients may not come to group services.
- viii. Council Member Stone asked which components would continue if funding ceased.
 - 1. Increased peer support would be difficult, as their current budget would not survive.

- ix. Council Member Leinweber noted that the program sounds like a revival of low-barrier, no cost to enter programs.
 - 1. Diversus confirmed that it is supposed to be easy for clients to engage. Provided a client is ready to seek help, the program is designed to keep them coming with as few roadblocks as possible.
- b. Life Continues; dba SafeSide Recovery**
 - i. SafeSide led their introduction with the story of one of their clients who made significant recovery steps, including 6 ongoing months of sobriety, with the program. Their peer course, IP2, is an intense sober living program in Denver.
 - ii. Council Member Stone asked if there were any transitional houses through the IP2 program that were in Colorado Springs.
 - 1. This is where the program is being proposed. 4 homes will be obtained, and outreach is ongoing, but more than just staff is required to support more clients.
 - iii. Council Member Crow-Iverson asked how the houses would be obtained.
 - 1. Renting will be utilized. Those in the intensive peer support program of 12 weeks are not charged because the program requires their unemployment.
 - iv. Council Member Crow-Iverson asked how many homes in total are currently being rented.
 - 1. There are 18 in Denver.
- c. NME Recovery Residence**
 - i. NME Recovery opened up a house for women in March of 2025 on their own financial account. Because NME Recovery recognizes that the first 60 days after quitting drug use are the most fragile for the individual. To help with the opioid epidemic, they employ evidence based support, collaboration, access and affordability, and engagement. Within the residence, each member must complete life skill meetings, therapy, and is assigned chores. This is to give the client an immediate sense of purpose. They aim to facilitate a men's house in the future.
 - ii. Council Member Stone asked what the organization was legally classified as.
 - 1. NME Recovery Residence is an LLC, which they explained was the easiest and fastest way to get their company active. They are a non-profit, dedicated to running a sober living home. They declared that because their house rules were more strict than others, they might not be "the best fit" for all recovering addicts.
 - iii. Council Member Stone asked if the paperwork for the nonprofit was done and how long it takes for individuals to be enrolled as residents.
 - 1. Yes, all paperwork is done. On average, 60 days or less for induction.
 - iv. Council Member Roybal asked if there were any other sources of funding.
 - 1. No, there is no other funding. The small initial donations have stretched further than originally anticipated.
 - v. Council Member Crow-Iverson asked if the maximum number they can house is 15, why there are only 8 current clients.

1. 15 is the maximum they are certified for, but would like to not exceed 12 per home due to the likelihood of cramped conditions.
- vi. Council Member Geitner asked if they were familiar with a program run by Step Springs, as they are very similar.
 1. No, they were not familiar with the program.

d. Ute Pass Regional Health Service District

- i. Ute Pass is the mobile crisis center for Teller County. Dialing 988 in Teller County takes you to a Ute Pass hotline. Their services are 24/7 and consist of paramedics trained for de-escalation and screening. They give people food for their immediate meals, and connect them to pantries for long-term solutions. The funding would be used for tools that allow for collaboration to happen between organizations. This tool will allow for social determinants of health to be used to make recommendations for hard handoffs.
- ii. Council Member Crow-Iverson asked Ute Pass to tie their services directly to opioids.
 1. There is a link between behavioral health and substance abuse disorder. Anecdotally, approximately 40% of those helped have a substance abuse disorder. Ute Pass offered to obtain the data
- iii. Council Member Nelson asked if the funding could be explained further.
 1. The funds will go specifically to the program. They have the infrastructure already in place, the funds go towards development. The end result will be that referrals can be made with a single computer click. Once the program is up and running, it will self-sustain because there will be a membership fee.
- iv. Council Member Roybal asked what service is provided, and if clients have to go anywhere.
 1. This is a mobile service, and because there are not many ambulances, most treatments take place at home. There are a range of services provided, like uninalysis, lab work, blood work, and follow-ups. There is a mandatory 24 hour follow up for all behavioral health clients.
- v. Council Member Geitner asked if the members of the alliance would be willing to pay for the service.
 1. Communication and discussion is happening currently to determine if it is the best model to move forward. Anecdotally, the presenter stated that if value is seen in a product, the alliance members would be happy to help sponsor.
- vi. Council Member Geitner asked how large the alliance currently is.
 1. There are 25 active members, with over 80 total. Those who show up consistently are around 25.
- vii. Council Member Stone asked if there was a phase approach due to the large number of tasks being proposed.
 1. Yes, there will be phases through years. The first phase will include a focus group to determine what tools the alliance wants. The

