

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
MAYOR'S OPIOID TASK FORCE  
131 NORTH MAIN STREET  
OCTOBER 16, 2023 @ 5:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDEES:**

Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano  
Chief Brian Gould  
Christina Benvenuto  
Laura Libby  
Dr. Andrew Lim  
Lisa Coates  
Christie Ganavage  
Kristina Tanguay  
Scott Rosado  
Mallory Deprey  
Daniel Jackson  
Sandra Kamens  
Alyssa Marin  
Chad Layton  
Courtney Dollar  
Michael Tinley  
Matt Norton  
Karen Barron (zoom)  
Karen Kiley (zoom)  
Angie BBHD (zoom)  
Despina Loukas (zoom)  
Gennesis Ojeda – Recording Secretary

**ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS**

Mayor Caggiano called the meeting to order at 5:00 followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ITEM #2 – ACCEPTANCE OF MAY AND AUGUST, 2023 MINUTES**

The Committee did not approve the minutes as Sandra Kamens did not have an opportunity to review them.

A **motion** was made by Sandra Kamens to table the approval of meeting minutes and **seconded** by Chief Gould. All in favor.

### **ITEM #3 – UPDATE ITEMS**

#### **ITEM #3A – COBRA & BRISTOL POLICE PARTNERSHIP**

No action taken.

#### **ITEM #3B - B.E.S.T.**

Mike Tingley reported that the billboard on Middle Street is working because 10 people have signed up for training. B.E.S.T has also paid for a speaker for an Overdose seminar at the schools.

#### **ITEM #3C – MAYOR’S UPDATE**

Tiny Tanguay stated that in the month of September there were 8 non-fatal overdoses and 7 deaths related to overdoses. In the past couple of years we have had an increase in deaths from overdoses. Tina gave information on how overdoses are broken down: They are broken down by year, age group, gender, location, what causes them and the root of ingestion. People think this is a homelessness issue but it’s not. It’s people in their own homes snorting drugs. The main driver of this is non-Hispanic white males that are using an unknown substance. Whether that be Fentanyl that can’t be tested right away or another drug. Fentanyl is very popular right now and it is in other drugs and this is what is accounting for the deaths.

Courtney Dollar stated that OD Map is what is reported to poison control and the lab data when they do the toxicology reports, sometimes those two don’t match. People will admit to a lower use of drug use, like just smoking weed. So, sometimes what is being reported as an overdose isn’t always accurate. It is however, crack and pill users. Her biggest concern is Xylazine and the wounds it’s causing.

#### **ITEM #4 - NEW BUSINESS**

##### **ITEM #4A – OPIOID SETTLEMENT/CANNABIS REVENUE DISCUSSION AND TO TAKE ANY ACTION AS NECESSARY.**

The Mayor stated that the City of Bristol has approximately \$125,000.00, which is 15% of the Opioid settlement money from the State of Connecticut. The State has a total of \$60 million and 15% of that is dedicated to the Cities and Towns in Connecticut. New Britain is a larger town so they would receive more. The other 85% of those funds will be open for grant type proposals and they will be opening up RFP’s for that portion of the funds this month. By the end of the year the State will start allocating money.

The Mayor stated we also have our cannabis revenue coming in. [He discussed the creation of Truelieve for those who did not attend previous meeting.] We currently have \$25,000 which the Board of Finance is going to make a final decision on where to allocate that money. We would like to use the money for future programs.

The Mayor then asked a representative from Bristol Health to speak to the Committee about a proposal of how to spend some of these funds.

Christina Benvenuto, Director of Security at Bristol Health stated that they are struggling to keep staff safe when someone is in crisis or someone is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. They are looking for assistance in funding programs to put safety measures in place to keep staff, other patients and visitors safe. The Bristol Health staff has been trained in de-escalization of patients which is verbal communication. They are looking to use some of the Opioid funds to train their staff in what's called MOAB (Management of Aggressive Behavior), which teaches them to physically subdue a patient. Total cost for this request is \$91,450.30 of which Bristol Health is asking the City for \$13,097.50.

