

City of Jacksonville

*1st Floor - Council Chamber
117 W. Duval Street*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 14, 2021

2:00 PM

Council Chambers 1st Floor, City Hall

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

CM Ron Salem, Pharm.D., Chair

CM Michael Boylan

CM Randy DeFoor

CM Terrance Freeman

CM Ju'Coby Pittman

CM Randy White

Legislative Assistant: Juliette Williams

Research: Colleen Hampsey

Meeting Convened: 2:00 pm

Meeting Adjourned: 3:27 pm

Attendance: Council Members Salem, White and Boylan

Excused: CVP Freeman; CMs DeFoor and Pittman

Also: Kealey West, Office of General Counsel; Trista Carraher, Council Auditor's Office; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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

Chair Salem welcomed the group and called for introductions.

2. Teen Anti-Vaping Campaign Report Cantrece Jones, Acuity Design Group

Ms. Jones, presented a review of the results from the vaping awareness campaign. The campaign ran from January 2021 through July 2021, and targeted middle and high school students through various social media platforms. By the end of the campaign, there was a decrease of teens who believe that vaping is harmless to their health. The campaign was viewed by tens of thousands of students, more than 12,000 engaged with the content, and the website averaged 65 visits/day. The campaign exceeded its objectives, despite having to modify the in-person components due to the pandemic. To maintain momentum and address the still existing public health issue of teen vaping, the campaign may continue if/when a partnership for funding is secured. They are in discussions with several community partners, including JaxChamber. Chief Rowley, JFRD, suggested reaching out to the Department of Health to add a question about vaping use of the youth risk behavior survey.

3. Mental Health Awareness Campaign CVP Terrance Freeman

Postponed the mental health update due to CVP Freeman's absence.

4. Harm Reduction Subcommittee Report CM Michael Boylan

CM Boylan spoke about the progress made on safe syringe program legislation. Kealey West, OGC, is drafting the bill and Chief Rowley is assisting with gathering all of the needed exhibits and documentation. Thus far a provider has been found and there is a search underway for funding - according to state law, no City funds may be used for the program. CM Salem reminded CM Boylan to communicate the benefits of the program at the front end to the rest of council because some may be uncomfortable with it. He also suggested including CM Dennis in the discussion because the provider's clinic is in his district.

5. Update on Project Save Lives

Dr. Pomm provided an update on Project Save Lives. Since it began in 2017, there have been 3835 participants that consented to services and 9 drug related participant deaths. In September 2021, 211 individuals consented to either peer services or traditional treatment. Dr. Pomm spoke about the significance of peer support and the recently much needed increased pay scale for such work. Dr. Pomm said that PSL is in talks with Baptist South and UF North to start the program in their emergency departments (costs to be covered by the hospitals). He also talked about the effect of the pandemic on housing and treatment capacity. Dr. Pomm said that they are making strides to find transitional housing, to use while waiting for an open bed in treatment centers.

There was some discussion about the increase in overdose deaths nationally and in Jacksonville, and about street pills mixed with, or made primarily from, fentanyl and how that is killing people who are not aware of what they are taking.

6. Report on Overdose Trends/Narcan Grant

Chief Rowley, JFRD, spoke about overdose transport trends. In September 2021 there were 452 patients transported as overdoses, and 469 doses of Naloxone given. In September 2020 there were 377 patients transported as overdoses, and 367 doses of Naloxone given. In September 2019 there were 390 patients transported as overdoses, and 345 doses of Naloxone given.

Chief Rowley said that there have been OD up ticks in the NW part of the city, in zip code 32246, and among minority communities where recreational users are being impacted with drugs containing fentanyl without their knowledge.

Laura Viafora Ray, JFRD, was absent so Chief Rowley provided an update on the Safe Healthy Neighborhoods grant, which enables JFRD to distribute Narcan and training to individuals and organizations

for free. Since the grant program began, 103 training sessions have occurred, and 5620 kits have been given out. Anecdotally, there have also been 36 voluntary reports from those who have used the Narcan to stop an overdose death. They are working to include even more community partners.

7. Update on Opioid Lawsuit Tiffany Pinkstaff, Office of General Counsel

No update at this meeting.

8. Report from Sheriff's Office Chief Steve Gallaher, JSO

Asst. Chief Gallaher, JSO, spoke about overdose homicide enforcement aspects. The highest amount of JSO overdose death responses occurred in 2021 so far in zones 4, 2 and 5. There were 37 JSO OD death responses in September 2021, 25 in September 2020. To date in 2021, there are 71 active cases under investigation, and 52 have been cleared through arrest (37 for drug charges, 15 homicide/manslaughter).

9. Report from State Attorney's Office Timothy Quick, State Attorney's Office

No update at this meeting.

10. Mental Health Pilot Program Cindy Funkhouser, Sulzbacher

Dr. Colleen Bell, Sulzbacher, presented a review of the MHOP nine month pilot program. On a personal note, Dr. Bell said that this program has been the most impactful thing she has been a part of in her career. In MHOP, there was a graduation ceremony last week, wherein 4 participants completed the program. There are 15 active MHOP participants, 3 in the orientation phase, and 4 that were removed and 1 who passed away. Income benefits: 11 MHOP participants are now receiving SSDI benefits, and 4 are pending and awaiting back pay.

Housing: Prior to the MHOP diversion, 93% of the participants were homeless. After MHOP acceptance, 87% are in permanent housing and the rest are awaiting placement.

Demographics: 13 male (9 African American, 2 White, 1 Hispanic), and 3 African American females.

Arrests prior to MHOP: the participants were arrested 108 times in 2020 collectively.

Mr. Kilcrease, Sulzbacher, explained the effect of MHOP on court/corrections costs, which have decreased for arrests, bookings, days in jail and Baker Act examinations for this pool of participants. CM Boylan asked for a breakdown of costs for one participant to complete the program, and Mr. Kilcrease said he will report back about that data.

Charlie Cofer, Public Defender, was in attendance to speak on behalf of MHOP, and noted that focus on costs can be misleading. Judge Cofer said that the 'old way' of arresting, releasing and re-arresting these individuals brought very little ROI for society or the MHOP participants. He also said that safe/secure housing makes all the difference in getting the participants stable and out of the incarceration cycle.

Chief Rowley offered to coordinate with Sulzbacher on data tracking, to see if/how often the participants were treated or transported by JFRD. Such data sharing would require a signed HIPAA release.

12. Comments from the Public (time permitting)

None.

13. Adjourn Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday November 10, 2021.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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Posted: 10.20.2021 5:00 pm