- implementation would be short due to the pieces of the system already existing, the tool being produced will connect each existing piece.
- viii. Council Member Stone asked to know how much funding falls into years 2 and 3
 - 1. Year 2 will require \$116,000, with hopes that year 3 is self-sustained.
 - ix. Council Member McConnellogue asked how many actionables could be completed on the project per year.
 - 1. 3-5 per year, the tool is for the Teller County mental health alliance. They wish to include other organizations like DHS to refer people.
 - x. Council Member Roybal asked how many of the callers use drugs.
 - 1. Ute Pass offered to have this information compiled and sent by the end of the week.
 - xi. Council Member Geitner asked how much information comes back for tracking purposes from referrals.
 - 1. Transparency is a hallmark for Ute Pass, and they want to track and share the data for accountability in real time.
 - xii. Council Member Geitner asked if the project would be viable if funded, and if not, what the threshold is.
 - 1. If forced to, FirstWatch dashboard would be defunded and they would reapply for funding with a revised proposal. The second piece that could be cut would be the second year deliverables, with hope to get them funded elsewhere.

e. The Phoenix

- i. The Phoenix sees clients that are exiting the criminal and legal system and are now nationwide. They offer free services and events, provided the individual participating is sober for 48+ hours prior. They are trying to make a new community for those who are leaving harsh places like jail, parole, probation, and prison. They target drug court specifically with volunteers. They will train 30 people with experience to be a guide for those leaving the system. One third of their proposed budget would go to staff, the program and the NewForm platform equally.
- ii. Council Member Roybal asked if this was to increase staff or retain current staff.
 - 1. All new increases to staff, and no new staff member would be 100% funded with grant money.
- iii. Council Member Geitner noted that outcomes are hard to determine, and asked what things are highlighted for people entering the program.
 - 1. Sobriety is the gold standard. Someone who goes to a Phoenix event 3x a week has a 90%+ chance of remaining sober. They find out where the individual came from via the intake paperwork and track them within Phoenix.
- iv. Council Member Stone asked what the funding request would accomplish for Phoenix.
 - 1. The funding request is entirely scalable, with growth being directly tied to funding amount.
- v. Council Member Crow-Iverson asked what the recidivism rate was.

1. Unknown, but offered to attempt to find the data.
- vi. Council Member Nelson asked if Phoenix had the data to show people who stay long invest back into the program.
 1. The programs are always free, and they are always asking for new volunteers. There are a high number of volunteers, but the percentage is unknown.
- vii. Council Member Leinweber asked for the breakdown of paid staff to volunteers.
 1. Over 100,000 volunteers with 120 program staff, of whom only 40 are paid.
- viii. Council Member Stone asked if this request was specific to Pikes Peak.
 1. Yes.

f. Community Anchor Academy

- i. The founder of CAA was convicted of drug possession, and upon release, decided to create a path for others to follow. CAA utilizes Wealthy Unlimited, a juice bar, to keep its participants gainfully employed under “paid interventionships”. Over 80% of participants are dealing with drug issues, and keeping them occupied with a sense of purpose will help deter recidivism. They have rapid assessment intake processes that ask people what they like doing, what they are good at, what the world needs, and what the individual can get paid for.
- ii. Council Member Williams asked how long the company has existed for
 1. This is their second year in existence as an individual company, but they started in 1995 as Denver Works, adding the health element later with the rebranding.
- iii. Council Member Geitner asked how the recidivism rate is calculated, how many people are being served, and how long the recidivism data stretches back.
 1. The recidivism rate is defined as new charges after being released. They have data on hand for 1 year, but can get data from 2017 and sooner.
- iv. Council Member Stone asked what the partnerships within the community consisted of.
 1. They identify employers they would like to work with and ensure the jobs line up with the individuals, then move forward with the program. By the time CAA decides to move forward, the individual is guaranteed the job.
- v. Council Member Stone asked for expansion on the funding.
 1. The goal of the funding is to expand operations. Wealthy Unlimited has 2 participants every 3 months, but with extra funding it would become 4.
- vi. Council Member Crow-Iverson noted the heavy grant-funded nature of the program and asked what the plan was to get away from grant funding.
 1. Equally funded by the Medicaid program they provide and grants, but did not expand on how to get away from grant funding.
- vii. Council Member Nelson asked how long the positions would be funded for and if funding goes towards clients.

1. One staff member will be added to help with the new participants, for one year. The positions for participants are 3 months at a time, then they get a more stable job.

g. Purpose, Inc.

