

EDGAR COUNTY ROSC MEETING MINUTES

July 22nd, 2025

5:15 PM

Paris Hospital Conference Room D and on Zoom

Attendees: Nicki Hanks, Jessica Parrill, Rick Cook, Debbie Cook, Doug Cochran, Vicki Dick, Sue Sheeran, Nate Alexander, Bethany Wagoner, Kyra Graham, Michelle Hibbard, Cindy Spencer, Dennis Eveland, Lisa Foster, Scott Foster, Michelle Creech, Cory Hanks, Lori Carroll, Jenna Hays, Camille Gordon, Carrie McKenzie, James Sanders, Michelle Hibbert, Kristen Davis, Heather Myers

Spotlight Agency/Program Supportive Services for Veteran Families (Heather Myers)

Heather Meyers, the SSVF Outreach Coordinator for The Salvation Army North and Central Illinois Division, provided an informative presentation on the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. The session began with an overview of the program's purpose—to offer financial and supportive services to low-income Veterans and their families who are currently homeless or at risk of homelessness. Heather explained that the SSVF program is a crisis response initiative by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs with the goal of promoting equitable housing stability.

She detailed the eligibility criteria, noting that Veterans must meet income thresholds and have served in the military, excluding those dishonorably discharged or discharged due to a general court-martial. A wide range of services were discussed, including case management, housing stability planning, assistance with obtaining VA and public benefits, legal services, healthcare navigation, and temporary financial aid for housing-related needs. Heather emphasized that services are tailored to the needs of each participant and designed to be both supportive and temporary, focusing on rapid rehousing and long-term housing stability.

The presentation included a breakdown of the five-step SSVF process: outreach and referral, eligibility screening, enrollment and housing plan development, ongoing case management, and eventual program exit upon securing stable housing. Heather also shared impactful comments from Veterans who described the program as empowering, respectful, life-changing, and community-based. She concluded the presentation by encouraging attendees to share program resources with Veterans in need and provided contact information for further outreach and support.

Council Member of the month

Sue Sheeran selected as **Council Member of the Month** in recognition of her outstanding dedication to the individuals in our community. Sue consistently goes above and beyond in her service. Her compassion, humility, and unwavering commitment make her a truly remarkable asset to the council. She never seeks the spotlight—everything she does is from the heart and grounded in a deep care for the well-being of others. Sue walks alongside some of our most vulnerable community members, offering not only support but also a sense of purpose, dignity, and hope. She makes people feel seen, heard, and valued—an immeasurable but powerful impact that is deeply felt by those whose lives she touches. She is a quiet force of good in our community, and her actions speak louder than words. For all these reasons and more, the council is proud to honor **Sue Sheeran** as this month's **Council Member of the Month**.

New Subcommittees

Nicki thanked everyone for their prompt responses to the survey sent out regarding the new FY26 subcommittees. Based on the results submitted, the **Second Chance Employment Subcommittee** will meet on the **second Monday of each month from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.**, and the **Resource Awareness and Media Subcommittee** will meet on the **third Wednesday of each month from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.** Both meetings will initially be held via Zoom. After the first meeting, each subcommittee will have the opportunity to decide whether to continue meeting virtually or transition to in-person or hybrid sessions.

Upcoming Community Events

During the meeting, two upcoming community outreach events were announced and discussed. The first is the **2nd Annual Candle Light Vigil** taking place on **Saturday, August 31st, 2025**, from **7:00 to 8:00 PM** at **New Beginnings Church**, located at **526 Clay Street in Paris, Illinois**. This vigil aims to honor and remember loved ones who have lost their lives to overdose. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs for comfort. The event will include speakers and community resource tables to support individuals and families impacted by substance use. This is an important opportunity for collective remembrance and awareness during Overdose Awareness Month.

The second event is the **Recovery Window Painting Project**, hosted by the **Edgar County ROSC** during the month of **September**. Local organizations throughout Edgar County are invited to participate by having their windows painted with **positive recovery affirmations**. The initiative begins on **September 1st**, with all window paintings scheduled to be removed at the **beginning of October**. This creative outreach project is designed to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and celebrate recovery in a visible and uplifting way across the community. Organizations interested in participating were asked to contact **Nicki at 217-264-6465** for more information or to get involved.

