

MINUTES

Region 16 Opioid Abatement Council Meeting

25 June 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
Lt. Jake	Markus	Proxy for Teller County Undersheriff	Y (Proxy Michelle Wolff)
Holly	Williams	El Paso County (EPC) Commissioner	Y (Proxy Sunny Bryant)
Carrie	Geitner	EPC Commissioner	Y
Michael	Allen	Fourth Judicial District Attorney	Y
Mark	Chacon	COS Police Department	Y
Randy	Royal	COS Fire Chief	Y (Proxy Steve Johnson)
David	Leinweber	COS City Council	Y (Proxy Nancy Herjum)
Open		City of Victor	—
Joseph	Roybal	EPC Sheriff	Y (Proxy Deborah Harris)
Dr. Emily	Russell-Kinsley	EPC Coroner	Y

Mark	Cristiani	Fountain Police Chief	Y
Denise	Howell	Manitou Springs City Manager	N
Patrick	Regan	Monument Police Chief	Y
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
Chris	Deisler	Woodland Park Police Chief	Y
Current Non-Voting Members			
DeAnn	Ryberg	EPC Public Health Deputy Director	Y
Kim	Mauthe	Teller County Director of Human Services	N
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	N
Council Member	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	Y

Others Present:

- Taylor Robinson, Community Partnership Family Resource Center
- Cory Gorton, Community Partnership Family Resource Center
- Megan Colwell, Face It TOGETHER
- Emily Brady, Face It TOGETHER
- Sheri Trahern, Serenity Recovery Connection
- Liani Murphy, Serenity Recovery Connection
- Brenden Cheek, Serenity Recovery Connection
- Frank Montesano, Serenity Recovery Connection
- Trisha Dervyton, Hazelbrook
- Jess Shvedov, Hazelbrook
- Shannon Miller, Hazelbrook
- Isaac Martinez, CSFD Community and Public Health
- Amanda Smith, CSFD Community and Public Health
- Alexis Rael, Southern Colorado Health Network
- Elizabeth Pike, Southern Colorado Health Network
- Tammy Pope, Elk Meadow Enduring Connections
- Mita Johnson, Elk Meadow Enduring Connections
- Danny Pedotto, Hope COS
- Donimique Knowles, Hope COS
- Jesse Saudlin, Hope COS
- Katherine Milo, Homeward Pikes Peak
- Maelee Mekee-Borah, EPSO
- Stanley Conley, Open Hearts & Open Doors
- Michael Ball, Open Hearts & Open Doors
- Beth Roalstad, Homeward Pikes Peak
- Heather Ryan-Figuenes, Homeward Pikes Peak

1. 2:01-2:03 PM - Welcome and Introductions

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

2. 2:03-2:05 PM - Consent Calendar

- a. Minutes were approved.

3. 2:05-4:03 PM Applicant Presentation Q&A

a. Homeward Pikes Peak

- i. They utilize a multitude of programs to serve those affected by substance abuse disorder. Homeward employs street outreach, housing, and clinical services alongside referral services for sober living and shelters. Homeward provides services to all family types, including single mothers and fathers. Homeward's stated goal is to make a safety net for the community by focusing on families battling substance abuse.
- ii. Council Member Stone asked if there are changes from the prior application because this new application requests more funding. He then asked if Homeward would be open to receiving less funding.
 - 1. Homeward stated that both half time and full time staff give services. Because the staff are needed, and cost of living is rising, more funding is requested. Homeward would be willing to receive less in funding, but would be able to increase care output with full funding.
- iii. Council Member Geitner asked what success Homeward has seen.
 - 1. Homeward generates quarterly reports to track the number of people moved to shelters, services, treatment, and whether the participants completed the programs.
 - 2. For those who stay with Homeward for more than 90 days, Homeward reports an 80% success rate. Success is defined as sobriety for longer than one year, obtaining and maintaining a job, and stable housing.
- iv. Council Member Geitner asked how many clients per year can be expected.
 - 1. Street outreach contacts many unique individuals, but served 250.
- v. Council Member Chacon asked if the 250 figure referred to those who have agreed to participate in services.
 - 1. Yes, when assessments are completed for housing, it is entered into a homeless system database. Each of those people receive follow-ups.