She continued to state that in their new Emergency Department, they are lacking security camera coverage and are asking the City for some assistance. Total cost for this request is \$27,554.00 of which Bristol Health is asking the City for \$27,554.00.

In addition, they are also requesting assistance for personal panic alarms around their campus so if there is a safety issue they would have the panic alarm to alert security. Total cost for this request is \$125,000.00 of which Bristol Health is asking the City for is \$83,348.50.

A **motion** was made by Chief Gould and **seconded** by Chad Layton to allow the Board of Finance to look into allocating money from the Cannabis revenue for Bristol Health to fund their MOAB (Managing Aggressive Behavior) training, extra security cameras in the Emergency Department and for Personal Panic alarms on Bristol Health Campus for staff safety.

#### **ITEM #4B – 2024/2025 CALENDER AND TO TAKE ANY ACTION AS NECESSARY.**

A **motion** was made by Chief Gould to set the meeting dates for next year as follows: January 15, April 15, July 15, and October 14, 2024 and **seconded** by Chad Layton. All in favor.

#### **ITEM #5 - ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcements made.

#### **ITEM # 6 – ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

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Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano  
Mayor's Opioid Task Force

| <b>1. <u>Applicant Details</u></b> |                                                   |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Name:                              | Christine Laprise<br>Vice President of Operations |
| Organization Name:                 | Bristol Health                                    |
| Contact Number:                    | 860-585-3157                                      |
| Email:                             | claprise@bristolhospital.org                      |
| Are you applying as:               | Non-Profit Entity                                 |

| <b>2. <u>Project Details</u></b> |                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name of project:                 | <b>Bristol Health Safety and Security Infrastructure for Enhanced Treatment of Substance Misuse</b> |
| Requested Funding Amount:        | <b>\$124,000</b>                                                                                    |

**Project Description:**

Bristol Hospital is Bristol's only full-service acute care hospital. We continuously work on expanding services to meet the needs of the greater Bristol community with a specific focus on underserved populations. Our mission statement is simple, "Caring Today for your Tomorrow." As echoed in our Vision Statement, we believe in advancing the health of our community through integrated, innovative, and individualized care. We hold our values of Communication, Accountability, Respect and Empathy (CARE) of utmost importance during all interactions within our organization.

We continue to prioritize the needs of the city's residents and are ever-evolving its service offerings as needed. Bristol Health's 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) highlights the continued need of a robust and diverse mental

health program to support our population. Of the CHNA respondents, substance and/or alcohol misuse was selected as the most prevalent key health issue overall (82.4%), with mental health and suicide selected as the second most prevalent issue in the City of Bristol (78.4%). Furthermore, the Zip Code for Bristol is part of the CDC and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's social vulnerability index making Behavioral Health a needed healthcare service after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bristol Health is seeking funds to satisfy the need for increased safety measures for the hospital campus and staff members as evident by the increase of violent patient behavior. Much of this violence is caused by patients struggling with substance misuse and behavioral health disorders. In fiscal year 2023 alone there were a total of 48 physical and 11 verbal assaults on our staff, the majority taking place in our Emergency Department. While it is our duty to take care of anyone who walks through our doors, it is imperative that we simultaneously protect the safety and wellbeing of our staff, visitors, and other patients. These funds would allow for our front-line clinical staff to be properly trained to de-escalate aggressive patients who may have altered mental status due to substance misuse, call for help to a precise location, and utilize upgraded camera technology to foresee and review any violent incidents.

