

**JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

**TWICE AMENDED SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC, VAPING, AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**

**TWICE AMENDED MEETING MINUTES**

**September 17, 2020**

**2:00 P.M.**

**Zoom Hybrid/In-Person Meeting**

**Council Chambers**

**Attendance:** Council Members Ron Salem (Chairman), Michael Boylan, Terrance Freeman, Ju’Coby Pittman; Chief Judge Mark Mahon; State Rep. Wyman Duggan; Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research Division; Lawsikia Hodges – Office of General Counsel; Director Mike Bruno, Lt. David Kilcrease, Chief Warren Calloway, and Tara Wildes – JSO; Cindy O’Brien – MHRC; Dr. Jimmy Fernandez – Armor Correctional Health.

Zoom Virtual Hybrid/In-Person meeting held in Council Chambers.

**Convened:** 2:02 P.M.

Chairman Salem convened the meeting and acknowledged committee members and special guests. The meeting would follow the agenda with questions at the end of all presentations.

Chief Judge Mark Mahon thanked the committee for the invitation to speak. He acknowledged the necessity of a more robust answer to addressing mental health issues in Jacksonville, which significantly impacts the jail and court system. A good mental health program would ultimately save the community money and get people linked to appropriate services and closer to being released from jail. Chief Judge Mahon shared he has been speaking with Miami’s Director of Jail Diversion Program, Cindy Schwartz to discuss ideas about jump-starting a model in Jacksonville. He expressed his commitment to being a supporter and advocate in this effort. The benefits of addressing this population include individuals getting the right services, reducing incarcerations, and savings in tax dollars, a win-win. This effort will take time, patience, and funding. Chief Judge Mahon stated that a public-private partnership is necessary to be successful. He mentioned that State Attorney Melissa Nelson and Public Defender Charlie Cofer are fully supportive. Recently, Mr. Cofer hired a social worker to assess and assist clients with connecting with appropriate services. Chief Judge Mahon concluded that he and all the judges that work with him are dedicated see this issue through to make a difference in the community.

State Representative Wyman Duggan stated that he and the chief judge, state attorney, and public defender, as a group, have been working together for a couple of years looking at this issue. He informed the committee that he submitted an appropriation request in this year’s state-level budget for a Mental Health Pretrial Diversion Program. The funding made it to the budget; however, it was impacted by COVID19. Rep. Duggan commented the positive perspective is the awareness at the state level and the involvement of public-private partnerships. With the jail as the largest provider of mental health treatment in the county, it is both ethical and economically necessary to address the mental health issues within the jail system. It is unclear about funding in next year’s budget; however, Rep. Duggan committed to facilitating constructive public policy solutions of the issue as a priority at the state level.

**Police Responses to Mental Health Crisis in the Community – Director Mike Bruno, JSO**

Director Bruno provided details regarding training an process for handling mental health calls for service. The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) officers are trained to standards that meet the national, state, and FDLE standards and critical incident training (CIT). Also, de-escalation, prevention of severe mental illness issues, and Mental Health First Aid are supplement trainings provided by JSO. Officers can Baker Act individuals per Florida State Statute. Initiating a Baker Act requires the officer to take individuals to any one of the seven local receiving facilities for assessment and treatment. Since the beginning of 2020, JSO has been utilizing a Co-Responder team, a police officer, and a clinician that works in the community answering calls for service and conducting follow-ups with clients. The team is developing a client base system to aid in providing services. The group attempts to defer and prevent arrests through stabilization, which can lead to a more productive life.

Director Bruno shared that it cost approximately $98.75 per day per inmate. In early 2020, JSO and MHRC conducted a study of 22 individuals deemed high utilizers. Most of the subjects were arrested 15 or more times between January 2018 and November 2019. 18 out of the 22 were identified with mental health issues. The daily jail cost for the 22 individuals is estimated at over $788,000 based on the time spent in jail. When considering the time spent in the crisis stabilization unit, the expenses for the 18 units rises to 1.39 million.

**Programs in the Community and Coordinating Care – Cindy O’Brien, Mental Health Resource Center**

Ms. O’Brien stated the Mental Health Resource Center, a 501c3 organization, provides a wide range of services in the community and is Jacksonville, Florida's largest provider in this area of mental health services. She highlighted programs that are working and interfacing with the criminal justice system and the gaps in services. Approximately 2 million times each year, people who have serious mental illnesses are admitted to jails across the Nation. Once incarcerated, they are more likely to spend extended periods in jail than quickly being released back to the community, unlike many others with resources and the ability to negotiate the legal system. Often, many of these individuals are arrested for necessary nuisance types charges such as trespassing, public intoxication, and other things that end up drawing attention to themselves or creating issues with businesses, family, friends, or neighbors. Thus, the risk factors leading to regress are often not only mental illness but social issues like unstable housing, unemployment or lack of income, limited family support, and several other things presenting as a challenge.

MHRC has two treatment centers, one on the north side and one on the south side of Jacksonville. The agency adopted an urgent care type model that allows any individual to walk in at any time and speak to someone about their needs and receive services. From July 2019 through June 2020, the centers served 5,478 individuals with over 3000 were walk-ins. Thus, the model shows that people utilize the opportunity to walk in for services when needed. With the Jail Diversion and In-Jail Service Coordination Program, MHRC has two staff located within the pretrial detention facility. One is assigned to first appearance court to review arrest and booking reports and identify those that may have been arrested and present as having a mental health-related issue. The other staff is assigned to Armor Correctional Health to assist with the collaboration and coordination of providers to gather mental health treatment/information. With the Jail Outreach Service Coordination, the team is comprised of care coordinators and peer recovery specialists. The approach provides services to meet people at that critical point of need or is either admitted to a crisis stabilization unit. By engaging an individual while incarcerated or another treatment setting allows the opportunity to link them with follow up services upon release. The team focuses on individuals considered high utilizers that are being discharged from the crisis stabilization unit.