b. Face It TOGETHER

- i. Face It TOGETHER utilizes genuine connections and data to increase their reach for individuals. They work with Open Hearts and Sober Living and Woodland Park to create community trust and relationships at local and community events and the Teller County jail. The goal is to take down stigma and provide coaching, which they report 84% success rate over 90 days of coaching 80 individuals. They additionally requested to amend their application to request for \$88,500, with plans to reapply in 2026.
- ii. Council Member Allen and Facilitator Corbett confirmed with Face It TOGETHER that they wished to amend their application for less funding.
- iii. Council Member Johnson asked what the Recovery Capital Index was.

1. A data trend of quarters over the past 10 years to assess leads, sessions, and coaching requests. Every 30 days, a client is assessed, and their anonymous data uploaded.
- iv. Council Member Geitner asked if their assessment includes a substance use question.
 1. Yes, some. Certain assessments cover drug usage, “but holistic wellness may not include that every time”. The assessments focus on wellness, risk, and other data to determine a unique coaching path for individuals.
- c. Hazelbrook Community Center; dba ParadigmONE**
 - i. Hazelbrook focuses on creating a “detransitional safety zone” by transitioning those who are abusing substances into a normal, socially positive life. Hazelbrook runs a 2-4 week program for individuals, and has seen an exponential increase in clients since beginning in 2024. They have completed stage 1 of 2, having implemented the “Blackout Zone” in Colorado Springs, a harm reduction strategic program that mirrors their completed Aurora project. Hazelbrook wants to use the potential funding for stage 2, where they increase care management to find individuals jobs and sometimes housing.
 - ii. Council Member Stone asked if the program in Aurora was fully functioning, and if this program is the bridge between those with unstable or no housing to clean living in new housing.
 1. Yes, the program in Aurora is fully functional. Yes, the stages build a bridge.
 2. Only 6 beds are available in Colorado Springs, but 48 in Aurora. With funding, the bed number would be increased to 14 in Colorado Springs.
 - iii. Council Member Stone asked what the average amount of time to get from stage 1 to 2 is in clients, and what the assessment timing is.
 1. Usually 3-4 weeks for stage advancement, and 7-10 days for program assessment.
 - iv. Council Member Geitner asked if this program is available for anyone, or only specific groups of people.
 1. Hazelbrook confirmed that the program is for those struggling with substance abuse.
 - v. Council Member Johnson asked what the recidivism rate was for this program, and if there was a figure on the number of individuals presenting for the program who had previously recidivised.
 1. While the true recidivism rate is not known, 77% of those entering the program have been formally incarcerated. Hazelbrook suggested sending the recidivism rate after the meeting.
- d. Elk Meadow Enduring Connections**
 - i. Elk Meadow utilizes counseling, sobriety management, and other methods to reduce types of pain. They focus on relationships through recovery, and the program does not end after 8 weeks of counseling. Elk Meadow declares that people have been in the program willingly for as much as 9 months at a time.

With funding from the council, new clients will be taken on, assessed, and helped.