**Please describe how you developed your requested funding amount:**

Our funding request for these increased safety measures is composed of three separate needs. In order to ensure our employees are properly trained to handle aggressive behavior, thorough training is necessary. To be fiscally responsible and efficient, we plan to send 5 key leaders to an in-person Management of Aggressive Behavior or "MOAB" training course to learn these skills and become certified instructors themselves. Leaders will learn strategies for preventing and defusing aggressive behavior as well as controlling and restraining individuals who become aggressive. MOAB training is a recognized tool to safely care for aggressive patients who may have altered mental status due to substance misuse. This specific training costs \$1,895 per person, leading to a total cost of \$9,475. From there, these individuals will be able to train our frontline staff of approximately 210 employees in our facility for a

much smaller investment of approximately \$17.25 a person, totalling \$3,622.50. This approach allows for adequate training of our frontline staff while also ensuring there is a sustainability plan for new staff and renewal training. Bristol Health intends to fund future training needs past this one time expense. Additionally, Bristol Health will cover the cost to backfill their positions while they are training, approximately \$78,352.00.

Bristol Hospital's primary external vulnerability is our campus lay out and the lack of adequate external surveillance we currently have to appropriately monitor activity. The hospital campus contains several buildings, each with their own unique traffic pattern and security needs. Our Emergency Department is considered one of our high-risk areas as it sees the most workplace violence incidents and is the front door for patients under the influence of opioids and other drugs experiencing a medical or traumatic issue. Increased camera surveillance in the emergency department is necessary because they experience all kinds of unpredictable behavior from patients transported by police, ambulance, or themselves. Cameras on the building exterior, road, parking lots and key internal areas would serve as a deterrent for many people to act in an aggressive manner if they know they are being filmed. A decrease in aggressive behavior would allow for faster medical intervention if a patient is under the influence from substance misuse. Furthermore, increased camera surveillance would allow for incident review to share with the police post-incident and can be used, with patient permission, as a training tool. Cameras also increase patient safety as they allow for remote monitoring by staff members to watch for violent behavior towards themselves or others. The cost of this additional surveillance technology is estimated at \$27,554.00.

The final component to this safety and security infrastructure program is to fund additional panic alarms for the campus. These alarms would be placed at vulnerable locations as well as on staff persons for use if under duress. Panic alarms not only provide safety to staff but also for patients. For example, a staff member can activate the panic alarm to request more resources to help a patient under the influence of opioids who may have suicidal ideations. The total for the personal panic alarms including licenses, software, hardware and charging stations is approximately \$125,000.

We are asking for \$83,348.50 from funding from the City of Bristol and Bristol Health will cover the remaining.

The total expenses for this project is for \$244,004.30. Bristol Health formally requests \$124,000 available through the City's Opioid Task Force funding. Please find the table below which details the costs and funding requirements for each portion of this project.

| <b>Total Number</b>                               | <b>Requested Item Description</b>                                                      | <b>Total Item Cost</b> | <b>Bristol Health Contribution</b> | <b>Request of City of Bristol</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Management of Aggressive Behavior Training</b> |                                                                                        |                        |                                    |                                   |
| 5                                                 | Instructor Certification Course Training (\$1,895.00/person)                           | \$9,475.00             | \$0.00                             | \$9,475.00                        |
| 210                                               | In-House staff training (\$17.25/person)                                               | \$3,622.50             | \$0.00                             | \$3,622.50                        |
|                                                   | Staff Shift Coverage for Training                                                      | \$78,352.80            | \$78,352.80                        | \$0.00                            |
|                                                   | <b>Total Estimated MOAB Training Costs</b>                                             | <b>\$91,450.30</b>     | <b>\$78,352.80</b>                 | <b>\$13,097.50</b>                |
| <b>Campus Cameras</b>                             |                                                                                        |                        |                                    |                                   |
| 3                                                 | ED Exterior (\$2,348.00/unit)                                                          | \$7,046.00             | \$0.00                             | \$7,046.00                        |
| 1                                                 | ED Road                                                                                | \$6,732.00             | \$0.00                             | \$6,732.00                        |
| 1                                                 | ED Parking Lots                                                                        | \$6,732.00             | \$0.00                             | \$6,732.00                        |
| 1                                                 | ED South Conference Room                                                               | \$2,348.00             | \$0.00                             | \$2,348.00                        |
| 1                                                 | ED South Corner Blind Spot                                                             | \$2,348.00             | \$0.00                             | \$2,348.00                        |
| 5                                                 | ED Hallway (\$469.60/unit)                                                             | \$2,348.00             | \$0.00                             | \$2,348.00                        |
|                                                   | <b>Total Estimated Camera Costs</b>                                                    | <b>\$27,554.00</b>     | <b>\$0.00</b>                      | <b>\$27,554.00</b>                |
| <b>Panic Alarms</b>                               |                                                                                        |                        |                                    |                                   |
|                                                   | Personal Panic Alarm Program (Alarms, licenses, software, hardware, charging stations) | \$125,000.00           | \$41,651.50                        | \$83,348.50                       |
|                                                   | <b>Total Estimated Panic Alarm Cost</b>                                                | <b>\$125,000.00</b>    | <b>\$41,651.50</b>                 | <b>\$83,348.50</b>                |
|                                                   | <b>Total Project Expenses</b>                                                          | <b>\$244,004.30</b>    | <b>\$120,004.30</b>                | <b>\$124,000.00</b>               |

