

**JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

**Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction**

**Mental Health and Substance Abuse Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**

**April 17, 2019**

**3:00 pm**

**Don Davis Room**

**First Floor, City Hall**

**117 W. Duval Street**

Chair: Shelley Grant

Phyllis Hall

Darcel Harris

Preston Harris

Carolyn Herman

Vicki Waytowich

Joe Peppers, Subject Matter Expert- Excused

**Topic:** Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction – Mental Health and Substance Abuse Subcommittee

**Attendance:** Chiquita Moore – Mayor’s Office; Colleen Hampsey **–** Council Research; Crystal Shemwell – Legislative Services

For all other attendees please see the sign in sheet

**Meeting Convened:** 3:01 pm

Chairperson Grant convened the meeting and welcomed the members. This was the third meeting of the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Subcommittee. Ms. Grant commented on the progress of the subcommittee thus far, in that they have identified many pockets of good things happening in mental health care and gaps where previously made recommendations could be implemented. There will be one more subcommittee meeting prior to the next Task Force Chair meeting to finalize the one page report.

There was a guest speaker in attendance, Tara Wildes from The National Alliance on Mental Illness- Jacksonville (NAMI Jax). Ms. Wildes was previously the Director of Jails for the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office. Ms. Wildes shared a PowerPoint presentation which covered how mental health issues are addressed in the jail. According to the presentation, sometimes people call the police for social service situations which end up with criminal justice system solutions. There are a few points for diversion, at intercept and intake, but mental health issues are not always identified in time. All jail intakes are screened for mental and physical health issues by the health providers contracted to service the Duval pre-trial detention center. The cost for treating mental health issues in jail is substantially higher than treatment in the community and in jail mental health issues can be exacerbated, especially if placed in isolation (solitary confinement). Additionally, drug and mental health courts in Jacksonville are not sufficiently funded. There are some substance abuse treatment jail programs, but they are limited. All JSO officers receive crisis intervention training, which is a 40 hour course.

When asked what the Task Force might do to help improve mental health in jail, it was said that there should be a 24 hour crisis center for police and families to take those in need prior to using the Baker Act. The current crisis center facility is not open 24 hours a day. It was also mentioned that JSO could have case managers/social workers ride with them for certain calls or follow up after a crisis. Ms. Wildes was asked to provide a zip code map of Baker Act recipient residences to assess for geographic prevalence. The subcommittee discussed the importance of early identification and intervention, how excessive truancy is often a symptom of trauma, and how punishments do not act as deterrents for kids or those with mental illness.

Ms. Wildes spoke briefly about NAMI and the work that organization does in the city. Comprised almost entirely of volunteers, NAMI provides free support services and education to create awareness of mental health issues. NAMI conducts awareness sessions in middle and high schools to combat stigma associated with mental health issues. While there are more mental health services offered in schools now, in many schools those are underutilized. It was agreed by all of the members that more school funding would be better spent on students’ services (mental health or otherwise) rather than on arming teachers with guns (currently being decided by Florida legislators).

With no further business, Chairperson Grant adjourned the meeting. The next Mental Health and Substance Abuse Subcommittee meeting will be held on April 25th at 12:30 pm.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 4:43 pm

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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Posted 4.23.19 5:00 pm

Tape: Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction Mental Health and Substance Abuse Subcommittee -Legislative Services Division 4.17.19