Opioid Abatement Advisory Board Minutes

Wednesday, July 15, 2026
Remote via Zoom
10am – 11am

Present: Alex Lam, Marina Lent, Fred Hehre, Fernando Lana, Brice Boutot, Anna McCaffrey

Also Present: Sarah Toste, Jaden Thackston Boston University MPH practicum student, Stacy Wise (SUD Coordinator), Martina Thornton (County Manager), Ally Gittens Dias (Mosaic TTA), Kala Thapa BU MPH practicum student

The Board approved the minutes from April 15, May 20, June 3, and June 17 with minor edits.

Update on substance use and behavioral health Needs Assessment

Kalasiddhi (Kala) Thapa and Jaden Thackston presented results of the preliminary substance use and behavioral health needs assessment, detailing the survey results, stakeholder interviews, and focus groups. They identified barriers to care such as insurance and cost, lack of providers, and stigma.

The assessment began in March, focusing on information collection, partner mapping, and conducting outreach. Data collection periods ended on June 22, with 10 service provider responses, 14 civic and faith-based organization responses, and 132 community member responses. The assessment used a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative data from surveys with qualitative data from interviews and focus groups. Jaden Thackston notes limitations in survey participation and demographic diversity, as well as response drop-off in longer surveys.

The meeting also discussed the need for a public presentation following the completion of the substance use and behavioral health needs assessment final report which will be done by September. The final report will incorporate all phases of analysis (mixed-methods synthesis, methodology, epidemiologic profile, priority populations, identified gaps, and recommendations) based on surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

A midway point draft of the report will be presented to the advisory board, with the goal of completing the final report and presentation by September 1.

Request for Additional Time
KalaThapa requested an additional 50 hours per person, noting they still have 20 hours left from the original allocation. Brice Boutot confirms the request is for a total of 100 hours, with the possibility of including presentation preparation in the hours.

The Board unanimously approved by roll-call vote an extension request for up to an additional 100 hours of consultant time (50 hours each for Kala and Jaden Thackston) to finish the needs assessment, for the final report, and a public presentation, to be completed by September 1.

Discussion on Board Reconfiguration and Meeting Cadence
Fred Hehre asked whether the Board wanted to reconfigure itself due to Sarah's resignation and discuss the possibility of appointing formal positions. The board decided to keep the current structure for now but to consider future appointments with Sarah Toste confirming in the chat that she will continue to work with Kala and Jaden on completion of the Assessment. Marina Lent agreed with sharing the workload and offered to take on minute-taking responsibilities, and Fred agreed to work with the County to post meeting Agendas and Minutes. The board agreed to take a break during the summer and reconvene in the fall.

Final Remarks and Adjournment
Brice Boutot raises the issue of the payment formula for Jaden and Kala's services, suggesting invoicing Edgartown based on a weighted average. Ally Gittens Dias agreed, suggesting a small amendment to the IMA to clarify funding distribution.

Fred Hehre updates the board on the Tisbury Board of Health's approval of the Kratom regulation, effective next Tuesday.

The meeting was adjourned with a roll call vote.