

## Effingham County ROSC Council Meeting Minutes

---

**Date:** Monday, September 15th, 2025

**Time:** 1:00-2:00 pm

**Location:** 104 Blohm Ave, Effingham & Zoom

**Meeting Facilitator:** Samantha Hicks

**Attendees:**

**In person:**

Jenn Galvan (Family Resource Center of Effingham Co)

Lauren Raymond (Effingham County Connections)

Lora B. (PLE)

Madison LeMay (Effingham Co Probation Program Manager)

Norbert Soltwedel (Effingham County Board member)

Paul Kuhns (Effingham County Sheriff)

Samantha Hicks (Effingham County ROSC Coordinator)

**Zoom:**

Bobbye Scott (Clark Co ROSC Coordinator)

Deb Beckman (Region 4 Statewide ROSC TA)

Heather Greenwood (Southeast Illinois Area Health Education Center)

Heather Meyers (Salvation Army Outreach Coordinator)

Kelly Buscher & Maria Deaconesa (Case Managers of Effingham County)

Kristin Davis (Family Guidance Center- Prevention Integration Coordinator)

Lyndsey Reedy (Douglas Co ROSC Coordinator)

Matt Doss (TASC Center for Health and Justice Program Manager)

Nathan Nichols (CEFS Public Transit)

Samantha Weidner (Effingham/Clay County Health Department)

Tommy Alsobrooks (Oxford House Outreach worker)

Walt (community member)

---

## Minutes

**Introductions**

Council meeting attendees introduced themselves and the agencies they represent or explained why they were attending.

**Samantha** then provided an overview of ROSC for new attendees at the meeting.

### **Community Survey FY26**

**Samantha** stated the yearly ROSC Council survey has been launched & will be open until November 24<sup>th</sup>. She stated the goal is to reach 1,000 responses. She stated when she looked this morning, we are currently at 186 responses which have been gathered in 2 weeks! She stated the first 13 questions were created by the Council to gather data based upon our top 3 priority projects. The last 10 questions along with the demographic info are state questions that were on the survey last year and cannot be altered for tracking data purposes.

**Samantha** asked for suggestions on how the members of the Council can help distribute the survey to help reach our goal.

**Sheriff** stated he thinks the agencies should put it on their Facebook page (Sheriff's office has done this already).

**Heather** asked if we can drop them off at schools. She also asked if the survey could go home in backpacks of students as she knows parents check the backpacks every day. Samantha stated she has emailed the superintendent of Unit 40 schools to ask if he'd be willing to pass along the survey to employees of Unit 40 but has not received a response. She will revisit this. Samantha stated she dropped off paper surveys at Tri-Star Academy and Aspire High School for the students to fill out. She will pick them up at a later date.

**Lora** asked if Altamont schools would be willing to fill it out. Samantha stated she'd have to contact the superintendent of those school districts as well.

The conversation of getting kids to fill out a survey related to addiction can be a sensitive topic in relation to school districts. The topic of prevention came up as well.

**Norbert** asked if Samantha preferred electronic responses rather than paper copies. She stated she will take whatever response people are willing to give. Samantha stated she enters in the responses of the paper copies.

**Jenn** said she'd be at Freedom Fest this weekend at Enduring Freedom Ministries and FISH parking lot give away. She will take the flyer for people to scan and take the survey.

**Norbert** stated he would be willing to take the flyer and paper copies to the Noon and Sunrise rotary clubs. Samantha will print paper copies for Norbert.

### **Committee discussion**

**Samantha** went over the days & times the new committees will be taking place starting the month of October:

Roads to Recovery committee: **1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month at 12pm**

Pathways to Peer Support committee: **1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month at 10am**

Healing Families: **2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 4pm**

She went over the purpose of these committees and stated they will be taking place at this location (104 E. Blohm Ave, Effingham) & on Zoom. She stated the largest responses of people interested in a committee is the Healing Families committee. She stated she has emailed the people who were interested in any one of the committees on details and of the committee they were willing to be a part of. She stated there will be an agenda for each meeting just like the Council meeting that will be emailed out prior to the meeting.

The topic of volunteer transportation was discussed (Roads to Recovery committee). The Council discussed the topic of volunteers transporting and then possibly a faith-based organization to help take on this gap. Samantha stated that Carrie M. had mentioned a church up north that employs a person to take people to treatment in various counties. They allot 15 transports per month.

**Samantha W.** emphasized that if we do this based on volunteers, there needs to be consent forms for the expectations of the relationship between the person transporting and the person being transported.

**Sheriff** asked a question about rules of transporting. Samantha stated if the committee goes the volunteer route, that would be up to committee/council to research already established volunteer transport organizations and come up with rules/regulations that would fit our area. The committee would research liabilities, what transporters need to know, etc. Samantha stated if an agency or organization would want to be the primary transport, the rules would depend on the agencies policies and procedures and what they would want to do. The committee/council would be here for support in whatever information they'd need to fill the gap.

**Norbert** asked what this type of transport is utilized for. Samantha stated the largest need ROSC has encountered is transporting people to 24-hour treatment facilities outside the area.

**Sheriff** stated that when someone goes through the jail's MAR program, they have to get to doctor's appointments after they are released from jail. He stated a lot of participants don't have licenses.

