

**OPIOID AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER (OSUD) GRANTS COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 24, 2025, 2:00 PM**  
**City Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Don Davis Room**  
**Chair: Dr. Richmond Wynn**  
**Vice-Chair: Antonio Nichols**  
**Secretary: Heather Rios**

<b>Committee Meeting Attendance</b>	
<b>X</b>	<b>Dr. Richmond Wynn - Chair</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Antonio Nichols - Vice-Chair</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Heather Rios - Secretary</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Dr. Lantie Jorandby</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Nancy Rice</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Sarah Smith</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Dr. John Tanner</b>

**Quorum Present: Yes**

**City Council Liaison (non-voting member):**

- City Councilmember Ron Salem, At-Large, Group 2 (not present)

**Staff:**

- Madelaine Zarou, Manager of Opioid Abatement - Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department
- Laura Viafora Ray, Program Coordinator - Opioid Abatement - Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department
- Ashley Smith, Assistant General Counsel - Office of General Counsel, City of Jacksonville

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM by Dr. Richmond Wynn, Chair.

**II. Welcome and Introductions**

Staff members introduced themselves, and each OSUD Grants Committee member in attendance introduced themselves.

**III. Office of Opioid Abatement Update**

Madelaine Zarou, Manager of Opioid Abatement, provided an update from their office. They shared that all Quarterly Progress Reports for Quarter 1 had been submitted by awarded agencies and that four out of the fourteen had been approved. The remaining

ten had been reviewed by the Office of Opioid Abatement (OOA) and they sent feedback, questions, and requests for additional supporting documentation.

Ms. Zarou continued their update by sharing that Serenity Granted, LLC, an awardee from Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 will be on placed on the Chapter 118 Non-Compliance List the next time the Council Auditor's Office releases an updated report. A review of Serenity Granted's annual report revealed that they were overpaid due to misinterpretation of a line item. The agency was notified via certified mail and instructed to pay the amount back, but the agency missed the deadline to pay the funds back. The agency will remain on the Non-Compliance List until the funds are paid back, and while listed they are not eligible to apply for or receive any COJ funding.

Next, Ms. Zarou shared that they sent the Committee' recommendations regarding funded category percentage allocations that were voted on last meeting to Council President Randy White. CP White is sponsoring legislation matching the Committee's recommendation. The legislation is expected to be filed on March 5th and will be effective for the FY 2025-2026 cycle.

Regarding opioid settlement funds payments, Ms. Zarou then shared that the city received funds that were expected in December of 2024 in February. The State confirmed that delays are possible. The payments represented one "Qualified" payment and six "City/County" payments totaling approximately six million dollars. The Office of Opioid Abatement is working with the Department of Finance to determine the budget for the FY 2025-2026 Opioid Settlement Proceeds Grants Program. Per Chapter 84, a minimum of 70% of the payments received will go towards the OSPG Program next cycle.

Laura Viafora Ray, Program Coordinator - Opioid Abatement, took over the last section of the OOA update, providing an update on FY 2024-2025 award invoice processing. They noted that with all contracts and purchase orders complete, their office had been prioritizing getting caught up on invoices. They shared that all October and November invoices, save for one, had been processed and submitted for payment. They went on to say that half of the December invoices had been processed, as well as about a quarter of the January invoices, and that the remaining invoices were late and had not yet been submitted by agencies. They concluded by sharing that approximately \$570,000, or 11% of the total program budget, had been processed thus far.

Sarah Smith asked if anything could be done to improve and expedite this process in the future, and Ms. Viafora Ray answered by sharing that their office would encourage participation by more staff, particularly those who would be processing invoices, in the

Awardee Training Workshop they host, as much of the workshop goes over invoicing policies. Ms. Viafora Ray went on to say that in their experience, the first couple of invoices take longer, but that the process becomes faster and smoother over time.

#### **IV. Public Comment**

Dr. Wynn opened the floor to public comment. There were no public comments.