- ii. Council Member Geitner asked what success is measured as, and how the board will know its funds are used in a worthwhile way.
 - 1. Funding has been secured from private foundations. Factors include show-rate for appointments, harm reduction goal progression, peer relationships, sobriety goals, and personal goals for the client.
 - 2. Assessments are 2 hours long, and questions are asked to determine the above information and more to stay connected to the program. Typically, there are 12-15 new clients per month, and those most always stay involved with the program.
 - 3. They meet with people that typically do not have specific programs aimed at them, like men and inmates.
- iii. Council Member Stone requested a brief history of the organization, and plans for the future.
 - 1. Both women presenting have been professional counselors for over 30 years and saw gaps in care for those in need of counseling. Together, they created an organization dedicated to functional wellness and partnered with Connect to obtain a full range of services.
 - 2. Both counselors have counseling experience in addiction, both substance and behavioral. The organization has existed for three years, and plans to continue growing.
- iv. Council Member Stone asked if the approvals will allow for greater connection within the Pikes Peak Region.
 - 1. Yes, and Elk Meadow currently already visits the jail twice weekly.
- v. Council Member Crow Iverson pointed out that when compared to similar programs, they are at half capacity. She then asked how they would plan to increase their client list.
 - 1. Elk Meadow has been growing consistently, and because both counselors are known within the community, receiving referrals will grow the organization faster. They want to see people tell others about the service from their positive experience in hopes that they recommend Elk Meadow.

e. Hope COS

- i. A team of life coaches provide peer support, peer recovery, and a warm shelter. The newest program is specific to peer coaching and support. Success is measured through the 8 dimensions of wellness at intake and every 30 days following. They rely on peer support for the programs, and the request for funding will fund key leadership positions, including a supervisor, justice transition supervisor, and a director. Alumni are encouraged to maintain relationships with the program and individuals still in the program.
- ii. Council Member Stone asked what “40% reported better wellness” meant for the client and Hope COS.

1. Environmental wellness is housing, social wellness is employment, overall wellness is self-reported. Each category of wellness has its own set of questions.
- iii. Council Member Chacon asked why the relapse numbers in Q1 of 2025 were so low (93% success).
 1. With only 2 discharges, the housing program is for sustained health outcomes. Of those in the housing program, 93% reported no relapse.
- iv. Council Member Geitner asked what meetings or surveys are done.
 1. If approved, in person meetings are preferred. Currently, most are virtual meetings.

f. Serenity Recovery Connection

- i. Serenity is one of 29 organizations that is fully accredited for community recovery support. They have a data platform where surveys, service, policies, impact, and training are held. They focus on cultural sustainability and help through peers. They do not bill for their services so their organization can grow faster and in more directions. They determine success through their post-program surveys.
- ii. Council Member Herjum asked if there is an increase in the recidivism rate in the criminal justice center.
 1. Yes, it is likely the recidivism rate has increased. Access to the criminal justice center would likely help lower this rate.
- iii. Council Member Johnson asked what a “95% recovery journey” means.
 1. Modeled after the 8 dimensions of wellness, family, housing, religion, sobriety, and more are considered. Each prong of wellness receives questions to assess the individual holistically.
- iv. Council Member Crow-Iverson asked how the \$470,000 will be utilized across the services.
 1. All positions funded by prior grants and funds will continue to exist. The new money will go entirely to expansion, with focus on family training.
- v. Council Member Stone asked how the funding from ROAC changed or improved the mission of the organization.
 1. They were able to reach out further into the Colorado plains cities. Their position within the “HOT” team in CSPD granted further outreach. These funds would also go to expansion of outreach.
- vi. Council Member Geitner asked where people are referred to.
 1. Individuals are referred to resource brokers. If that person has a need, Serenity will find an organization that addresses that need. Serenity focuses on the different options to “meet people where they are”. This allows them to get people the resources they need to complete their goals.

g. City of Colorado Springs Fire Department

- i. Colorado Springs Fire Department is requesting to implement the Transition Assistance Program. This program will work with people involved in the justice system who have mental health and substance abuse disorders. The criminal

justice center is currently where they get their clients, and they want to add two new positions: an outreach coordinator and a crisis navigator. They will track data with fifty individuals involved in the criminal justice center and municipal court. Eventually they would like to expand, taking on 100 individuals and granting each their own personalized health plan.

