

**JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

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

**MEETING MINUTES**

**October 15, 2020**

**2:00 p.m.**

**Zoom Virtual Meeting – No Location**

**Attendance:** Council Members Ron Salem (Chairman), Michael Boylan, Terrance Freeman, Ju’Coby Pittman, Brenda Priestly Jackson, Randy White; Trista Carraher – Auditor’s Office; Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research Division; Asst. Chief Steve Gallaher – JSO; Cindy O’Brien – MHRC; Dr. Raymond Pomm- UF Health/Gateway; Dr. Jimmy Fernandez – Armor Correctional Health.

Virtual meeting held via Zoom. No physical sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

**Convened:** 2:02 pm

Chairman Salem convened the meeting and acknowledged committee members and special guests.

**Report from State Attorney’s Office – Joe Licandro**

The number of opioid deaths continues to increase. As of Friday, October 9th, there have been approximately 300 opioid deaths. Although investigations are ongoing investigations, the JSO’s Narcotics Division has successfully identified suppliers, which led to additional arrests. Mr. Licandro mentioned that requests for search warrants of residences involving phenol are increasing weekly. It was stated that prosecution isn’t the complete solution to the problem. The best efforts involve continuously identifying and removing suppliers off the streets and increasing anti-drug awareness.

**Project Save Lives Update - Dr. Raymond Pomm, UF Health/Gateway**

The number of people afflicted with substance abuse and mental health issues in detox is staggering. When the program started in November 2017, the concentration was opioids, fentanyl specifically. Currently, evidence shows more abuse of opioids with cocaine, benzodiazepines (tranquilizers), and methamphetamines with alcohol. The volume of alcohol with opioids is causing significant complications in detoxing. Studies show that more people are tolerant of fentanyl, which requires a greater dosage, which increases the risk of death. Since the beginning, 1659 out of 3491 individuals have consented to work with the program. There have only been seven opioid-related deaths from the consented participants.

Unfortunately, the number of beds decreased to 15 due to COVID. However, the number of beds increased from the 50% cutback after relocating. The count is now 22 as opposed to 30. Beds are filling out with Project Save Lives (PSL) to where the other individuals cannot get in. The ability to offer more beds is based on the number of no-show slots. Beds are filled quickly with those in greatest need, which happens to be PSL individuals ready to go. With the new detox screening process system, double occupancy is now available in conjunction with St. Vincent’s Riverside. Beds will remain an issue until a new detox facility is built. There is some partnership with private facilities; however, a residential site is not feasible due to the necessity of a specialized nursing stall on duty at all times.

Logistics are still being worked out with UF; however, the PSL has been in EDI for the past two weeks. In comparison, the first week of engagement at facilities show eight contacts at St. Vincent's Riverside, 15 contacts at Memorial, and 31 contacts at UF. Note: All the contacts did not accept services.

**Report on Overdoes Trends/Narcan Grant – Chief Mark Rowley, JFRD**

A 12-month report was completed in July on 545 PSL participants. The report compares the length of time of the participants in the program vs. not in the program. The report showed a 28% decrease in JFRD’s response to overdose recidivism. In perspective, July 2020, at the peak of COVID-19, isolation, and a 40% increase in countywide overdoses, PSL participants still demonstrated a 28% decrease. A smaller study was conducted on 68 participants from July 2020 – September 2020, which resulted in a 43% decrease in overdose responses to the participants.

JFRD responded to 445 overdoses, the highest recorded number, in August 2020. Paramedics and firefighters administered 521 doses of Narcan, the highest ever. Within one month, JFRD had a 10% decrease in overdose responses, a 25% decrease in patients treated as overdose that was clinically assessed by our paramedics, and a 42% decrease in Narcan doses administered in September.

JFRD works with another program called Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods Project, which offers public access to Narcan. Laura Viafora is the project director. The program has already distributed approximately 1700 doses as of last month. By the end of October, an additional 2000 doses of nasal Narcan are expected to be delivered in the community. The program has confirmed 14 uses of nasal Narcan that helped save lives. If an organization or group is interested in being trained on nasal Narcan should contact Laura Viafora at (904) 630-3488 or visit www.drugfreeduval.org/.

**Update on Opioid Lawsuit – Kealey West, Office of General Counsel**

No current update on litigation. Ms. Tiffany Pinkstaff should have more information at the next meeting.

**Mental Health Analysis – CM Salem & Chief Judge Mahon**

Council Member Salem, Judge Mahon, and Sheriff Williams have been working closely with developing a diversion program for people arrested, particularly on a misdemeanor, that may have a mental health issue. The program is expected to be implemented early next year, with a 50/50 financial responsibility between JSO and the City of Jacksonville. Tremendous feedback has been received with valuable information on creating the most effective program for Jacksonville.

The program will assist individuals with mental health issues and misdemeanors (trespassing, begging in public, harassment, etc.). Individuals will receive assistance getting out of jail and transitioning to a program to get much-needed services. Judge Mahon is in constant communication with supporters such as representatives, the public defender, the state attorney, and the sheriff. This program will have a lasting impact on the community. An explanation of program details on the first draft of the plan, which includes Lutheran Social Services, is expected by the next meeting.

**Report from Sheriff’s Office – Assistant Chief Steve Gallaher, JSO**

The official count of overdosed death response cases year to date is 300. Consistent with the report given by Chief Rowley, August had the highest numbers to date. There were 43 deaths in August, which is doubled from 2019. The zone comparison chart depicts where drugs are either consumed or victims are transported to or found versus the location of the drug sale. Thus, where warrants are served and arrests made are not necessarily in the same locations of the overdose death response.

A summary of zone boundaries include:

* Zone One - immediate downtown area, all of Springfield up to the Trout River
* Zone Two - Arlington, Beach Boulevard North up to the river
* Zone Three - Beach Boulevard South to the county line and to the river
* Zone Four – Westside, everything south of I10 and west of the river
* Zone Five - north of I10 to I95 border
* Zone Six – Northside, airport area to Oceanway, all the way around the river up to the north end by Dames Point Bridge

**Report on Data Collection - Dr. Lori Billelo, UF Health**

Data collection is ongoing. An additional six months of data have been received from Vital Statistics for Duval County and surrounding areas. The team is sorting through approximately 10,000 deaths to identify those individuals touched by Project Save Lives and determine the cause of death. A more detailed report is expected at the next meeting.

**E-Cigarettes and Vaping Initiative - Council Member Ron Salem**

The Acuity Design Group has conceptually agreed to develop a vaping initiative campaign for the school system. Acuity will provide a presentation at the next meeting.

**Public Comment**

Jacqueline Dowdy, River Region Chief Executive Officer, offered the agency’s support and assistance.

David Samoff commented on the importance of programs in all areas of Florida.

With no further business, Chairman Salem adjourned the meeting at 2:44 pm.

**Adjourned:** 2:44 pm

Minutes: Yvonne P. Mitchell, Council Research Division

ymitch@coj.net 904-255-5171 Posted 10.23.20 8:00AM

Handouts: OD Charts thru Sept 30, PSL Status Report 10.6.20, SHN (NARCAN) Project Update 10.8.20