#### **V. Vote on Minutes from January 27, 2025 Meeting**

Ms. Smith put forth a motion to vote to approve the meeting minutes from the January 27, 2025, meeting. Heather Rios, Secretary, seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **VI. Vote on FY 2025-2026 OSPG Program Process**

Ms. Viafora Ray presented a chart that was provided by the Division of Procurement outlining the Request for Proposals (RFP) process. They reminded attendees and committee members that at their inaugural meeting in September of 2023, the Committee discussed whether to adopt the RFP process per Chapter 126 or the grants process as outlined in Chapter 84 (referred to as the 'grants application process') for the FY 2023-2024 cycle. For that cycle, the Committee voted unanimously to adopt the grants application process. The Committee also voted on adopting the grants application process at the January 2024 meeting for the FY 2024-2025 cycle. Ms. Viafora Ray noted that the RFP process would require the creation of subcommittees for each of the funded categories - Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support - and that this would require additional meetings of both the regular committee and these subcommittees.

Ms. Smith stated that she wanted to reiterate what they had said during previous discussions on this topic, noting that the committee members were selected for their diverse expertise and that this might be lost in an RFP process. Antonio Nichols, Vice-Chair, agreed with Ms. Smith's comments and stated that he felt they had developed a good, streamlined process that allows them to utilize and apply their expertise.

Mr. Nichols made a motion to utilize the grants application process in lieu of an RFP process. Dr. John Tanner seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **VII. Vote on Program Budget Change Requests**

The following Fiscal Year 2024-2025 OSPG Program awardees presented budget changes for consideration by the committee:

- I.M. Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless, Inc. - Sulzbacher Substance Abuse Recovery Program
  - This budget change request was presented by Dr. Colleen Bell, President, Health Division with Sulzbacher Center.
  - Ms. Smith put forth a motion to approve this budget change request. Mr. Nichols seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.
- I.M. Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless, Inc. - Sulzbacher Substance Abuse Treatment Program
  - This budget change request was presented by Dr. Colleen Bell, President, Health Division with Sulzbacher Center.
  - Dr. Wynn asked Dr. Bell if the program would be maintaining the same level of housing and rental support. Dr. Bell answered by saying yes, and that they were able to rework their internal resources for housing to provide this resource from other sources, which would allow them to use funds to purchase things like medication instead.
  - Mr. Nichols put forth a motion to approve this budget change request. Ms. Rios seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Supporting documentation for the budget change requests described above, including letters signed by Dr. Cindy Funkhouser, CEO and completed “Budget Change Request Templates” describing each line-item change request, were submitted to committee members for review ahead of the meeting. These documents are available upon request by emailing [opioidabatement@coj.net](mailto:opioidabatement@coj.net).

## **VIII. New Business**

Dr. Wynn opened the floor for new business.

Ms. Smith shared that she had heard feedback from smaller organizations who perceived the process and outcomes from the last cycle as being unfair, as mostly larger organizations were funded. Ms. Zarou added some context to the discussion by reminding committee members and attendees that there is a limit, per Chapter 84, for how much funding an agency can receive from the program - referred by their office as the “24% rule,” it dictates that an agency can only receive up to 24% of their average annual revenue from the past three years (calculated from average revenue as reported on filed tax returns from the past three years). Ms. Zarou went on to say that this rule also applies to Public Service Grants and possibly other COJ grants as well. They acknowledge that this does put larger agencies in a position to request and receive larger amounts of funding, but that a limit does exist. Ms. Viafora Ray added that

ultimately, who is funded and who is not funded is determined, per the code, by which programs achieve the highest average scores from Committee members across the eight evaluation criterion, not based on how much funding an agency requests.

Finally, Ms. Viafora Ray expressed that they also wanted to provide an update to the Committee regarding a potential audit. They shared that a representative of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reached out to them last week requesting a preliminary meeting to discuss adding the OSPG Program to their annual risk assessment audit. Ms. Viafora Ray and Ms. Zarou had this initial meeting, and they shared that they felt it went very well, and that the OIG rep ultimately decided to postpone the audit because they wanted to be able to review a full year of the program, and did not realize that the first cycle in FY 2023-2024 was only for eight months. Ms. Viafora Ray concluded by noting that the OIG would be following back up with them in the fall. Dr. Wynn asked if the Committee would be expected to be a part of the audit, and Ms. Viafora Ray answered that they were not sure at that time, but that it was possible.

There was no additional new business.

**IX. Adjournment**

Ms. Smith put forth a motion to vote to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Rios seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. There was no discussion. The meeting was adjourned by Dr. Wynn at 2:31 PM.

***Next Meeting Date - Monday, March 24, 2025 at 2:00 PM***

To be signed by Heather Rios, Secretary, certifying approval by the Committee:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_