

# City of Jacksonville

1st Floor - Council Chamber  
117 W. Duval Street



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 11, 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: 2:00 pm Meeting Adjourned: 3:29 pm

Attendance:

**Council Members Salem, Boylan, Freeman, Pittman, White and Priestly Jackson (Remotely)**

**Also: Kealey West, Office of General Counsel; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research**

- 1. Call to order, Introduction of Committee Members - Council Member Ron Salem**
- 2. Presentation of NEFRC Award of Excellence for Project Save Lives - NEFRC, Tyler Nolan**

**Mr. Nolan commended all involved with Project Save Lives, presented them with the Northeast Florida Regional Council's 2020 Regional Award for Excellence in Public Safety, and the group was photographed.**

- 3. Mental Health Pilot Program - Chief Judge Mark Mahon  
Cindy Funkhouser, Sulzbacher**

**Judge Mahon spoke about MHOP, 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, and includes pre-trial release and wraparound services for those with mental health issues as an alternative to jail. MHOP began operation on February 1, and as of now already has 7 participants as recommended by JSO with an eventual service capacity of 25 - 40 individuals. Dr. Colleen Bell, Sulzbacher, spoke about the cost savings associated with diverting those with mental illnesses who are chronically arrested into this program as opposed to incarceration.**

**CM Boylan invited Judge Mahon to share information about the program at the next Safer Together workshop in March.**

**CM Pittman asked about the sustainability of funding, and Judge Mahon said that the goal is to find private/philanthropic dollars if the program proves successful at the end of the nine month pilot period. CM Pittman also noted that mental health assessment and de-escalation training should be incorporated into the curriculum at the police academy.**

- 4. Strategic Planning – UCF Project - Chelsea Piner, University of Central Florida**

**Chelsea Piner, a graduate student from UCF, spoke briefly about her personal connection to opioid abuse, as many of her friends and family have been impacted by the epidemic. Ms. Piner will be working to construct a strategic plan for the committee as a part of her course work, and conducting a survey of members to perform a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. CM Salem recommended that his fellow committee members assist in the process as needed.**

**5. Harm Reduction Subcommittee - Council Member Boylan**

CM Boylan spoke about a teleconference he attended recently with various community partners to discuss harm reduction methods (such as needle exchange programs). He emphasized the importance of organizational collaboration and suggested that there be a presentation to the NCSPHS Committee on the topic at an upcoming meeting.

**6. 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 said that the negotiations taking place with the Baptist Main Emergency Department have progressed and PSL should be in operation there within a month, which would be the seventh ED for Project Save Lives. Dr. Pomm said that while the COVID pandemic has led to opioid overdose increases across the country, the OD incident rate for PSL participants has decreased.

Dr. Pomm spoke briefly about the interface between mental health and substance abuse disorders, and how that relates to the use of the Baker Act.

**7. Report on Overdose Trends/Narcan Grant - Chief Mark Rowley, JFRD  
Laura Viafora Ray, JFRD**

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, 2885 doses have been given out, with 54 percent distributed in high need zip codes. There have been 70 training sessions and more than 1200 people have completed the trainings. Anecdotally, there have also been 18 voluntary reports from those who have used the Narcan to stop an overdose death.

Ms. Ray also spoke about a new partnership with JASMYN, the Jacksonville Area Sexual Minority Youth Network, and an upcoming Narcan training session on February 23, 2021 in City Hall for any interested council members and staff.

Chief Rowley spoke about JFRD data trends related to overdose calls, overdose treatment, and Narcan use. As compared to January 2019 data, January 2021 has shown fewer doses of Narcan administered, and fewer patients transported to the ED for overdoses. There is also a lower rate of overdose recidivism for PSL participants as compared to the general population.

**8. 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. Lt. Gallaher said that patrol zones 3 and 4 have the highest overdose death responses, with 88 and 117 respectively in 2020, and 3 and 4 overdose death responses respectively in 2021.

Lt. Gallaher said that there were 364 total overdose death responses for JSO in 2020, and 31 thus far in 2021. In 2020, 38 of those cases were cleared by arrest, of which 9 were homicide arrests.

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

Mr. Quick spoke about the valuable collaboration between the SAO and the Sheriff's Office. He again commented on the presence of kratom in toxicology screenings and said it will be discussed further at the next meeting.

**10. E-Cigarettes and Vaping Initiative - Vaping Campaign Update  
Cantrece Jones, Acuity Design Group**

Cantrece Jones, Acuity Design Group, spoke about the anti-vaping awareness campaign that was launched a few weeks ago. Ms. Jones said she will have more data to share at the next meeting, and noted that the focus of the campaign is under age vape users, not adults.

**11. Hearts 4 Minds Campaign - CM Terrance Freeman**

CM Freeman spoke about 2021- 81, a bill he sponsored that approves the service contract with Hearts 4 Minds for digital and non-digital educational, outreach and media content and materials throughout a 36-month contract period to raise awareness about the importance of mental health, break down the stigma of mental illness and connect people to providers. The funding was previously appropriated in last fiscal year's budget.

Sheryl Johnson, President and Founder of Hearts 4 Minds, explained how the organization was created from her personal tragedy and loss of her son to depression. After her son's passing, Ms. Johnson became committed to helping other families like hers, who were burdened by the struggle of mental illness and suffering in silence. She noted that society embraces those battling cancer or other physical afflictions, but not those suffering from mental illnesses. Ms. Johnson said it is vital to stop believing that mental illness is a personal choice or a shameful personal failure. As a result of social stigma and/or a lack of resources, many of those with a mental illness don't get the help they need. The goal for the City funded mural campaign is to end the stigma and connect those who need it with mental health care. Ms. Johnson also talked about a partnership with the Baptist Health Foundation to establish Alex's Dragonfly Endowment for Young Adult Behavioral Health that will finance a care coordinator at Baptist Behavioral Health to serve young adults with mental illness and their families. When fully funded in 2022, the care coordinator will ultimately serve 300 young adults annually. The Jim Moran Foundation will match all donations up to \$750,000.

**12. Comments from the Public (time permitting)**

Carnell Oliver spoke about racial disparities in the approach to addiction, as seen in the treatment of those using crack cocaine as opposed to opioids; the emergence of opioid use in the black community; and the long lasting negative impact of the Reagan Administration.

**13. Adjourn Meeting**

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research  
CHampsey@coj.net 904.255.5151  
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