- ii. Council Member Stone asked what a behavioral health clinic navigator was and what that position does.
 - 1. Master level clinicians, with the crisis navigator being one step below that.
- iii. Council Member Stone asked if “working at half capacity” meant half of a prior client number, or operating at half potential.
 - 1. Both, as they had more clients when they had more members. They are down two employees and the grant would get two new people on board.
- iv. Council Member Herjum asked if they were asked to expand.
 - 1. Yes, Judge Cane requested expansion of the TAP program because he often sends people there prior to their trial or hearing. Additionally, because of the quick release times (sometimes less than 24 hours), means people do not get access to resources and enter the same environment they left. If TAP were at the release location, they would be able to immediately offer resources.
- v. Council Member Crow-Iverson asked what the assessment consisted of.
 - 1. Determination of need is the primary purpose of the assessment. Outcomes include sober housing, contact information, counseling, bus provision, follow ups, or anything else they need.
- vi. Council Member Herjum asked how often people get the housing they need through this program.
 - 1. 348 clients have been seen in 2024, with 287 seeing success. A housing assessment does not mean a house is provided. The purpose is long term recovery, and not every individual needs housing. They “get individuals where they need to go”.
- vii. Council Member Geitner noted that this sounds like what many of the nonprofits are doing. She asks why the fire department is doing this, how and why it is related to the goals of the fire department, and why this program should be elevated over the other organizations.
 - 1. Council Member Johnson replied, stating that “anyone is backup in the 911 system”. If individuals forgo help immediately after release, their subsequent actions could burden the other branches of 911 like police and EMS. Reduction of recidivism is key.
- viii. Council Member Crow-Iverson asked how successful the program will be now that affordable housing is diminishing in availability.
 - 1. Shelters were highlighted as the main backup, with assisted living as a tertiary option.
- ix. Council Member Chacon asked if individuals being contacted were in the program voluntarily or as part of a plea deal.

1. All are voluntary, and there are no mandatory interactions from the court. Sometimes the judge recommends the individual “see outreach” for help, and sometimes the individuals come up by themselves.
- x. Council Member Herjum noted that people trust the firefighters, and this could save tax dollars because this is a grant.
- xi. Council Member Geitner stated her disapproval of government expansion.
- xii. Council Member Williams asked if there was a way of determining who abused substances.
 1. Yes, over 70% according to the surveys. Often, there will be drug charges on their record as proof of the active problem.

h. Colorado Health Network; dba Southern Colorado Health Network

- i. Southern Colorado Health network seeks to appoint an overdose prevention coordinator with the funds. This will help with the HIV and other blood diseases individuals contract from dirty needles. They purport to advance harm reduction, accomplishing this by meeting people where they are and keeping people safe. They believe that harm reduction in the form of needle exchange grants more chances for that person to seek help. They want to create a syringe access program and stigma free spaces for helping people make better healthcare decisions.
- ii. Council Member Chacon asked what the purpose of the provided testing was, and how they calculated overdose prevention fairly.
 1. When a participant comes in, they take a survey to determine their needs. They also track anyone who picks up naran and ask what happened to the prior dose, and ask if the person lived or not.
- iii. Council Member Chacon asked if the data was accurate, and how that would be verifiable.
 1. They do not have verification. They do not connect the data because it is anonymous. Southern Colorado Health Network believes the number of overdoses is underreported.
- iv. Council Member Johnson asked if the program could continue with less funding than requested.
 1. Would like to see all, but would be grateful for any funding. Grants fund the organization, and want to serve the Pikes Peak community with this new funding.
- v. Council Member Geitner pointed out that the needle exchange program is something they do, even if it is not the whole program. She asked if Southern Colorado Health Network has been following the law in regards to setting up a needle program in Pikes Peak.
 1. They use community input to deliver meaningful relationships to clients. Council Member Geitner pointed out that this did not answer the question.

i. Community Partnership Family Resource Center

- i. Community Partnership has served children and families for over thirty years with their program. They serve 1 in 16 Teller County residents. They focus on

starting education early to break the cycle and prevent children from becoming adults who use drugs. They have strong data to show their program works through long term community building, assessments, screening, and educational programs. With this funding they would be able to serve 200 more clients this year among their 20 total programs.

