City of Jacksonville

1st Floor - Council Chamber
117 W. Duval Street

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 14, 2021

2:00 PM

Council Chambers 1st Floor, City Hall & Virtual

Special Committee on the Opioid Epidemic, Vaping & Mental Health Resources

CM Ron Salem, Pharm.D., Chairman
CM Michael Boylan
CM Terrance Freeman
CM Ju'Coby Pittman
CM Brenda Priestly-Jackson
CM Randy White

Legislative Assistant: Juliette Williams
Research: Colleen Hampsey

Meeting Convened: 2;02 pm Meeting Adjourned: 3:19 pm

Attendance:

Council Members Salem, Boylan, Freeman (Remotely) and Priestly Jackson (Remotely)
Excused: CMs Pittman and White

Also: OGC; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

1. Call to order, Introduction of Committee Members - Council Member Ron Salem

2. Update on Project Save Lives - Dr. Raymond Pomm, Gateway

Dr. Pomm provided an update on Project Save Lives, and said that there have only been 8 overdose deaths among participants since the program's inception in 2017. Dr. Pomm talked about the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, which has brought an increase in alcohol abuse and substance use overall. Dr. Pomm said that there are negotiations taking place with the Baptist Main Emergency Department, which would be the seventh ED for Project Save Lives. Dr. Pomm mentioned the capacity constraints for residential treatment, due to the pandemic. Dr. Pomm also noted that most participants are involved with peer specialists, and not traditional in patient treatment, and that peer specialists are being swooped up by other entities with the ability to pay them more.

3. Report on Overdose trends/Narcan Grant - Chief Mark Rowley, JFRD & Laura Viafora Ray, JFRD

Chief Mark Rowley, JFRD, spoke about data trends and the increase in overdose responses as impacted by the pandemic. Since March 2020, there has been a 22 percent increase in OD responses, a smaller increase than that seen in some other cities which are experiencing a 40 percent increase. CM Boylan asked why the chart presented shows more Narcan doses administered than patients. Chief Rowley said it is due to multiple doses needed to revive some (about 12 percent) patients.

Laura Viafora Ray, JFRD, spoke about the Safe Healthy Neighborhoods grant, which enables JFRD to distribute Narcan and training to individuals and organizations for free. Since the grant program began, 2615 doses have been given out, with 52 percent distributed in high need zip codes. There have been 59 training sessions and more than 1000 people have completed the trainings. Ms. Ray specifically spoke about a collaboration with various hotel security firms to prepare security staff to handle overdoses they may encounter. CM Salem suggested that they also coordinate with event security from sports and entertainment venues, for training sessions. Ms. Ray talked about the stigma associated with Narcan, wherein some may think having it on hand encourages drug use but research shows the opposite. She also noted a pre and post training assessment which indicates a decrease in that perception after the training. Anecdotally, there have also been 17 voluntary reports from those who have used the Narcan to stop an overdose death. CM Salem asked about expiration dates on Narcan, and Ms. Ray said she tracks and alerts any parties whose doses are about to expire.

4. Update on Opioid Lawsuit - Tiffiny Pinkstaff, Office of General Counsel

Tiffiny Pinkstaff, Office of General Counsel, provided an update on the City's opioid lawsuit. Ms. Pinkstaff said that the settlement arrangements are still in negotiations, somewhat stalled due to issues regarding attorney's fees. The hope is that it will be resolved in February, 2021. The settlement funds will be allocated to local/participating municipalities by the Florida AG, and the portions are yet to be determined.

5. Report from Sheriff's Office - Assistant Chief Steve Gallaher, JSO

Lt. Steve Gallaher, JSO, shared some information about the enforcement side of the opioid epidemic, and said that there were 9 opioid death-homicide arrests in 2020. Lt. Gallaher said that patrol zones 4 and 3 have the highest overdose death responses, with 117 and 88 respectively in 2020. Lt. Gallaher also said that some of the homicide suspects are believed to be involved in the deaths of multiple victims.

6. Report from State Attorney's Office - Tim Quick, State Attorney's Office

Mr. Quick, SAO, said that medical examiner toxicology reports are showing the frequent presence of kratom (an herbal extract sold as a purported energy booster, mood enhancer, pain reliever and for opioid withdrawal). Dr. Pomm said that there is risk associated with kratom, even though it is widely available and legal, including strong withdrawal symptoms. There is a prohibition on sales in Sarasota, and it was requested that Keally West, OGC, report back as to the details on that. There was some discussion about the local prohibition of kratom, which has been tried and failed at the federal and state levels previously.

7. E-Cigarettes and Vaping Initiative - Vaping Campaign Launch Preview
Barry O'Sullivan, Acuity Design Group

Ms. Jones provided an update on the anti-vaping public awareness campaign, set to roll out next week following a press conference in City Hall. There will be a social media component (Facebook and Instagram) and the campaign website is vapingisugly.com.

8. Mental Health Pilot Program - Mental Health Pilot Program Update
Colleen Bell, Sulzbacher

Dr. Bell, Sulzbacher, gave a presentation on the mental health diversion pilot program. The program is in collaboration with Duval County Judges, State Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, Lutheran Services of Florida, and Gateway Community Services, includes pre-trial release and wraparound services for those with mental health issues as an alternative to jail, and will offer mental health treatment, free prescriptions, intensive case management; substance abuse treatment and scattered site housing (if needed); Wraparound services: job placement, SOAR processor for SSI/SSDI, peer specialist, and other supportive services as needed.

9. Comments from the Public (time permitting)

Chief Rowley spoke briefly about harm reduction, and the misconception that abstinence is possible for all of those with substance use issues. He also mentioned methods used in other cities, such as needle exchange programs to decrease the risk of HIV and Hepatitis C. CM Salem commented on the controversial nature of such programs. CM Boylan offered to work with Chief Rowley to explore harm reduction methods and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

Stanley Scott expressed support for harm reduction public health programs and offered to help if possible. He also emphasized the need for community input.

10. Adjourn Meeting

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research
CHampsey@coj.net 904.255.5151
Posted: 1.20.2021 5:00 pm