



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

CITY-COUNTY HEROIN, OPIOID, AND COCAINE TASK FORCE

ALD. MICHAEL MURPHY, CHAIR

Michael Lappen, Vice-Chair

James Mathy, Ald. Khalif Rainey, Marisol Cervera, Ryan Shogren, Daniel Bukiewicz, Ken Ginlack, Cassandra Libal, Jamaal Smith, and Michael Wright

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Friday, February 14, 2020

9:00 AM

Room 301-B, Third Floor, City Hall

1. Call to order.

Meeting convened at 9:02 a.m.

2. Roll call.

Present 8 - Murphy, Lappen, Cervera, Mathy, Shogren, Bukiewicz, Kowalik and Vann

Absent 1 - Rainey

3. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes.

The meeting minutes from July 26, 2019 were approved without objection.

4. City-County efforts, programs, initiatives, grants or activities update.

Chair Murphy commented. Medical Examiner statistics showed a terrible 2019 for Milwaukee County with over 402 fatal overdose deaths, which were more than 2018. The crisis has not plateaued. More effort is needed to address the crisis. The numbers could have been worse without the task force's recommendations and the initiatives from the City and County. There are positive initiatives that are ongoing.

a. NAACHO updates

1. Connections to Heal events

This item was not discussed.

b. Oxford House

Appearing:

Ryan Clevenger, Oxford House

Jonathan Gildart, Oxford House

Vice-chair Lappen said that a safe and sober housing initiative has been formed with

Oxford House to help address the challenge of securing housing for people of recovery, and more money has been given to expand the model.

Mr. Clevenger and Gildart gave an overview. Oxford House is a nonprofit, started in 1975, has about 2800 houses in 47 states and 4 countries, provides safe and sober housing with support, is transitional housing based on evidentiary practices, helps serve a gap, and is a self-driven peer model that empowers residents to learn skills to return to self-dependency. Residents hold contributing roles within the household, hold each other accountable, and contribute funds to cover household costs collectively. The first two houses in Milwaukee County will be opened this March 4th with one house holding 10 women and the second house holding 9 men. There can be more houses, as much as possible, if given the opportunity. There are over 300 Oxford House houses in the State of Washington.

Members inquired about licensing requirements, funding sources, violations of recovery, issues with neighbors, visitations, and recovery meetings.

Mr. Clevenger and Gildart replied. Oxford House falls under single-family housing serving persons with a disability, so there are no unique or additional licensing requirements. Oxford House is only a housing component with no programming onsite. Programming occurs outside of the home. Original funding came from federal block grants in 1988. Residents are responsible to be self-supporting and split costs to pay rent. Money from residents is not paying any salaries. The maximum amount of residents in a home is 10. Residents in violation of their recovery or other requirements would be evicted. Oxford House would still try to provide further treatment and support to violators. There is initial fear and stigma from neighbors, but over the long term, that stigma goes away. Neighbors do come to find that Oxford House homes are good and well-maintained facilities in the long-term. Family and children can visit the homes and possibly stay overnight. Houses can be done with women or men with their children, which is a future goal. Residents can prefer the type of supportive, intervention, or recovery meetings that they would want to participate in, such as AA meetings. The mission of Oxford House is to empower and give tools to persons of recovery to be successful.

Mr. Clevenger added that he'll be a staff resident, has been with multiple Oxford House homes nationwide for a long time, has an extensive network and support, and helps residents to network with community agencies for employment and skill building.

c. Other

Appearing:

Courtney Geiger, Milwaukee Health Department

Jonathan Belott, Milwaukee Fire Department

Chair Murphy said that the Center of Disease Control awarded over \$700,000 to the Milwaukee Overdose Response Initiative (MORI) to expand the program. MORI is a partnership between the Milwaukee Health Department, Fire Department, County Behavioral Health, and numerous community partners to decrease overdose fatalities and increase access to treatment for those at risk with a team of fire paramedics and peer support specialist responding to overdose patients.