- ii. Council Member Herjum asked what specifically would be expanded.
 - 1. Community Partnership plans to increase social connections with focus on families. Suggested uses included safe storage of drugs and prenatal health.
- iii. Council member Herjum asked how many clients speak of personal experiences.
 - 1. While not everyone participates, some do open up about their situations. The home visitation program usually gets the most honest and open answers, but most often the second meeting is where clients tell the truth. If the client does share, that information is tracked anonymously.
- iv. Council Member Johnson asked if all social determinants of health are touched on and how they impact substance abuse.
 - 1. Community Partnerships responded that research shows substance abuse is often tied to childhood trauma. They ensure that families and individuals who walk through the door will have a place to be open and honest about any type of trauma that led them to substance abuse.
 - 2. The goal is to give people resources, tools, power, community, connection, and anything else they need to have in order to turn away from drugs.
- v. Council Member Stone noted that there is often nowhere to go in rural counties except for Community Partnerships. They do what the county cannot afford to do. Both Community Partnerships and Council Member stone spoke to the highly trusted nature of Community Partnerships.

4. 4:03-4:59 PM - Council Discussion and Endorsement of Applicants

- a. Facilitator Corbett discussed the funding for the May applicants who were advanced for further consideration (The Full Circle Program, TESSA, CASA of the Pikes Peak Region, One Chance to Grow Up, and Crossroads Turning Points) and the nine applicants presenting in June.
- b. Council Member Stone reminded the council that the remaining grant monies are available funds and not a budget.
- c. **Homeward Pikes Peak**
 - i. Council Member Crow-Iverson said that Homeward was imperative because of their work in the sober living homes. Adding funding to ensure their continued existence is necessary.
 - ii. Council Member Stone agrees that Homeward gives great value, with his only concern being the increased request for funding.
 - iii. Council Member Crow-Iverson noted that the \$581,000 request is less than the cost of harm that would come about from Homeward's absence.
 - iv. Council Member Herjum noted that their plans to provide housing will prevent people from being homeless.

- v. Homeward Pikes Peak was unanimously advanced for further consideration by the council.
- d. Facilitator Corbett asked which applicants should be advanced immediately to save time on discussion.
 - i. Face It TOGETHER was nominated by Council Members Stone, Allen, and Crow Iverson. No objections were observed.
 - ii. **Face It TOGETHER** was unanimously advanced for further consideration by the council.
 - iii. **Community Partnerships** was advanced for further consideration by the council.
 - 1. Council Member Wolff abstained from voting.
- e. **Serenity Recovery Connection**
 - i. Council Member Herjum asked if Serenity was asking for more money this year than last year.
 - 1. Yes, Serenity's budget was shown on the screen and comparisons were made.
 - ii. Council Member Stone noted that the data provided was sound and would like to see their program continue.
 - iii. Council Member Geitner was skeptical of their heavy and consistent use of the term "evidence based" to describe their own data. Council Member Geitner expressed concern and hesitation over funding an organization that has a needle exchange program. She suggested excluding the needle exchange program from funding.
 - iv. Facilitator Corbett suggested that the council could ask how the funds will be used.
 - v. Council Members Crow-Iverson and Herjum noted that there were no legally operating needle exchange programs.
 - 1. Council Member Allen confirmed, stating that it is a legal requirement for needle exchange programs to reach out to the DA, and the DA has never been contacted about any needle exchange programs.
 - vi. Council Member Williams suggested passing them in the process to continue the help that they clearly give to the community.
 - vii. Serenity Recovery Connection was unanimously advanced for further consideration by the council.
- f. The council conducted a formal vote to fund the applicants in May whom were advanced for further consideration. Full Circle, TESSA, CASA, One Chance to Grow Up, and Crossroads were formally approved for funding.
 - i. The council directed staff to begin the contract process with the approved applicants..

