

SE Colorado Region 19 Opioid Settlement Board

January 9, 2023, 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM via Zoom

Present

Rick Butler
Kim MacDonnell
Blaine Arbuthnot
Dennis Pearson, Meagan Hillman
Felix Lopez
Rob Oquist
Wendy Buxton-Andrade
Garrison Ortiz, Christine Zeitvogel

Rose Pugliese

Guests

Sarah Long
Shylo Dennison
Marissa Stoller
Arlene Cooke
Kristin Carpenter
Stacey Samaro
Jude Solano
Terri Schriber
Brandy Kinslow

County represented

Baca
Bent
Crowley
Kiowa
Las Animas
Otero
Prowers
Pueblo

Facilitator

Pueblo County Attorney's Office
Pueblo Dept. Public Health
City of Pueblo
Otero County Health Dept.
Colorado Consortium
Crossroads' Turning Points, Inc.
Southern CO Harm Reduction
The Schreiber Group
Rural Recovery Network

Call to Order

Commissioner Lopez called the meeting to order at 3:06 PM. Eight counties were represented during the meeting.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Lopez asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

- Commissioner MacDonnell moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Arbuthnot.
 - The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Lopez asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 19, 2022 meeting.

- Councilman Butler moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Commissioner Arbuthnot.
 - The motion passed unanimously.

Facilitator Update

Ms. Pugliese stated that the group would be reviewing RFPs and discussing the option of applying for Opioid Infrastructure funding.

Discussion of RFPs submitted and recommendations of the RFP Review Committee

Commissioner Lopez shared that the RFP committee reviewed and recommended awards for 4 proposals. Commissioner Arbuthnot reported on the recommendations:

- Southern Colorado Harm Reduction Association (SCHRA) requested \$250,000 and the committee recommended awarding \$100,000 for the prevention/education portion of the proposal. Part of the proposal was more appropriate for a different RFP.
- Pueblo Department of Public Health requested \$100,175 and the committee recommended an award of \$50,000.
- Crossroads' Turning Points requested \$315,981 and the committee recommended an award of \$250,000.
- Southern Colorado Youth Go (SoCoYoGo) requested \$25,000 and the committee recommended an award of \$25,000.

Ms. Pugliese explained that the committee recommended holding back a balance of the available funding totaling \$338,869.77 remains. Commissioner Arbuthnot stated that organizations could also apply for additional funding.

Ms. Zeitvogel asked if the board had decided whether the funding would be distributed as outright grants or reimbursement grants. Ms. Long stated that a reimbursement grant is more complicated, that reporting can be required either way, and safeguards can be included in the contract. Commissioner Ortiz also noted that reimbursement grants are more cumbersome; however, he stressed the importance of good accountability tied to the funds. He stated that since the accountability and reporting can be required by contract, that he would be willing to approve outright grants. Commissioner Buxton-Andrade agreed that straight grant funding was preferable. Commissioner Lopez stated that before awarding the second-year funds to any project, the organization would be invited to report to the board regarding the program and impact. Ms. Pugliese pointed out that this was only first year funding and additional funding would be received next year.

Ms. Long reported that the RFP committee had asked how questions could be asked of applicants. She recommended building in an opportunity to ask supplemental questions as part of the review process prior to scoring proposals. Commissioner Lopez asked the board to make an attempt to meet face to face. He acknowledged the difficulty accommodating all members.

Proposals and Awards:

Southern Colorado Youth Go (SoCoYoGo) requested support for an online platform to reward youth for pro-social activities. Ms. Zeitvogel noted that the program is only in Pueblo County but could be expanded to the rest of the Region 19 counties and provide an opportunity to reward youth for the positive activities they are engaging in. Commissioner Ortiz added that the program is already active and put together well.

Commissioner Lopez requested a motion to approve the committee's recommendation to award \$25,000 to SoCoYoGo.

- Commissioner Buxton-Andrade moved to approve the committee's recommendation to award \$25,000 to SoCoYoGo; seconded by Commissioner Ortiz.
 - The motion passed unanimously.

Crossroads' Turning Points requested \$315,981 for Botvin Life Skills in partnership with GOAL Academy. Commissioner Lopez noted that the program covers all 9 counties. Ms. Zeitvogel stated that the

proposal offered a program the board had expressed interest in when Botvin Life Skills was presented by Matt Biszak of Prowers County, and that by partnering with GOAL Academy on-line Crossroads' would offer the program to all 9 counties in Region 19. She also stated that after 2 years, Crossroads' will have trained GOAL Academy staff to deliver the program and will no longer be involved. Ms. Zeitvogel would like to see the program in all Region 19 brick and mortar schools so that students would receive the same positive programming even if they moved to a different school. Commissioner Lopez stated that for year 2, the SECOR board may ask to expand Botvin Life Skills to brick and mortar schools. Commissioner Ortiz stated that he has found the program to be successful and well run.

Commissioner Lopez requested a motion to approve the committee's recommendation to award \$250,000 to Crossroads' Turning Points.