Grant Goals FY26

During the meeting, the group reviewed the objectives of the current three-year grant, with a focus on advancing second chance employment opportunities for individuals in recovery. The conversation emphasized the importance of breaking down employment barriers and supporting

long-term recovery through meaningful work. Key initiatives discussed include building partnerships with local businesses willing to hire individuals with lived experience, hosting training sessions focused on job readiness skills, and increasing media outreach to highlight success stories and reduce stigma. A primary goal is to see at least 10 individuals in recovery successfully employed by the end of the calendar year. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to promote recovery-friendly workplaces and sustainable community reintegration.

Agency Updates

ECPHD

The Edgar County Public Health Department is hosting a "walk-in clinic" for students returning back to school (vaccinations, lead test, TB screens, etc.) on Tuesday, July 29th from 10am - 1pm.

Neighborhood Watch

It was reported that there has been an increase in incidents involving packages being stolen from residents' porches. Community members are urged to take extra precautions and make arrangements if they are expecting deliveries while their homes are unoccupied. This may include coordinating with a neighbor, using secure drop boxes, or scheduling deliveries for times when someone will be home. **A community meeting be held in Chrisman on July 23, 2025.** All residents are encouraged to attend and participate in the conversation.

HRC

It was announced that **HRC and ROSC** are partnering to introduce a **Recovery Walk** the morning of this year's **Recovery Picnic**. This new addition aims to further promote awareness and unity within the recovery community.

CARE Coalition

No update

Soup Kitchen (Vicki Dick/ Sue Sheeran)

Vicky took a moment during the meeting to express her heartfelt gratitude to everyone who stepped in to help at the Soup Kitchen during her medical leave. She shared her deep appreciation for the support, dedication, and teamwork shown by volunteers and staff, noting that their efforts ensured the continued operation of this vital community service. Vicky's message served as a reminder of the strength and compassion within the group, and she thanked everyone for their kindness and commitment during her time away.

Trafficking Training/ Handle with Care (Doug)

No update

RU Recovery (Rick Cook)

Rick informed the council that a local long-term care facility is currently undergoing renovations and has generously offered to donate all of its old furniture to him. The council discussed the critical importance of having access to furnishings for individuals transitioning into new housing, particularly those in recovery who may be starting over with limited resources. Michelle proposed the idea of utilizing storage units to hold the donated furniture until it is needed, which was met with agreement. The group expressed appreciation for the strong spirit of collaboration among council members. A participant attending in the conference room also acknowledged the continued support and generosity of the local community, recognizing how vital these contributions are to the success of recovery efforts.

Celebrate Recovery (Cory Hanks)

No update

Homelessness Initiative (Nate Alexander)

It was announced that Doorway to Hope has officially obtained its 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, marking a significant milestone in their mission to support individuals in need. The organization is currently in discussions with Lake Ridge Church to explore a potential partnership involving a building space. The goal of this collaboration is to establish a community center that would serve local residents by offering resources and support services. Long-term, Doorway to Hope aspires to expand this initiative into a full shelter.

Community Updates

Rides Mass Transit announced the launch of a new **Tiger Fixed Route** service, which will begin on **August 4th** and operate **Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM**. The route will include multiple drop-off locations throughout Paris, including the Dollar Store, North American Lighting, Horizon Health Clinic, Walmart, Paris Community Hospital, Highland Court, Crawford and Crawford, the Edgar County Health Department, CVS, Tiger Apartments, the Paris Post Office, Union-Paris Square, Sutton Senior Center, and areas between Jefferson and Court Street. The fare for the fixed-route service will be **\$1.00 per ride**, making it an affordable and accessible transportation option for residents. This service is expected to greatly enhance mobility and access to essential services across the community.

Next Meeting: August 26th, 2025, at Paris Hospital Conference Room A and on Zoom.