**Please describe why you believe your project is an allowable use of funds:**

Substance misuse of drugs such as opioids are not a stand alone health issue, as common mental health disorders are associated with the onset of taking them in the general population, according to JAMA Internal Medicine (Sullivan, 2006). The NIH highlights that in 2016, of the more than 2 million U.S adults who used opioids, 62% of them had a co-occurring mental illness (NIH, 2023). According to the American Addiction Centers research, up to 75% of individuals being treated for substance misuse have engaged in physical assault, mugging, and using a weapon to attack someone among other violent crimes (American Addiction Center, 2022). With this knowledge, it is no surprise that national rates of violent attacks against medical professionals grew by 63% from 2011-2018 according to AAMC News, and has escalated further since the beginning of COVID-19.

Furthermore, the International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety found in a recent crime survey that the rate of hospital violent crime has increased by 47% since 2020 and unfortunately, Bristol Health is not exempt from this trend. Locally, we have seen similar trends in crime rate. According to police reports gathered by the Bristol PD, calls and subsequent arrests made at the hospital have increased since 2020. In 2020, 199 calls for service and 7 arrests, followed by 175 service calls and 10 arrests in 2021. In 2022 calls for service increased to 208, leading to 7 arrests.

Bristol Health contributes to the COBRA program through many of our individual entities' direct involvement in assisting citizens into the program. Our EMS team transports patients to our Emergency Department for proper evaluation and care. Between January to September of 2023, our EMS team responded to more than 15 overdose/substance misuse calls per month. Of those, over 50% of the calls involved a physical assault, verbal assault, threat of violence, or disorderly person. A violent patient who may be misusing opioids cannot be discharged from Bristol Hospital without a provider's clearance making this project a worthwhile investment for the community.

# Sen. Martin in support of improving safety for healthcare providers, patients

MARCH 13, 2023

## **Sen. Martin in support of improving safety for healthcare providers, patients**

Bristol Press

BRISTOL – Sen. Henri Martin spoke in support of improving safety for healthcare providers and patients Monday.

Martin, a Republican who represents Bristol, Harwinton, Plainville, Plymouth and Thomaston, joined other legislators and healthcare providers in speaking in support of House Bill 6741. The bill seeks to address violence against healthcare workers and assist hospitals in increasing workplace safety.

Martin said that the legislation was put forth in response to a spike in abuse of hospital staff.

"We have seen in recent years a startling spike in verbal abuse and physical attacks on doctors, nurses, and hospital staff," said Martin. "As we saw during the pandemic, our health care workers are essential to the public health of our communities. It is absolutely unacceptable to stand by and allow these health care employees to work in abusive working environments."