**Jenn** stated she has a client that wants to go to recovery meetings in the area but can't drive and is also pregnant so walking everywhere is difficult for her.

**Samantha** said we all talk about transportation being a barrier in rural communities so the Roads to Recovery committee is a starting point to hopefully help fill the gap of transportation needs. She stated whatever organization or business is willing to contribute and be a strong part of this solution will benefit from it, just like any other organization having transportation needs.

**Samantha** stated the PLE committee has been established for the past 2 years. She stated this committee is a big part of executing large ROSC events. The event the committee is putting on is S'MORE Recovery on Sept 27<sup>th</sup> at Edgewood Legion Lake at 5pm. She stated the committee has a Facebook group chat we communicate needs and coordination of events.

#### **Partners for Progress deflection initiative discussion**

**Samantha** gave a snapshot of what the initiative has been working towards the past year during leadership meetings that happen every other week on Zoom. She stated this program is largely meant to support First Responders, such as law enforcement and EMS. She stated it is a type of pre-arrest program for individual first responders come encounter with either on a regular basis or for the first time. The goal is to reduce the number of individuals who enter into the judicial system from arrests. She stated it's up to the discretion of the first responder when they

encounter an individual to refer them to a Deflection Specialist. The specialist *relentlessly* tries to engage with the individual referred by the first responder to help them get into services they may need. The initiative will be launched in Feb 2026. The counties to be covered by 3-4 specialists are Clay, Crawford, Effingham, Jasper, Lawrence, Marion, Richland, & Wabash. She stated **Matt** is on this meeting who is the facilitator of this initiative. She stated **Heather** is also on this call who has played a large part in getting the word out and forming our community standards.

**Heather** stated she is in Clay County and is very passionate about this initiative being a police officer's wife. She stated that we need to get the word out and help ourselves by helping others get help. She stated we need to utilize this resource that is going to be given to us, especially first responders. She emphasized that if you know or have connections for first responders, please let them know about this and connect them with Matt, herself, Samantha W., or Samantha H. to be on the leadership meetings to learn more and implement it into their agency.

### **Other discussions**

**Sheriff** shared a story that was shocking to him but also makes him realize that he has more to learn about this field and how his department can help people struggling with addiction.

**Norbert** suggested PLEs sharing their stories regularly & asked why it doesn't happen often.

Members of the Council stated various reasons as to why a PLE wouldn't want to share their stories in public—stigma of the society, fears of being vulnerable, fears of still carrying the label of being an “addict” or “alcoholic,” leaving their past in the past after creating a new life.

**Samantha** stated at almost every large ROSC event, they have a PLE share their story. She stated the Celebrate Recovery has a testimonial every month, and 12 step meetings have speaker meetings where PLEs share their stories as long as the meeting is an “open meeting” where non-members of the 12-step program can attend as observers only. They are happening, just not in the eye of the public where they may face judgement and discrimination. **Norbert** stated he thinks it's important for people to share their stories to show others there is hope and that they can live a healthy, full life.

**Lauren** stated that from her experience working with clients with addiction, a lot of times, their program is the first time they're getting a positive experience—of people telling them they can make it through whatever they're going through. She stated she has a family she's been with for 5 years and they are just now starting to believe in themselves. It takes a long time for people with immense trauma to believe in themselves.

**Madison** stated that addiction is a complex brain disorder & the general public needs to be educated on that—that addiction isn't a matter of will power, but actually has to do with rewiring the brain.

**Sheriff** agreed as he stated that his HMA for MAR went over all of that when they were starting the MAR process in the jail. He said he had no idea about the complexities of addiction and what it does to the brain.

**Samantha** pulled up the survey stats from last year and read the 2 questions:

“People with a mental health disorder deserve respect,” “People who use drugs deserve respect.” She stated that the data showed a significantly larger percentage agreed that people with a mental health illness deserve respect as opposed to people who use drugs. She stated

this shows that people don't correlate drug use with being a mental illness, even though it is as classified in the DSM-5 by the American Psychiatric Association. She stated these 2 questions are on this year's survey as well so we'll be able to compare the results. It shows more education is needed about the affects of alcohol and drugs have on the brain & the results of such prolonged use.

---

### **Upcoming events**

#### ▪ ***September is RECOVERY MONTH!***

- Bakery & Coffee shop purple drinks & treats
  - Joe Sippers, Fox Holler, Daylight Donuts, Human Bean, Dunkin Donuts, Panera Bread, Starbucks, Kirby Foods
- S'MORE Recovery- Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup> @ 5:00pm @ Edgewood American Legion Lake, Edgewood

#### **Contact emails:**

**Effingham County ROSC Coordinator**

***Samantha Hicks—samanthah@hourhouserecovery.org***

**Effingham County ROSC Recovery Navigator, CPRS**

***Felicia Depoister—feliciad@hourhouserecovery.org***

**ROSC Program Supervisor**

***Jenna Hays- jennah@hourhouserecovery.org***

Where to find past meeting minutes: <https://www.govst.edu/Recovery-Support/South-Central-IL-ROSC/EFCRC-ROSC-Council/>



**Effingham County ROSC Facebook page**



**\*\*NEXT EFFINGHAM ROSC COUNCIL MEETING\*\***

**Date: Monday, October 20th, 2025**

**Time: 1:00-2:00pm**

**Where: 104 E. Blohm Ave, Effingham & Zoom**