- i. Purpose has two paid employees and are funded through the House Appropriations Bill. They have seven recovery groups and a peer coaching program with 56 participants. They are mostly volunteer supported and are partnered with HOPE COS. They work to fill the gap within the homeless community and rehab housing. They connect with people in person, and have connections within the homeless community, and offer virtual group programs. Last year, they reached out to 1200 homeless people with Council funds, of which 96 are projected to go into detox or sober living with another round of funding.
- ii. Council Member Stone asked what the changes in funding entail to allow for 5x the amount of individuals going to sober living (18 to 96).
 1. Hiring an additional peer specialist will allow for more outreach. Seven are already in training, so the impact would theoretically be large.

h. The Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience

- i. They want to expand their pre-established GRIT program into a recovery module with a greater resilience toolkit for participants. They seek to push basic “first-aid” for social support. GRIT Recover would allow for friends, family, and loved ones to better communicate to those suffering from opioid abuse. They work with experts from Serenity Recovery to expand the model and integrate it to increase knowledge between both organizations. They have over 5000 participants and intend to increase this number with funding.
- ii. Council Member Roybal asked what the plan was for counties and parks in the area.
 1. They will utilize marketing and rely on how GRIT previously snowball-marketed. If people tell others about the program without the second person needing to see the advertisement, the advertisement has snowballed.
- iii. Council Member Stone asked what an active user was, and how many exist.
 1. It is known that over 5000 people have signed up, and they receive follow up surveys to see if they are making connections and conversations as directed by the program. They do not track intentionally.
- iv. Council Member Stone asked to know what the family outcomes and substance abuse disorder outcomes are.
 1. A key recovery mechanism is the increased social support. The steps and structures outlined in the program direct a person how to have those good conversations. 95% of those who took the training feel more confident in their ability to confront a loved one about drugs.
- v. Council Member Stone asked if the funding was scalable.
 1. Yes, but the budget has been adjusted to not include screening.

- vi. Council Member Crow-Iverson asked if they are changing anything about the GRIT program to be more opioid-centric.
 - 1. They are not changing a program, but adding a branch to GRIT Resiliency via the information from Serenity and internal experts. Anyone in GRIT can sign up for any number of programs, and there will be a new module specific to opioid abuse and recovery.
- vii. Council Member Leinweber asked if they could name the other programs.
 - 1. There are 4 tailored GRIT programs, all of which are available in Spanish. GRIT Leadership, GRIT Education, GRIT Tribe, and GRIT Caregiver. Each program has community partners who are experts.
- viii. Council Member Geitner asked if a GRIT coach is someone who has used the program, if it is a self-help app, and how impact will be measured.
 - 1. Yes, coaches have used the program previously. Yes, the app is self-help. Impact is measured on a self-upload basis, where an estimated 20 people will get opioid coaching.
- ix. Council Member Geitner asked how the program is safe and trustworthy despite the personal data being collected.
 - 1. Lyda Hill is not a clinical program, and therefore does not have to follow HIPPA guidelines. The program is for social support, and real names are discouraged.
- x. Council Member Crow-Iverson asked if it was up to the individual to report and get data.
 - 1. Yes, GRIT is a call to action that is “the nice thing to do”. It is designed to help people help those around them.
- xi. Facilitator Corbett asked for confirmation on the new funding application request amount.
 - 1. \$166,421.00

i. Fountain Police Department

- i. Fountain PD is proposing Z-school, a drug evaluation class for law enforcement officers. This class will teach on the impacts of narcotics and how to differentiate which narcotic a person might be on. The program will focus on de-escalation and resource production for the individual. This program is new, from the East Coast, but quickly catching on.
- ii. Council Member Markus noted the emphasis on de-escalation and asked why this class would be better for officers than the CIT course.
 - 1. The details of CIT are unknown to the presenter, but they are “likely similar”. The course is how to de-escalate situations with people on drugs with displays of empathy.
- iii. Council Member Crow-Iverson asked why the training is excellent, and what it entails.
 - 1. The course is a 4 hour online training that is self-paced. It is monitored by Z-school and UCCS. Officers from different police departments can share their protocols and success stories of de-escalation.
- iv. Council Member Racine confirmed he had previously taken the Z-school course.

- v. Council Member Markus confirmed that he had not taken it yet, but noted 40% of Teller County officers are CIT trained.
- vi. Council Member Williams asked if they would be willing to put a council member through the course for free.
 - 1. Council Member Racine will take this matter to his Police Chief.
- vii. Council Member Racine confirmed that he would recuse himself when voting on Fountain PD.
- viii. Council Member Markus asked if administrators are charged for the cost of taking the course.
 - 1. No. The goal is to have every LEO agency in Colorado have at least one officer take the course. Z-School waived the fee for the first Durango PD officer to take the course.
- ix. Council Member Markus offered to take the training.

