ROSC Meeting Minutes –Lee / Whiteside
Date: October 15th, 2026
Time: 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Attendees:

- Gerald Lott – Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery (SVVOR)
- Lauren Metzler- Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery
- Jordan Keene- Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery
- Cameo Dixon- Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery
- Alex Disz - Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery
- Jake Albers - Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery
- Jaeson Johns - Illinois State Police
- Pat Bartel- Chief of Police Sterling Police Department
- Michelle Sanders- Regional Office of Education
- Ben Rudolph- Technical Assistant, Chestnut

Opening, Introductions, and Discussion:
Gerald called the introduction of the meeting to order
Michelle- reintroduction of Recovery High School, potential for congressman Sorenson to come and visit as well as temporary location starting the school in August, funding is hoping to be attained by the end of the year to renovate the permanent building location, Lee County Opioid Settlement Committee is willing to support the Recovery High School in terms of staffing and others once ROE has a number in a proposal that has been sent for a "formal yes"

Gerald- Michelle and other community members including the Dixon mayor and United Way attended a happy hour in which these peoples talked about attaining funding for different upcoming initiatives including the Recovery High School, we are ready to start a publicity campaign for the Recovery High School
There is a Community Forum November 5th at Abiding Word Church in Sterling, Dip may be catering this event, this event is offering CEUs
Michelle- noted that there is a significant need in the community for a specialized school, inviting everyone to start a conversation about the Recovery High School at the event on November 5th, reach out if you have questions
Jordan- putting Recovery High School in the program spotlight offered by the Whiteside County Healthier Partnership of Community Nonprofits
Jordan and Lupita went out to the vape shops last month, still waiting on the official report, in one of the shops one of the gentleman working was actively rolling up weed, some were vaping or smoking inside the shops, none were seen with 7OH, but many had Kratom and their related products, they also have items that are meant to help users pass a drug test, checking advertising

to see if these are being marketed towards children, Luptia's report should be coming out soon, Jordan reported being worried about how normalized mushroom gummies and THC drinks that are readily available and accessible, a shop owner stated that there is something stronger and better coming since they are unable to sell 7 OH products, THC/marijuana products are openly available

Ben mentioned that he has been in shops where owners are without knowledge, are not actively asking for an ID to purchase products, and shared his worries about possible overdose potential and treatment for products that are without regulation or legislation, possible banning has been talked about, but educating and conversation involving the awareness of the harmful marketing is helpful, noted that the older population over 30-40 years old are mostly unaware of what's going on in these types of shops, statewide conference in Effingham will have a doctor's presentation about substances, Ben wants to see if there are any solutions or ways that we can be retroactive in handling the problems associated with these "legal" substances

Jordan noted that shop owners are not knowledgeable on what the different forms of THC or other marijuana products are including how they are manufactured and where they are coming from, Jordan noted that she did not see whippets or nitrous

Gerald asked **Michelle** what we can do for ROE- keep sending newsletters and information

Jaeson noted that education and outreach is important for his department

Chief Bartel noted that we should keep doing what we're doing, he is continuing work on 7 OH legislation, he mentioned smack tabs that contain Kratom where some Ole Miss students had passed away from an overdose, we should be hearing back from Oxford Police Department regarding this incident, he also mentioned that there was a Wellness Coordinator who became addicted to a Kratom product called Feel Free and openly speaks about this, we should be hearing back from her

Gerald mentioned that he would like to have people come in to speak so he would like to be included in these conversations, a suggestion was made that we steer away from radio and retroactively use these funds for promotion through yard signs such as "we support recovery" or "recovery lives here" that would be distributed throughout the community

Jordan said she likes the idea of a yard sign and thinks this could be a memorable way to advertise

Bartel suggested that we utilize TikTok, Instagram, or Snapchat to market our message to the younger generation, he utilizes a company that manages these marketing advertisements for their department

Gerald emphasized that radio and newspapers seem to be losing their punch and is open to the idea of trying to better purpose other forms of social media marketing

Ben seconds the idea that a yard sign could be a stigma breaker and community builder, his neighborhood has "I love my neighborhood because…" signs

Lauren mentions that she is looking forward to a Kratom ban, but is worried about how we would handle clients withdrawing from these products

Gerald stated that he has been disappointed in the local hospitals due to a recent experience with a house member over alcohol, so has concerns about Kratom protocols, stated that we will just

have to keep fighting forward on how to treat this problem as this is not going to go away or change if we don't know what to do, so it will require all to up our game
Bartel seconds that there are disagreements between police and hospital too, suggested that we sit down with CGH or OSF and discuss the service that we are getting in relation to substance-related issues
Gerald stated that previously we have had good experiences with the hospital and that they even often refer clients to us, so he would like to speak with Bartel's contacts to potentially remedy some of these issues
Bartel suggested that contracted doctors may be part of the problem
Gerald admits that some doctors are not transient, but is willing to accept help from Bartel
Ben closed the meeting by encouraging everyone to continue with a positive attitude, hoping and praying that the temporary spot for the Recovery High School comes through, and that we get together with hospitals, mayors, and other community stakeholders to continue to overcome any issues as they arise with Kratom related bans

Meeting Minutes prepared by Cameo Dixon