5. 4:16-4:19 PM - Planning for Remaining Grant Applicants

- a. There is \$10.1M of remaining grant funds.
- b. \$6.9M is already in the cost database and may be pulled down. Colorado has not given projections yet.

- c. \$20M out of the expected \$67M Region 16 is to receive through 2038 has been disbursed to the Region from the Opioid Administrator thus far.
- d. Council Member Geitner stated that the council should be careful about the funds they choose to grant. The council should focus on higher quality programs rather than new programs that may not work.
- e. **Hazelbrook dba ParadigmONE**
 - i. Council Member Stone immediately pointed to the housing opportunities Hazelbrook offers, and Council Member Allen agreed that expansion of their services is important.
 - ii. Hazelbrook Community Center was advanced for further consideration by the council.
- f. **Elk Meadow Enduring Connections**
 - i. Council Member Crow-Iverson noted that 110 people in one year is potentially too ambitious. Council Member Stone agreed.
 - ii. Elk Meadow Enduring Connections was not advanced for further consideration by the council.
- g. **Hope COS**
 - i. Council Member Geitner wants to ask the sheriff's office about this organization because Hope COS goes through the sheriff's office.
 - 1. Council Member Harris stated that she spoke with the manager and the email was "outstanding" with regard to jail access.
 - ii. Council Member Herjum indicated that the city has contracted with Hope COS's sheltering services and had positive results.
 - iii. Council Member Johnson declared that he sits on the board of Hope COS, and will abstain from voting, but recommends the organization.
 - 1. Facilitator Corbett and Attorney Hodges requested that council members declare their positions within organizations. Attorney Hodges confirmed that vote abstention has been the council's practice.
 - iv. Council Member Cochran notes that this is specific to women's shelters and wants to advance the organization.
 - v. Hope COS was advanced for further consideration by the council.
 - 1. Council Members Johnson, Wolff, Herjum abstained from voting.
- h. **City of Colorado Springs Fire Department**
 - i. Council Member Cochran notes that they have great projects but are part of the government as Council Member Geitner pointed out. Council Member Cochran recommended moving the organization forward.
 - ii. Council Member Geitner opposes moving the organization forward because it represents an expansion of government. Expanding the fire department is not the best way to cover an opioid response.
 - iii. Council Member Cristiani noted that immediate contact is important because resources can be provided immediately. The fire department has that immediate access.
 - 1. Council Member Geitner reminded Council Member Cristiani that this is not necessarily for emergency purposes

- iv. Council Member Crow-Iverson has concerns with TAP acquiring this type of housing because availability is shrinking, which means lesser likelihood of success, due to the decreased market stock to purchase from.
- v. Council Member Allen wished to move them forward, as it is not a declaration of funding granted.
- vi. City of Colorado Springs Fire Department TAP was advanced for further consideration by the council.

i. Southern Colorado Health Network

- i. Council Members Allen, Geitner, and Cristiani oppose.
- ii. Council Member Allen noted that the desire to use a needle exchange program without first contacting the District Attorney was unwise. Southern Colorado Health Network offered to take Council Member Allen on a tour.
- iii. Council Member Williams agreed, stating that while the council is saying “no” now, Southern Colorado Health Network is welcome to apply again next year with a modified proposal.
- iv. Council Member Johnson noted that some individuals on the board are against needle exchange programs, and the council should be transparent about that fact.
 - 1. There was an additional exchange regarding meeting etiquette and communication styles.
- v. Southern Colorado Health Network was not advanced for further consideration by the council.

6. 4:59-4:59 PM - Financial Report

- a. No financial report was provided due to time constraints.

7. 4:59-5:00 PM - Public Comments

- a. No public comments were received due to time constraints.

8. 5:01 PM - Adjourned by Facilitator Corbett