



OCONEE COUNTY OPIOID RESPONSE TASK FORCE

Regular Meeting Held at:
Council Chambers, Oconee County Administrative Offices
415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC

Members

Aaron Zeller, MD (Chair); Scott Krein (Co-Chair); Lekesha Benson
Michael Carroll; Richie Caudill; Tim Rice; Caitlin Pope;
Alan Sayre; Jon Holland; Zac Smith

The Oconee County Opioid Response Taskforce met on Friday, December 8th, 2024 at 10am in County Council Chambers, located at 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla SC. Members present included Aaron Zeller, Scott Krein, Michael Carroll, Caitlin Pope, Alan Sayre, Jon Holland, and Staff Liaison, Zac Smith.

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting, date, time, place of meeting and agenda were posted on the bulletin board at the County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC, and the County Council website [www.oconeesc.com]. In addition, it was made available [upon request] to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens. Members of media present: Dick Mangrum

Minutes:

- 1. Call to Order:** Mr. Zac Smith, Opioid Response Coordinator called meeting to order at 10:01am.
- 2. Adoption of meeting schedule:** Next meeting to be scheduled will be held on 1/12/24 starting at 10am in County Council Chambers.

Mr. Zac Smith noted to the Task Force members that the next regular meeting is scheduled for January 12th, 2024 starting at 10am.

Mr. Zac Smith went on to inform members that the application process for the South Carolina Opioid Recovery Fund Board (SCORF) opens on December 20th, 2023 and that Council approval of the application could be considered at the January 16th 2024 Council Meeting.

3. Officer Elections:

Dr. Aaron Zeller made the recommendation that each person explain their thoughts on OCORT, how it will benefit the county, and their history in committee seats.

Mr. Zac Smith called for a vote to nominate Dr. Aaron Zeller as OCORT chair with Mr. Alan Sayre moving the motion to second. No opposition. Dr. Aaron Zeller deemed chair of OCORT. Vote 6-0.

Dr. Zeller made a motion to nominate Mr. Scott Krein as vice chair, second by Mr. Alan Sayre, and no opposition. Vote 6-0.

Mr. Zac Smith stated that the chair and vice chair will remain in their positions until The Taskforce's initiative has been completed, since it is an ad-hoc committee. In the event that the chair or vice chair resigns, a member of The Taskforce will be elected to fill the position.

4. Discussion Items-

Dr. Zeller requested to know how much funding was available from SCORF. From the documents that were given to him, the topics of discussion were community resources for opioid awareness, peer support for law enforcement and first responders, and harm reduction type programs.

Dr. Aaron Zeller asked how much funding is available for opioid recovery.

Mr. Zac Smith (staff liaison) stated the total amount of funds available for use is \$1,594,247.98. The program is an "opt in" type where you have to apply for the funds to receive them and, the program/project has to be opioid specific.

Mr. Zac Smith: The SCORF funding has many moving parts of how funding can be used. Several ways prevention, harm reduction, treatment of incarcerated populations, and pregnant females. Mr. Zac Smith's position as the Opioid Response Coordinator is to train first responders in opioid awareness and monitor the opioid crisis locally.

Mr. Zac Smith- the process of OD Map and how the program helps track overdoses within the county. Mr. Scott Krein Is OD Map populated by the ROLL Narcan administrations or is it through input from DHEC? Mr. Zac Smith- OD Map is populated by DHEC via hospital, EMS, and law enforcement inputs. Mr. Jon Holland- How often is the data reported? Mr. Zac Smith-the data input is almost in real time.

Dr. Aaron Zeller-So that is part of what you do Mr. Smith as a liaison? Interact with numbers and data bases? Mr. Zac Smith- Yes. Dr. Aaron Zeller- Are you leading the training for first responders and Narcan? Mr. Zac Smith- Yes, I work under the direct supervision of Deputy Chief Carroll.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- How much money is Oconee County sitting on again? Mr. Zac Smith- \$1,594,247.98. Dr. Aaron Zeller- Is this an opt-in type program? Mr. Zac Smith- It is an application process of where funds are applied for and you receive them. Ms. Amanda Brock-the funds were received through a class action lawsuit.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- Does anyone have any questions on the funds or have any discussion on what they are to be used for? I have some possibilities of what they are used for...community support, peer support, criminal justice avenues, prevention/harm reduction, and first responder training. Were there anymore reasons?

Mr. Zac Smith: He and Mrs. Brittney Martin (Grants Administrator) are working on an application that will be filled out by non-profit organizations or businesses that are interested in obtaining funds for opioid specific type programs. There are certain dates that the application process opens and closes. Project start dates are a part of that and I have forms to give you with the dates.

Mr. Zac Smith: The Guaranteed Political Subfund process and how the money is again guaranteed, but it will need to be applied for by an application process. The application process will be as follows: applicant, OCORT review/recommendation, County Council approval, SCORF approval/denial, and (if approved) County Council distribution of funds to applicant.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- The Taskforce that they did not have the authorization to sign any contract(s) or funds.

