

LAWRENCE
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Mayor's Blue Ribbon Crime Advisory Committee Meeting

Monday, June 15 at 12:30pm
City Hall – 4th Floor Conference Room

Committee Members Present: Whitney Lanning, Chairwoman, Bob Eaton, Vice-Chairman, Mayor Bill McMurray, Drew Brown, Chief Christopher Connally, Linda Dotson, Ron Holliday, Capt. Clark Stratton, Sherriff Bill Puett, Mickey Roberts, Pat Dillon, Mike Cazel, Sgt. Keith Dudley, Brigitte Berry

Call to Order: Committee Chair, Whitney Lanning called the meeting to order at 12:31pm.

Minutes of Last Meeting: The minutes of the December 16, 2019 meeting were reviewed. Bob Eaton made the motion to approve the minutes, Mike Cazel seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Updates from Law Enforcement and County Prosecutor:

Bill Puett – Sheriff Puett provided an update regarding the County Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Puett reported that his office was moving to Phase 2 of the re-opening plan. He discussed additional safety precautions the Sheriff's Office was putting in place to prevent transmission of COVID-19. Sheriff Puett also shared information regarding the needle drop box program; the program has been in place approximately 90 days and has already collected three 18 gallon cans full of used needles. Sheriff Puett also shared that there has been an increase in arrests associated with meth use. The Sheriff's Office has also hired a mental health professional to provide mental health services for 40 hours per week to assist inmates with substance abuse, mental health and social service issues.

Chief Chris Connally – Chief Connally provided an update regarding the St. Joseph Police Department and local crime data. Chief Connally stated that most crime categories were trending downward; however, auto theft was up. Chief Connally discussed his concerns that COVID-19 may result in the under-reporting of crime such as domestic violence and child abuse and neglect. He further explained that children have had less contact with mandated reporters through the school system and fewer people are going to the Emergency Room due to fear of contracting the virus. Chief Connally also mentioned the national protests for racial equity. He shared that SJPD is accredited and that all officers must participate in trainings on cultural proficiency, implicit bias, fair and impartial policing. Chief Connally discussed his conversations with protesters and his involvement with the discussion summits Mid-City Excellence has been having weekly on the topic of addressing racial disparities in our communities.

Captain Clark Stratton – Captain Stratton introduced himself as the new Commander of Troop H of the Missouri Highway Patrol, as he took over that role in March 2020. Capt. Stratton reported that Troop H currently has 5 open patrol positions and two new officers that will be assigned to the Maryville and Bethany areas. According to Capt. Stratton, over the past two weeks two teams of 8 officers from Troop H have been deployed to St. Louis and Kansas City to assist with the protests there.

Chief Jill Voltmer – Chief Voltmer reported that her office is preparing for students to return in August. Currently there are very few students on campus, most of whom are student-athletes. Chief Voltmer stated that the current plan is for students to return in person in the fall, but that could obviously change due to changes in local transmission/infection rates.

Ron Holliday – Prosecuting Attorney, Ron Holliday reported that hearings have been significantly delayed due to COVID-19. Mr. Holliday stated that the first jury trial since COVID is scheduled to occur in July and that a shooting case has been moved to January 2021. Mr. Holliday reported that the court system will likely continue to be behind once everything is fully re-opened.

Committee Priorities for 2020 - Discussion of Priority 1: Substance Abuse

Whitney Lanning reminded the Committee of the three focus areas the Committee had developed at the end of 2019: substance abuse, mental health, and family disruption/trauma. She explained that the Committee would be investigating the first priority area, substance abuse, with input from local leaders from Family Guidance, Northwest Health Services, St. Kolbe-Puckett Center for Healing, and the Opioid Taskforce.

