

## Effingham County ROSC Council Meeting Minutes

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**Date:** Monday, November 17th, 2025

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

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

**Meeting Facilitator:** Samantha Hicks

**Attendees:**

**In person:**

Beth Wise (ECHD, Family Connections & Family Resource Center Supervisor)

Felicia Depoister (Effingham County ROSC Recovery Navigator, CPRS)

Jenn Galvan (Family Resource Advocate, Family Resource Center)

Justin Carder (IDHS Office Administrator)

Katlyn Johnson (Effingham County Probation case manager)

Madison LeMay (Effingham County Probation Program Manager)

Olivia Jenkins (Hour House Prevention program facilitator)

Paul Kuhns (Effingham County Sheriff)

Samantha Hicks (Effingham County ROSC Coordinator)

Tim Ellis (Effingham County Board member)

Tom Webb (Chief Deputy, City of Effingham)

Tommy Alsobrooks (Oxford House Outreach worker)

**Zoom:**

Deb Beckman (Statewide ROSC Leadership Team)

Heather Greenwood (Southeast Illinois Area Health Education Center)

Justin Carder (IDHS Office Administrator)

Kasey Kemme (U of I Extension Office Director)

Kat O'Brien (Gateway Foundation Warm Hand-off Program @ HSHS St. Anthony's)

Keith Powell (Safe Families for Children)

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

Kristin Davis (Family Guidance Center's Regional Substance Use Prevention Integration Center)

Maggie Gouchenouer (Analyst, Southeastern Illinois Drug Task Force, IL State Police)

Meghan Rewers (Director of Crisis Nursey of Effingham County)

## Minutes

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**Introductions**

Council meeting attendees introduced themselves and the agencies they represent or explained why they were attending. Attendees also provided updates regarding their agencies if applicable. **Samantha** gave an overview of the ROSC concept in Effingham County & what the Council is trying to achieve.

**Felicia** announced she will be leaving ROSC to pursue her and her husband's business dreams. Her last day will be December 1<sup>st</sup>. **Samantha** stated Hour House is currently conducting

interviews for a new Recovery Navigator for Effingham County. The job position is posted on indeed.

### **Community Survey**

**Samantha** says the community survey is up to 314 responses—up 42 responses from last month. The goal is 1,000 by November 24<sup>th</sup>. That is when the “cut-off” date will be to compile the raw survey data to send to IDHS. Samantha stated the survey will still be open afterwards to anyone who is willing to take it to collect more data for our county for other entities who may need it as well. She stated male responses are up a significant amount from last year. She stated the age demographics are pretty even at about 10-20% each.

### **Committees Update**

**Samantha** explains the three ROSC committees started earlier this month. There are two in the first week of the month and one in the second week. There is the Roads to Recovery committee which focuses on volunteer transportation to treatment and other recovery-related supports. Pathways to Peer Support focuses on getting more peer-to-peer support positions in Effingham County. The Healing Families committee focuses on providing support to family members of individuals that use substances.

#### **Roads to Recovery Committee**

**Kat** provided the updates for the Roads to Recovery Committee. She stated the committee is focusing on churches to provide this service. She stated committee members had a hard time getting in contact with the people we needed to talk to just by making phone calls. It was decided by the group to call each assigned church and set up a meeting with the leadership team of the churches and go as a group to present the concept instead of just 1 or 2 people from the committee. She stated the members are asking for the meetings to be set after the holidays—Jan/Feb.

**Tom** stated the volunteer list would be a great resource for Effingham’s Safe Passage program rather than trying to maintain their own list. **Samantha** stated the committee would for sure provide this list to the city police. She stated that the current Strategic Plan includes Safe Passage in their main goal for this committee initiative.

#### **Pathways to Peer Support Committee**

**Samantha** provided the update for this committee. She stated no one could attend this meeting last month but members provided the information they had volunteered to research via email prior to the committee meeting. Lora (PLE) called treatment centers and asked if they employ CPRs. Hour House: yes, Comprehensive Connections in Mt. Vernon: yes, Heritage Behavioral Health: yes, Evolve Counseling in Effingham, yes. Lora stated she left voicemails for the others. Maggie found 2 institutions which offer online CPRs classes—Governors State University & Northern Illinois University. **Samantha** stated she has had a handful of conversations with SIU School of Medicine which offers the educational portion for the certification online & also pays for students to attend via grant monies currently. She stated this committee goal is going to take a long time because it involves shifting the perspective of agencies and providers to see the importance having peer to peer support in their agencies as employees.

**Heather** stated she would like more information on this as she is out talking to high schoolers all over Southern Illinois all the time. She thinks letting students know these types of programs exist is important.

#### Healing Families Committee

**Samantha** provided the update for this committee. She stated herself and Becky from the Family Life Center attended. Some members who could not attend provided information to Samantha via email prior to the meeting. Connie (PLE) stated she found an evidence-based program called CRAFT>> [CRAFT Connect - Family Support](#). She stated it costs over \$1,000 to become a facilitator for one of their family programs but thinks this community needs face to face family support for those affected by substance use disorder.

**Becky** shared what she had learned from a retired superintendent, principal, and teacher from the area. She stated the biggest need expressed by these individuals was how to address bullying in schools & trauma-informed counseling in the schools. She stated they expressed the need for teachers to be frequently trained on how to address the bullying with the child who is bullying and how to address the child being bullied.

