



HLM Recovery R.O.S.C. Council Meeting Minutes

Date: April 22, 2025

Time: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Hybrid Meeting – Coal City Public Library

Attendees:

Neesha Stringfellow, Tarcia Leak, Cristina Ramirez, Dr. Kathleen Burke, Dr. Bipin Sharma, Justin (Existential Counselor Society - ECS), Allison Thomas, Ben Rudolf, Michelle Prium, Cherryl Habeeb, Jan Dombrowski, Joy Fink, Ginni Demko, Paula Ekstrom, Dr. Alice Maria Crawford, Pastor Harriet, Angela Solis, Connie Dewall, Heather Drew, Jimmi O'Connor (Family Guidance Center), Samantha Rosenthal, Angelia Robinson, Blake Worman, Cristina Banda, Elena Rivera, Dan Vlasaty, Haseena Jackson, Natasha, Debbie Boedeker, Danny Sourbis, Renita, Officer Brennan (Coal City Police Department), Wesley Stringfellow, Coal City Library Attendants.

Opening Remarks:

Dr. Alice Maria Crawford, Founder of HeartLife Ministries, warmly welcomed all attendees. She expressed deep gratitude for the positive changes taking root within the community and emphasized the essential role of unity, partnership, and compassion in strengthening local support systems. Dr. Crawford led an opening prayer that set an inspiring tone of hope, purpose, and collective dedication to the meeting.

Special Opening Announcement:

At the beginning of the meeting, Neesha Stringfellow announced that HeartLife Ministries' Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) Council is actively working to expand its borders to reach more rural communities. She emphasized the council's commitment to hosting additional meetings in rural areas, inviting more municipalities, and involving healthcare professionals to raise awareness and foster greater collaboration in building recovery-oriented communities.

Neesha encouraged all present to advocate for increased outreach and engagement, aligning with the ROSC mission of creating recovery-ready communities throughout Will and Grundy Counties.

Refreshments:

Special thanks were extended to Dr. Bipin Sharma of the Existential Counselor Society (ECS) for generously providing refreshments. Additional gratitude was given to Cristina Ramirez for her ongoing support and contributions to the day's success.

Presentation by Dr. Bipin Sharma:

Dr. Sharma provided an enlightening update on ECS's efforts, particularly the development of a new men's recovery facility in Grundy County.

Key points included:

- The challenges ECS has faced in obtaining county approval for the new facility.
- Expressions of appreciation to those organizations and community members who submitted advocacy letters supporting the project.
- A call to action to continue rallying community support for expanded recovery resources.
- The importance of offering additional recovery housing and services to meet rising community needs.

Guest Speaker Presentation: Dr. Kathleen Burke:

Representing the Will County Substance Prevention and Behavioral Health Department, Dr. Burke shared timely updates:

- Progress on county-wide opioid response efforts.
- A celebration of the successful distribution of Narcan (naloxone) via the red box program strategically placed throughout the county.
- Positive data showing a reduction in opioid-related death rates in several critical regions.
- An outline of the department's continued community outreach efforts to educate the public and provide lifesaving resources at local events and fairs.

Community Sharing Session:

Led by Neesha Stringfellow, this open forum allowed participants to:

- Share recent achievements and recovery initiatives.
- Discuss challenges and brainstorm collaborative solutions.
- Express appreciation for the growing partnerships and mutual support systems strengthened through the Will and Grundy ROSC network.
- Highlight ongoing needs and resource gaps that must be addressed as outreach expands into more rural areas.

Coal City Police Department Update:

Officer Brennan provided an update on the Coal City Police Department's efforts:

- Continuing to prioritize recovery connections over punitive approaches.
- Strengthening referral partnerships with recovery support services and treatment centers.
- Supporting family outreach and education initiatives to prevent recidivism and promote healthier community outcomes.

Community Resource Request:

Representatives from the Coal City Public Library formally requested:

- Additional educational materials, recovery resources, and program support from the ROSC Council to enhance the library's public service efforts.
- Opportunities for library-hosted community education events to raise local awareness about recovery options and mental health supports.

Adjournment:

The meeting closed on a note of deep unity, purpose, and gratitude. Participants left energized and committed to expanding recovery services and awareness efforts across Will and Grundy Counties, particularly through greater rural outreach and strategic collaboration with municipalities and healthcare providers.

The council remains dedicated to building a stronger, more recovery-ready community network as it continues to grow.