Mr. Jon Holland- Is there data in the county to show what certain projects the money needs to be used for, is it based on who applies. Mr. Zac Smith- There has been people who have reached out about how the application process is...specifically recovery centers. Mr. Scott Krein- we have not had a way to track until now and we don't know and Zac has been doing a good job to trying to work on finding those gaps. explained that if the applicant's strategy fits the SCORF abatement strategy, it will most likely be approved.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- is there a way to measure outcomes and deliverables to be monitored? Mr. Zac Smith- We are working on that process at this time. For the organizations that did receive money, I would be visiting them to see those measurable outcomes. Dr. Aaron Zeller- Is there a place on the application that involves anticipated outcomes at the end of the period. Ms. Amanda Brock there will be quarterly reports requested such as a recipient agreement and closeout report by Oconee County staff. The board will have the freedom to decide on who receives the funding. Dr. Aaron Zeller- Do we have an idea of where there is the most need? The role will be of the board will be talking and voting about the applications. Mr. Scott Krein-We have data with some things, but some items get missed...including provider wellness of emergency responders. Spoke on data points and how the money can be well utilized. Some deadlines are quickly approaching and money does not have to be used at once.

Mr. Jon Holland- Does the 1.5 million dollars have to be used now or will it be over multiple years? Mr. Zac Smith-it's total. Mr. Jon Holland-so this can be used overtime and rolled over? Ms. Amanda Brock- that would be ideal. Mr. Scott Krein- the money does not go away. Ms. Amanda Brock- the funds are there to help a program get started and exist.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- For the record, there is not a specific amount that we have to dish out before this February 5th close date? Mr. Zac Smith-that's correct. Dr. Aaron Zeller- are the dates managed through the class action suit? Mr. Zac Smith- No, the SCORF Board sets the dates. Dr. Aaron Zeller-will there be more dates after this? Mr. Zac Smith- yes, these dates are for the calendar year 2024. Dr. Aaron Zeller- We don't have to feel pressured to spend the money in one year.

Mr. Jon Holland- If the money is utilized over multiple years, that means that we have made a one year commitment, and does County Council want the Taskforce to advise them for the years after this one? Mr. Zac Smith- Yes. Mr. Jon Holland- we have all made a one year commitment, right? Mr. Zac Smith- you, ask a Taskforce member have made a commitment until the Taskforce is released by Council. Seeing as this is an ad-hoc committee.

Mr. Scott Krein to Mr. Zac Smith-Have you started working on the new budget for 2024 for your position or will it be a continuance since it was delayed? Mr. Zac Smith- Yes, we have requested a continuance. Mr. Scott Krein- So the funding for the other programs that one can apply for starting 12/20, does that come out of the same place? Mr. Zac Smith-Yes, it all comes out of the same funding.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- So it appears that a small portion of the funding is for Mr. Smith's position and it's administrative, is that correct? Mr. Zac Smith- Yes, that's correct and is how I am funded. Dr. Aaron Zeller- Does anyone have any questions regarding that portion of the funding? Dr. Aaron Zeller- Can we have the Oconee County Opioid Response Coordinator's budget so the Taskforce can set aside the proper funding for that position. Ms. Amanda Brock and Mr. Scott Krein-We can share that with you. Dr. Aaron Zeller- The training and prevention aspect that you, Mr. Zac Smith are conducting is coming out of this pot of money, correct? Mr. Zac Smith- Yes, that's correct. Dr. Aaron Zeller made a motion to have the Opioid Response Coordinator's budget made available at the next Taskforce meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Jon Holland. Dr. Aaron Zeller- Does it need to be a vote? Ms. Amanda Brock- You can withdraw the motion due to it being an informal request internally. Dr. Aaron Zeller- I believe it would be nice to see that funding so we can have a ballpark of what funding is needed. Ms. Amanda Brock- In the event that you would like any documents such as this, you can informally request it via email through Zac and it will be made available to the whole group so everyone can have the same material.

Mr. Jon Holland- has there been any new requests for funding? Ms. Brittney Martin- we have not provided any new community funds at this time.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- Any questions regarding funding, deadlines, and important dates?

Dr. Aaron Zeller- what will be the criteria as far as an application process and is that available for us to look through? Mr. Zac Smith- Once we have an idea about how the application will look, we will provide that for you after SCORF approval.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- Has a template been made. Ms. Brittney Martin replied by bringing up the SCORF template to tailor Oconee County's application process to it. There will be additional requirements such as quarterly reporting that will be completed in the event that someone receives community support funding. The SCORF Board has released a new template and will be closely monitored. Dr. Aaron Zeller- So the goal is to have the application created and placed online somewhere for people to fill out? Ms. Amanda Brock- The process will most likely be created through the holiday season and we don't have to have it available by then. Once application is completed, it will be sent to SCORF for approval, and then sent back to this Taskforce to make sure everyone is good with it. Once everyone is on board with it, it will be sent out. Usually, you will have backup materials in advance for meetings and the application would be part of that once it's available. Dr. Aaron Zeller-all materials will be emailed to us prior to the meeting? Ms. Amanda Brock- Yes, all materials related to the meeting will be given to you prior of the meeting and will be made available at the actual meeting. Dr. Aaron Zeller-We will not have applications to review by January 12th? Ms. Amanda Brock-No, you will be approving the application itself. And once approved, it can be made available on the web the same day even with changes made to it.