Ms. O’Brien provided additional detail regarding the Co-Responder Program. The officer and clinician respond to mental health crisis calls and emotionally charged situations via JSO dispatch. Currently, downtown is the primary focus area. Since July 2020, the team has responded to 197, of which 102 were mental health or substance use crisis-related. Forty-three cases were diverted from incarceration or hospitalization; supported 13 cases, follow up and care coordination; and 19 cases Baker Act initiated, and 3 cases involved emergency care evaluation.

* Mental Health Pre-Trial Release Program
* Permanent Supportive Housing
* Transportation
* Cross-Training Initiatives
* Utilization of Problem-Solving Courts

**1st Appearance and Diversionary Programs – Lieutenant David E. Kilcrease, JSO & Asst. State Attorney Coral Messina**

Ms. Messina, Asst. State Attorney and Smart Justice Coordinator, oversees diversion opportunities and problem-solving courts on behalf of the State Attorney's Office. She explained that if an individual is arrested and charged with a misdemeanor and a potential mental health issue is identified often, the individuals are released to a mental health receiving facility. However, if not released to a facility and the case remains with the SAO, the case is reviewed to determine if charges are appropriate to file. The first consideration involves the determination of whether the individual is more suited for a mental health court.

Lieutenant Kilcrease shared that Duval County Mental Health Court program was developed and implemented under the direction of the Fourth Judicial Circuit in 2008. The program is twelve months and maybe extended as needed. Participants are provided:

* mental health assessments;
* individualized treatment plans;
* ongoing judicial monitoring to address the mental health needs of the offender and the public safety concerns of the community; and
* referrals as part of diversion or as a special condition of probation (post adjudicatory)

The program eligibility criteria require participants must be local residents over the age of 18 with a misdemeanor, non-violent 3rd and 2nd-degree felony charge. There are case by case exceptions with the victim and SAO consent. The mental health diagnosis includes Schizophrenia, Bipolar, or Anxiety with or without co-occurring substance abuse disorder. This program is suitable for mental health participants that have an extensive history with the criminal justice system. Lt. Kilcrease reviewed the court statistics for 2018, 2019, and 2020 which depict the number of admissions, discharges, and graduates.

**Review of Existing Status of Mentally Ill Prisoners in the JSO Department of Corrections – Chief Warren Calloway & Jimmy Fernandez**

Chief Calloway stated that since June 2020, the jail has housed 362 inmates with a mental health diagnosis. The Average Daily Population (ADP) at the jail is 2898. When comparing the number of mental health diagnosed inmates to the ADP, it shows that the 362 inmates represent 12.4% of the overall population. Chief Calloway stated correctional officers have similar training in CIT and Mental Health First Aid as the police officers to assist with the mental health inmates.

Dr. Fernandez, Armor Health Medical Director, provided additional statistics on the behavioral health at the Duval County Jail. The patient encounters from 2018 to 2019 doubled. The category for Unique Behavioral Health patients decreased based on the intensity of service provided at the jail due to increased disproportionately with a subset of patients. The total number of psychiatric prescriptions has gone down; however, the total cost is trending higher year after year. Dr. Fernandez's interpretation shows the disproportionate increase in the price of psychotropic drugs, which is an issue with the unit cost and volume. He emphasized the importance of comprehensive screening during the intake process to gather the necessary medical information. Approximately 8% of the offenders in jail have at least one mental health condition. This would ensure the identification of diagnosis and a more appropriate clinical determination of behavioral health response. More robust programs will significantly impact costs related to healthcare, security, and transportation.

**Re-entry with regard to Mentally Ill Formerly Incarcerated Persons and Family Support – Tara Wildes**

Ms. Wildes, Director of JREC, explained that Jacksonville Reentry Center (JREC) is focused on the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated personsto the community. JREC collaborates and connects with community partners to provide job opportunities; offers career development opportunities, including cognitive-behavioral counseling; provides provision of treatment and therapy, among other services. Ms. Wildes offered additional information on the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), an organization of the family and friends of people living with a mental illness. NAMI is an excellent resource that helps connect people to services and provide a listening ear. Members share the knowledge gained through their own experiences – both successes and failures. Most times, they hear about similar experiences foster supportive networks to assist those going through a time of crisis or heartache. NAMI Helpline number is (904) 724-7782.

Chairman Salem thanked all the guest speakers and updated the committee on the next steps. He has met with the mayor and sheriff regarding an expanded diversionary program. A proposal is being drafted along with finding funding to support a pilot project with housing as a component. The next meeting will be on October 15, 2020.

Several of the committee members asked follow up questions of the guest speakers. After public comment, with no further business, Chairman Salem adjourned the meeting at 3:34 P.M.

**Adjourned:** 3:34 P.M.

Minutes: Yvonne P. Mitchell, Council Research Division

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Posted 10.07.20 5:30P.M.

Visual Presentations: JREC & NAMI and MHC Presentation