**Samantha** stated the Council has a goal on the current Strategic Plan about prevention in the schools, but with the red tape involved, it has come to a standstill. She welcomed suggestions from the Council.

**Heather** shared her experience with working with the school resource officers in Flora, IL (Clay County) to address these types of issues. She stated an SRO from the Flora police department, a counselor from the hospital, and herself presented a series type deal to junior high students about self-esteem, bullying, etc. She stated most of the kids who attended were a part of the after-school program, Beyond the Bell, on a volunteer basis. She stated it was well received and the students opened up to the presenters about struggles they have which oftentimes included family struggles with substance use in the home.

**Council members** discussed how bullying ties in with ROSC and substance use. Members stated oftentimes children who are being bullied don't have their basic needs being met at home such as clean clothes, having lunch, hygiene, etc. which leads to increased likelihood of being bullied and an increased likelihood to self-medicate. Members also stated that maybe peer groups who are using substances are the only groups that will "accept" the child being bullied. **Beth** stated she often sees this with families her staff works with at Effingham County Connection and the Family Resource Center.

**Olivia** stated Hour House Prevention has been in the Unit 40 Junior High for a while, and they facilitate a program called Too Good for Drugs which is 5 lessons. The lessons don't cover bullying specifically but include topics such as goal-setting and decision making, communication, managing emotions, and peer pressure which touches the topic of drugs.

**Kristin** stated the city website states the SROs have a bullying presentation.

**Tom** stated the presentation is either 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade or 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade, so the students get it twice.

**Heather** stated that when they talked to the kids, it was very intimate and allowed the kids to open up more versus an assembly style presentation.

**Jenn** stated she's worked with families who pull their children out of school and home-school them so they're not getting any education as well. She stated she is seeing this more frequently.

### **Strategic Plan discussion**

**Samantha** stated there are copies of the Council's Strategic Plan on the table & shared on Zoom. Samantha went over each goal in the strategic plan and asked for input and feedback. She stated she will be updating this by the end of the year to reflect progress made towards these goals and changes that need made based on current needs.

**Council members** discussed the goal about outreach to the small villages around Effingham city. Beecher City came up in discussion and some member stated it has been really hard for them to get their programs into Beecher City for families. **Sheriff** stated they have a really good school system which is information from the county SROs. He stated that if we want to get into the school system there, that is the route to go but is somewhat guarded because it's taken 10+ years to build that relationship with the school. The Council understands this statement. **Beth** stated when she tried to write for a grant years ago, Beecher City didn't meet the criteria for a low-income district which was really surprising. Someone stated they are pretty sure some of Lake Sara is included in the district which would make sense for Beth's statement.

**Samantha** asked for suggestions to get into other villages. **Madison** stated the fire department in Montrose is heavily involved in the community. It is a volunteer fire department run by Chris "Chopper" Overbeck. **Tim** stated that is Jeremy Deter's district on the county board.

**Council members** discussed the goal about increasing the awareness and information on health promotion and harm reduction. **Samantha** stated there will be an event about MAR (medication assisted recovery) services in Effingham County, what it is, how it works, the science behind addiction and the brain, etc. The event will be in partnership with the HMA which is the program that helps the Sheriff facilitate the MAR program in the jail currently. She stated she thinks the event will be January or February 2026. She is in the process of contacting MAR providers in this area to possibly sit on a panel. There are 4 MAR providers in the area currently—Effingham County jail, Gentle Care Consultants, Family Care Associates, and HSHS Medical Group.

**Tim** stated there are and will continue to be opioid settlement funds for agencies who propose for one or more of the core strategies. He offered the support for this event.

### **Community events**

**Samantha** stated the ROSC PLE committee created a light display for the EARS Tinsel & Tails event at Cardinal Golf Course which happens every Friday & Saturday night from Nov 28-Dec 27. It costs \$5 a ticket and you ride around the path on a golf cart to see other organizations and businesses light displays. She stated she will be volunteering with FISH to help make contacts as well. She stated free laundry days have sponsors through June 2026.

### **Open Discussion**

**Samantha** opened the floor for open discussion.

**Sheriff** asked **Tommy** if Oxford House is considered recovery housing—what's the difference between (for example) Hour House recovery homes and Oxford House.

**Tommy** stated the main difference is that Oxford House is democratically run and is self-supporting by the member who live in the house. There aren't paid staff that are on premises at all times. The levels of recovery housing were briefly discussed. **Tommy** disclosed that a women's and children home will most likely be under contract by the next Council meeting. The goal is to have 3 houses in Effingham to create a charter. The women's and children's home will have 1-2 spots for women with children and then the rest of the spots will just be women.

**Sheriff** stated that if they know anyone who wants MAR services who reside in Effingham County, to connect them with him and he will get them set up.

**Tim** stated the Effingham County board has about \$80-90k currently in opioid settlement funds. He stated the county board welcomes any proposals for new or existing programs that will use the funds to try and help fill gaps in this area. The proposal has to meet the criteria for 1 or more core strategies. **Samantha** offered support in writing a proposal if any agency is thinking about doing so.

**Samantha** stated the December Council meeting will be a holiday celebration and to bring food or snacks if you wish. She asked for suggestions for some creative games to play to be emailed to her if anyone can think of anything!

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

**Date:** Monday, December 15th, 2025 @ 1:00-2:00PM

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

**Contact emails:**

**ROSC Coordinator:** Samantha Hicks; samanthah@hourhouserecovery.org

**ROSC Recovery Navigator:** 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**