Mr. Scott Krein- From looking at the dates given by SOCRF, it appears that we will not be looking at applications for approval until April besides the continuation of funds. Have we applied for the Coordinator's new funding for 2024 yet? Ms. Brittney Martin-Since we did not receive funds until July, a continuation was approved by SCORF and will be applied for in the next application round.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- How is the community going to know that the applications will be ready? Ms. Amanda Brock- Until the application is approved and ready, we don't want to put out news stating that it is available six weeks before a deadline. stated that once application has been created, it will be sent to the organizations that have requested potential funding in the past months. Notification will also be sent via social media blast and to the Oconee County Community Resource Guide. We can provide a draft application for them in anticipation of approved application release to help them prepare for the process. We want to help as many people as we can.

Mr. Scott Krein- Data will be an important part of this process, so we need to look at that and at the same time, look at the longevity of the money. Again, we need to look at the data and continuation of success with programs. Dr. Aaron Zeller-Prevention and Harm Reduction will be a hot topic for him in the funding.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- Loneliness, isolation, and a loss of community is a problem in today's society regarding drug use. Mr. Alan Sayre- agrees with that and the opioid itself is not treating the loneliness per say. The mixtures of all illicit drugs i.e. cocaine, heroin, and other synthetics is a problem. They are looking to slow down the high of the drugs. We need to look at cause versus symptoms. We, as a taskforce and community need to be open minded as far as helping folks get the treatment that they need. Dr. Aaron Zeller- I look forward to improving resources in the community so we don't have the problems that we have today. Mr. Mike Carroll-we also have to look at the prescription overdoses, both intentional and accidental. Education will be key for these folks, especially in the accidental drug overdoses. Dr. Aaron Zeller-if an application comes in for educational purposes i.e. lunch and learns, speakers, or continuing education to doctor's offices come in, we, as a taskforce need to look at approving those.

Mr. Zac Smith- In the event that a Taskforce member is part of an organization that is requesting SCORF Funds, the Taskforce member will need to abstain from voting on the application hearing. Dr. Aaron Zeller- we, as a taskforce will keep each other accountable for that.

Dr. Aaron Zeller-in summation, we have discussed the application process, funding, and the Opioid Response Coordinator's position regarding how many first responders have been trained in overdose awareness.

Mr. Zac Smith- the initial ROLL and Narcan training does not stop here. There will always be a continuance in training. A majority of fire departments and rescue squads will be making ROLL class a mandatory training for new members. Mr. Scott Krein-Part of the funding and the Coordinator's position is to train community members, first responders, and county employees in CPR Training. Mr. Zac Smith- in the new American Heart Association's CPR Class, there is a portion in that class that has opioid training integrated in it.

Mr. Zac Smith- The Airport, Motor Pool, and PRT have received the training.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- It seems as if the Opioid Response Coordinator's position is to partially reduce overdose patient stigma and to give education to first responders. Mr. Zac Smith- In the past, we have been in a reactive state of overdoses. Now, we are working on being proactive in our response to overdoses. The training, funding, and awareness is a part of that.

Mr. Scott Krein to Mr. Zac Smith- Will you send out the Taskforce member's contact information to the other members of the board, and the SCORF Board website. Mr. Zac Smith- I will send it once I get back in the office. Next SCORF meeting will be held in Columbia, SC on Friday, December 15th 2023. You can find all of the requirements for Opioid Recovery on the website.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- Do we need to have any other roles for the board such as secretary and treasurer? Mr. Zac Smith- A chair and vice chair is all that is needed. Minutes will be typed by the Staff Liaison.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- Who will be tracking the funding, remaining balances, and money allocations. Ms. Brittney Martin- I will be handling the funding side of the Board. I will be sharing the approved and

denied abatement strategies for the initial application. There are also some things that were not approved such as the DARE program that will be shared.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- The items that were denied and approved, did that come from the SCORF/State level. Mr. Zac Smith- The SCORF board made those approvals and denials.

Mr. Mike Carroll- If you go to the SCORF website, you can find applications and approvals of other counties projects. This may help with the application process of what we can and can't do.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- Any other questions or comments?

Mr. Mike Carroll- We can send the Oconee County Community Resource guide to the members of the taskforce that everyone can view for certain types of assistance. Mr. Jon Holland- Can you search for certain resources? Mr. Zac Smith- Yes, it can be to where you can search for different types of help. It is easier to update and maintain.

Dr. Aaron Zeller- I am glad to see the funding for Oconee County being put to good use. I think that the organization of the committee is a good thing. Ms. Brittney Martin- the Opioid Response Taskforce is an approved abatement strategy.

5. **Adjournment:** Motion made by Dr. Aaron Zeller with a second from Mr. Jon Holland. Vote of 6 to adjourn, 0 to oppose.

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