Ms. Geiger gave an update. The grant was approved on November 8, 2019, and implementation of expanded services occurred after January 6, 2020. Since the

program's inception in June 2019, the response team was only out for 6 hours a day for 4 days a week. The grant has allowed the team to go out 8 hours a day for 6 days a week. Prior to January 6, 2020 there were a total of 24 transports to treatment. Between January 6 to 30, 2020 there were 15 transports to treatment.

Lieutenant Belott added remarks. He is the MORI manager. An extra person has been working with the response team to go out and find more patients and contacts. Patients, at a minimum, have been willing to be informed about treatment services. Patients would be referred out to different agencies. Two weeks ago about 30 people received Narcan training on a Saturday event. The additional funding has allowed more time and ability to follow-up with patients, which was an issue before. Patients are starting to be aware of MORI.

Chair Murphy said that the grant will look at the effectiveness of the program through metrics, and it appears that the program is effective so far.

5. Discussion on proposed Medicaid regulations for reimbursement of residential treatment services for SUDs.

Vice-chair Lappen said that there was a move from the State to change regulations for funding residential treatment services for SUDs, which would have adversely impacted community provider networks and current residential treatment services in its original version.

Member Cervera commented. There was a cohort who provided feedback to the State. The proposed Medicaid legislation is currently on hold to garner additional feedback from providers. Concerns of the legislation have been on reduced rates, reimbursement timelines, streamlining process, scope of services, and loss of services.

Vice-chair Lappen added comments. The County is working to preserve and expand networks and services. The State has cancelled the roll-out of the proposed benefit. The hope is that the next version of the proposal is more supportive of community providers and allows the County to use its funds to fill gaps.

6. Discussion on the Opioid Data System bill.

Chair Murphy said that there is a bill in the State Senate and Assembly with bipartisan support that would appropriate \$1.5 million from the Department of Administration (DOA) to create a data system. The DOA would collaborate and work with state and local agencies to collect data regarding opioid and meth use. It is anticipated that the legislation will move forward with approval by the governor. About \$95 million has been allocated since 2018 from federal and state governments to address the opioid epidemic, but there has been lacking adequate review of the data to determine the effectiveness of programs. The data system would serve to better analyze the effectiveness of programs with metrics statewide.

7. Public comments.

Paul Mozina testified that the task force needs to reconsider the war on drugs and its effects on crime, violence, incarceration, trauma, use of guns; the criminal justice system and criminalization of drugs need to be reconsidered; the war on drugs have led users to unsafely seek out drugs on the streets rather than through safer, legalized

means; drug use and deaths will continue with no end; people should have the right to consume anything they want; fentanyl and other drugs are able to be produced in the streets; and treatment efforts should be diverted to educate children and people about proper and improper products and drugs for consumption.

Rafael Mercado, Team Havoc, testified that his organization has gained nonprofit status; lacking at the task force is the issue of methamphetamines and representation of the City's north side and its different drug issues, such as cocaine; people use drugs for treatment; he had a difficult upbringing and overcame issues with drugs, gangs, and PTSD; is contributing back to the community by helping users get treatment; helping incarcerated persons by teaching them construction trades and getting them employed; and sober safe zone programs need to be created with the utilization of vacant homes and employment of incarcerated persons reentering the workforce.

8. Agenda items for the next meeting.

Member Vann commented that recidivism, drug use, and overdose is an ongoing major issue for incarcerates and the penal system. There should be continual efforts to educate the penal system about harm reduction.

Chair Murphy said that harm reduction is being done with a BHD grant from the Center of Disease Control, and he is hopeful for a long-term impact.

Vice-chair Lappen added remarks. BHD did receive a recent award to expand the work they're doing with the House of Corrections to provide Vivitrol. BHD can possibly come to the next task meeting to present more information on the program with the House of Corrections, family drug treatment court, and other prevention programs.

Remaining agenda items to be determined.

9. Set next meeting date and time.

To be determined for April or May.

10. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 9:54 a.m.

*Chris Lee, Staff Assistant
Council Records Section
City Clerk's Office*

This meeting can be viewed in its entirety through the City's Legislative Research Center at <http://milwaukee.legistar.com/calendar>.

Materials from this meeting can be found within the following file:

[191567](#)

Communication relating to the 2020 activities of the City-County Heroin, Opioid and Cocaine Task Force.

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THE CHAIR