4. 4:21 PM - 4:24 PM | Financial Report

- a. Staff Member Grant noted that the settlement must be opted into, with the cut-off being September 30, 2025. After this date, the next round of funding will be known.
- b. Council Member Stone asked where the Council sits with current funding projections.
 - i. \$6.5M is in the database.
 - ii. \$16M is available to the Council, which includes the bank account and database.
 - iii. \$67-69M will be the total amount granted through 2038, with most funding being front-loaded.
- c. Council Member Geitner noted that the funds come out to \$3.8M/year if distributed equally.
- d. Council Member Geitner asked how much funding per “bucket” had been set aside.
 - i. Staff Member Grant explained that the current 2 year plan allocations, noting that funding can be moved between the buckets.
 - ii. Staff Member Grant will provide an overview of the 2 year plan categories for the facilitator to include in future presentations.

5. 4:24 PM - Council Discussion and Final Award of Funding

- a. Facilitator Corbett asked if anyone from July should be advanced without debate.
 - i. Council Member Stone suggested NME Recovery. Their goal is to self-sustain, so funding for 3 months (\$42K) as opposed to 1 year could help the men’s shelter get “off the ground”.
 - ii. Council Member Leinweber advocated for Lyda Hill because it reaches the community at large, and there is a broad range of people to engage with it.
 - 1. Council Member Geitner says a self-help app is not closely related to opioids. Despite being a good tool, it does not have a strong connection.
- b. Facilitator Corbett reminded the Council that a decision must be reached on June applicants advanced for further discussion.
 - i. Council Member Crow-Iverson advocated for Homeward Pikes Peak.
 - 1. Council Members Leinweber and Allen seconded.
 - 2. Homeward Pikes Peak was unanimously advanced by the Council to receive funding for \$581,340.00.
 - ii. Facilitator Corbett suggested Face It TOGETHER be voted on next.

1. Face It TOGETHER was unanimously voted by the Council to receive funding for \$88,500.
- iii. Council Member Stone brought up voting for Hazelbrook.
 1. Council Member Geitner brought up research she had done on the community for Hazelbrook and discovered a great deal of concern over the lack of transparency and the program itself.
 2. Hazelbrook was not voted for by the Council to receive funding.
- iv. Council Member Stone suggested HOPE COS.
 1. Council Member Markus seconded.
 2. HOPE COS was unanimously voted by the Council to receive funding for the full amount.
- v. Council Member Williams moved for Serenity.
 1. Council Member Stone wants to amend indicating he was supportive of funding after removing indirect costs from the funding.
 2. Council Member Williams agreed, Council Member Stone seconded.
 3. Council Member Geitner requested that a process be implemented in the future to have a chart showing the different types of support being offered.
 4. Serenity Recovery Connection was unanimously voted for by the Council to receive funding for \$408,466.19.
 - a. \$61,269.93 of the requested amount associated with indirect costs was removed.
- vi. Council Member Stone moved for City of Colorado Springs TAP, stating that it was a good program that does things nonprofits cannot.
 1. Council Member McConnellogue recused herself from voting.
 2. Council Member Roybal seconded.
 3. Council Member Geitner expressed concern for the growth of government.
 4. Council Member Williams expressed greater concern given the results of the marijuana ballot initiative. She believes the city is reaching for any power it can, and believes the city could misappropriate the funds.
 5. Council Member Crow-Iverson noted that the connection between illegal camping and opioid settlement money is low.
 - a. Staff Member Bronsky noted that not all programs are fully directed at opioids, as all are linked.
 - b. Council Member Crow-Iverson noted that all presenters today were opioid related.
 - c. Staff Member Bronsky rebutted by noting that no one else is going to the court room doors to pick up clients.
 - d. Council Member Crow-Iverson suggested that they could redo their presentation, and Council Member Geitner reminded the Council that creating extra meetings over one issue is unfair to the other presenters.

6. Council Member Allen moved to approve the City of Colorado Springs TAP.
 - a. City of Colorado Springs TAP was voted for by the Council for full funding.
 - b. Council Members Geitner, Nelson, and Crow-Iverson vote no.
 - c. Council Member McConnellogue recused herself.
 - vii. Council Member Stone moved Community Partnerships forward.
 1. Community Partnerships was unanimously advanced by the Council for full funding.
 - viii. Council Members Geitner and Stone suggested all remaining applicants should be discussed and presented in the August meeting, with a changed agenda to account for the extra voting.
- 6. 4:59 PM | Planning for Remaining Grant Applicants**
 - a. The list of the August applicants was displayed. No questions were raised.
- 7. 5:00 PM | Public Comments**
 - a. No public comments were received due to time constraints.
- 8. 5:00 PM | Adjourned by Facilitator Corbett**