- Commissioner Arbuthnot moved to approve the committee's recommendation to award \$250,000 to Crossroads' Turning Points; seconded by Commissioner Buxton-Andrade.
 - The motion passed unanimously.

Pueblo Department of Public Health and the Environment (PDPHE) requested \$100,175 to collect data and create documents targeting millennials struggling with substance use disorder. Ms. Zeitvogel noted that this project will create well researched materials that the entire region can use, and that the committee would like to expedite the preparation of these materials. Commissioner Ortiz stated that the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment has a regional and collaborative approach and will do an excellent job. Commissioner Lopez stated that he is looking forward to having the literature available to the region.

- Commissioner Ortiz moved to approve the committee's recommendation to award \$50,000 to Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment; seconded by Commissioner MacDonnell.
 - The motion passed unanimously.

Southern Colorado Harm Reduction requested \$250,000 for 2 programs with \$100,000 for the Life Empowerment and Fulfillment program. The Maternal Opioid Misuse program was considered a better fit for a different RFP. Commissioner Ortiz stated that while SCHRA does excellent work helping people, and the organization is well intended, he was concerned about their ability to administratively account for and report on funding and resources. Due to his concern with accountability, he stated he would vote against the proposal. Commissioner Buxton-Andrade stated that she had a very positive experience working with SCHRA. Commissioner Arbuthnot stated that he has heard good things about their work and asked if Pueblo County has taken any action about their concerns. Commissioner Ortiz stated that Pueblo County has made a lot of effort to reconcile disputes or differences because Pueblo County used to provide annual funding to SCHRA. The disputes became public and Pueblo County no longer awards annual funding. He is concerned about the accounting, reporting and administering of the funds based on his experience with SCHRA. Commissioner MacDonnell asked if there is something that SECOR could do or ask for in reporting to increase Pueblo County's confidence. Commissioner Ortiz stated that if the reporting shows where the funds have been spent and the board is confident in the reporting, that he expects to vote in the affirmative for subsequent funding requests. He does not want to require additional reporting for SCHRA above the reporting to be required of other grantees. He believes that requiring reporting in the contract as described by Ms. Long should be sufficient.

- Commissioner Buxton-Andrade moved to approve the committee’s recommendation to award \$100,000 to Southern Colorado Harm Reduction Association; seconded by Ms. Hillman.
 - Commissioner Lopez called for a recorded vote.
 1. Baca – aye
 2. Bent – aye
 3. Crowley – aye
 4. Kiowa – aye
 5. Las Animas – aye
 6. Otero – Commissioner Oquist stated that he is not voting member but wished to try the program for one year and determine if the board is satisfied with performance
 7. Prowers – aye
 8. Pueblo – no
 9. Huerfano – absent

The vote carried.

Ms. Pugliese asked Commissioner Lopez to request a vote to withhold \$338,869.77 and retain it for future RFPs. Ms. Zeitvogel noted that this could be used to provide matching funds if needed.

- Councilman Butler moved to retain \$338,869.77 of Prevention and Education funding; seconded by Commissioner Arbuthnot.
 - The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Submission of Opioid Infrastructure Funding Grant

Ms. Pugliese stated that approximately \$2.5 million in infrastructure funding is available across the state for the funding cycle ending on Friday, January 13, 2023. This can be used for capital improvements and operational assistance. Commissioner Buxton-Andrade stated that the AG’s office was splitting the funding into 2 cycles this year and that she recommended not applying as a region during this cycle and instead providing a letter of support for other applicants. Local governments can apply for the funding. Commissioner MacDonnell agreed that Region 19 should wait until the next round to apply. The board will discuss applying for infrastructure funds at future meetings.

Other business

Ms. Pugliese asked if the remaining RFPs should be released. Pueblo County posts the RFPs on their website. The AG’s office will also have a website to host the RFPs. Commissioner Arbuthnot asked to have board member suggestions added to the RFP before posting. Commissioner MacDonnell asked if the committee can invite applicants to come to a meeting to answer questions. Commissioner Buxton-Andrade asked if the questions could be asked by email. Ms. Long stated that Pueblo County sends the same supplemental questions to all applicants. If the applicants are interviewed in person, all questions must be the same for all applicants. Ms. Pugliese will add the option for supplemental questions to the RFP before posting it. She will send out the RFPs by January 13, 2023.

Commissioner Lopez asked if any additional board members were interested in joining the RFP review committee. Ms. Pugliese noted that some board members may want to serve on some reviews and not others. Ms. Hillman suggested sending out a poll to board members. Ms. Pugliese asked board members to submit to her the names of organizations that should receive the RFPs.

Ms. Schreiber asked to know the best way to learn about funding opportunities. Ms. Pugliese asked Ms. Schreiber to send her an email to be added to the distribution list.

Next meeting

The next meeting has been scheduled for February 27, 2023.

Adjournment

Commissioner Lopez asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

- Commissioner Ortiz moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Commissioner Lopez.
 - The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Zeitvogel
Secretary, SECOR

APPROVED