First, Whitney introduced Jen Osborn, Director of Clinical Quality Improvement at Family Guidance. Ms. Osborn shared the following information about substance abuse treatment and services in St. Joseph:

- Inpatient drug treatment was provided by Family Guidance, it cost approximately \$900,000 per year to operate; funding was lost in 2013
- Many patients do not have insurance, thus there is no sustainable form of revenue currently available to offset the cost of inpatient treatment
- Research has shown that inpatient and outpatient treatment have the same rate of success 6 months post treatment
- Medication Assisted Treatment has been found to be the most effective form of treatment for opioid and alcohol misuse; Family Guidance administers a MAT program
- Family Guidance pairs mental health treatment with substance abuse treatment, during the treatment period
- Family guidance has found that lack of stable housing, lack of employment opportunities, and family issues are the three primary barriers to effective treatment for those struggling with substance abuse locally

Next, Whitney introduced Terry Peterson, Director of Behavioral Health at Northwest Health Services. Mr. Peterson shared the following information about substance abuse treatment and services in St. Joseph:

- Northwest Health administers a MAT program for those affected by alcohol and opioid misuse
- Local mental health providers have worked together to coordinate programs and facilitate provider meetings, so that information can be shared and gaps can be addressed
- Northwest Health has referred three individuals to inpatient treatment programs outside of St. Joseph in three years
- A recovery community is considered best practice for serving those struggling with substance abuse – a recovery community is one that has multiple treatment options and a network that supports patients in recovery through housing, employment, education, etc.

Whitney then shared a letter from Rodney Hummer, Interim CEO of Northwest Health Services and member of the Opioid Taskforce; see attached.

Whitney shared information regarding her recent discussion with Dr. Dustin Smith, Medical Director with St. Kolbe-Puckett Center for Healing. Dr. Smith reported that patients at St. Kolbe-Puckett need housing and employment assistance in order to focus on their recovery. Dr. Smith discussed how his patients can access the help they need from St. Kolbe-Puckett, but that the stress of not having the resources to maintain housing, their utility, or to get a job that allows them to maintain those, is what risks their success in recovery.

The guest speakers were offered the opportunity to describe the biggest gap in our community to serving those with substance use disorders.

Ms. Osborn, Family Guidance: Keeping people engaged in treatment, early intervention is necessary but not always possible, maintaining good connections with other providers is key.

Terry Peterson, Northwest Health: Recovery housing is a need, maintaining engagement, there is a need for more providers.

Chief Connally added that from the perspective of SJSJ there needs to be a resource that can accept intoxicated individuals other than the emergency room. He stated that often SJPJ will encounter someone and the only issue that the person has is that they're inebriated, but the officer cannot leave the individual in that state, thus the emergency room is the only option available.

Public Comment:

Dan Radke addressed the committee. Mr. Radke asked whether marijuana would be decriminalized. Chief Connally reported that there is a City Ordinance regarding marijuana possession and described the ordinance. Mr. Radke asked if SJPJ Officers are required to participate in psychological evaluations. Chief Connally stated that psychological evaluations are conducted at the time of hire and as necessary; there is no annual evaluation requirement. Mr. Radke asked for more information about the Missouri use of force count; Chief Connally described how use of force is defined and reported statewide. Mr. Radke asked about the police complaint process and Chief Connally described the Community Police Advisory Committee process for reviewing complaints. Chief Connally offered to have a more thorough discussion with Mr. Radke outside of the Committee.

Next Steps: Whitney Lanning reported that the meeting notes would be going out to the Committee, along with a survey to collect the Committee's recommendations for substance abuse resources in our community.

Whitney discussed the protests that had been occurring across the country and shared her appreciation of how Chief Connally, the SJPD and all our local law enforcement were handling the situation. She stated that the ability to have an open dialogue about race and community policing are incredibly important. Whitney stated she'd met with Mayor McMurray and Chief Connally and together they'd discussed creating a sub-committee to discuss best practices and assess racial disparities in our local criminal justice system. Whitney asked the committee if this was something they'd be interested in creating. Drew Brown shared that he'd done similar work with another organization and would be interesting in serving on the sub-committee. Mike Cazel and Seargent Dudley stated they'd like to serve on the sub-committee as well.

Whitney stated that she'd get with the sub-committee volunteers and set up a date/time to meet, with the goal of having recommendations ready for the full committee at the September meeting.

Next Meeting: September 21, 2020; 12:30pm, City Hall – 4th Floor Conference Room

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:44pm.

Prepared by: Whitney Lanning