

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
MAYOR'S OPIOID TASK FORCE
MAIN LIBRARY, 5 HIGH STREET
LOWER LEVEL, MEETING ROOM #3
APRIL 18, 2022 @ 5:00 p.m.**

ATTENDEES:

Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano
Chief Brian Gould
Courtney Dollar
Frank Caputo
Sandy Kamens
Chad Leyton
Tina Tanquay
Matt Norton
Tom Palmer
Heather Hitchcock
Lori Kibbe
Tamara Carlson
Dr. Dietter
Karen Kiley
Gina Rose
Angie Andrukiewicz
Christine Thebarger
Janelle Howard
Leandro Encanacion
Kay White
Noelle Bates – Recording Secretary

ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

Mayor Caggiano opened up the meeting at 5:00 p.m. He welcomed the members back after not having a meeting since February 4, 2021. He stated the focus of this meeting was to update how things have been going and what goals we want to set for 2022 and beyond. He stated that he would like to have this Committee meet regularly on a quarterly basis. He then had the members introduce themselves.

ITEM #2 – ACCEPTANCE OF FEBRUARY 2021 MINUTES

A **Motion** was made by Sandy Kamens and **Seconded** by Matt Norton to approve the minutes of the February 2021 Minutes. All in favor.

ITEM #3 – UPDATE ITEMS

ITEM #3A – COBRA & BRISTOL POLICE PARTNERSHIP

Chief Gould gave a brief background on the program stating that the police officers have the ability to refer people to Bristol Hospital for treatment rather than making an arrest for low level drug offenses. The program is doing very well and they are continually make referrals and connecting people to the proper treatment and services.

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

Jannelle Howard updated the Committee stating that she, Chad and Sandy have been running the coalition for two years on keeping people connected to prevention and awareness of addiction. They have been attending local events such as the Farmers Market and the Duck Race to get information out to the public. They are currently conducting team nights which meets once a month.

ITEM #4 - NEW BUSINESS

ITEM #4A - DISCUSSION OF 2022 DATA

ITEM #4B – POST-COVID MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Angie Andrukiewicz gave an update on the 2022 data on overdoses and suicides. She uses a program called Epi Center and OD Map to track the data, which is tied to Bristol Hospital. Basically, she can see all the nurse's notes except for the person's name. This allows her to know whether someone is being treated for opioids or if they are a frequent flyer.

She has noticed an increase in deaths; 5 in December, 2021, 2 in January 2022, 6 in February 2022, and 4 in March, 2022. She is concerned that people don't have the money to get to treatment.

The OD Map has shown an increase in the suicidal rates. The overall trends seem to be from 16 and up. The past year has been the biggest year for deaths and stated she believes it is due to a lack of awareness to resources. The goal should be to get information out to the right audience. She stated that suicide is up 33% across the nation. Chad Leyton stated that the rate has increased 234% in the nation in the last 10 years and he is concerned what the next 10 years will bring.

ITEM 4C – PRIORITIES FOR 2022

Chad Leyton stated that an article was recently submitted by People's magazine regarding phetynol deaths. In the past year phetynol deaths were people between the ages of 13 and 29. He meet with the Rotary Club to address these issues. They have planned a big calendar of events throughout the year, but states that this will only scratch the surface. They have created a coloring book that addresses opioid awareness and he would like to be able to get these into

restaurants, doctor's office, schools, etc. Chief Gould asked if he had a supply of coloring books so he could take some to distribute to his officers as they do a lot of community outreach.

Chief Gould also stated that we need to ramp up our social media platforms and our gas station PSA's. He stated that the phentynol situation is getting worse in the country. We now have younger children overdosing on marijuana that is laced with phetynol. So, we need to get that outreach back out there and we need to get these programs back going. It's great that we are back in the school system. He believes that we need to focus on everyone, but the stop gap is going to be with our youth. We need to get the youth to understand how dangerous and deadly this is. The State and legislation has done a good job and the lawsuits have had an impact on making the medical industry accountable and looking at other alternatives instead of prescribing this medication.

Dr. Dietter responded to a question from the Mayor about what is being done in the school system and he stated that he has had some preliminary conversations with Janelle, B.E.S.T., Youth and Community Services as well as the Police Department for perhaps another community forum. He has been noticing an increase in THC and opioid products in the schools. They have been working hand and glove with the Police Department to have a calibrated response to that and it really is around education and diversion. The BOE is partnering with the Parks Department and Youth Services for a 6 week educational program. He has been hearing from a lot of parents and guardians that they have no idea what to be looking for as far as the gummies and other paraphernalia that are out there and it creates a challenge. They have been trying to educate them on how to spot such things. Through the Student Health Program, they have been trying to provide support, education and resources.

Tamara Carlson agrees with Dr. Dietter stating that at the Bristol Boys & Girls club, the parents don't have the knowledge to recognize what to look for. In talking to the kids at the program, they have found that the kids don't want to sit and listen to a lecture about opioids. They stated that it would be more impactful if they meet people who have gone through this who have been addicted to a drug and had come off of it. They also wanted to know where they could go as a safe place if their parents or other members of their household are addicted to opioids.

Courtney Dollar disagrees with the narrative that the marijuana is being laced with phetynol and people are overdosing from it. We have to be careful about the data we put out to the public. There was a recent case where 37 people in Thomaston had overdosed on phetynol laced marijuana which was all over the news. What they found out later was that every person, with the exception of one, had phetynol in their system or a history of phetynol or opioid addiction. So this doesn't necessarily mean that the phetynol was in the marijuana and we need to be careful about sending out misinformation.

Gina Rose stated that their agency is greatly diversifying their services and highly motivated to join Wheeler Clinic and the school system, as well as other after school programs to help counsel children and families that have substance abuse as a primary diagnosis, as well as other conditions that can predispose someone to maladaptive coping in the future. This would include difficult to treat depression, anxiety and other sociological issues that create a lot of stress that

lead to people believing that their only escape is to be under the influence. They would like to do a weekend to educate people on things that they have become aware of as risk factors to be able to help promote a thorough knowledge of how someone is at risk in appropriate ways. She suggested a permanent needle exchange, early childhood prevention program and town educational forums, and consistent access to naran.

The Mayor stated there are a lot of Commissions that meet on a monthly basis and his goal would be to meet on a quarterly basis and to know who we might be missing on this Task Force and to invite them. The group suggested people from Fire, EMS, Anna Gopian from Tricircle and Lisa Coates (who could not attend today's meeting).

Christine Thebarger stated that CHMA was awarded a five year grant. They have a team that works with mental health and opioid addicted homeless people. They have been getting folks that they've seen for years that have not been able to get into programs and have now been able to get them into programs over the last month and a half.

Sandy Kamens stated that in 2021 the Department of Addiction Services had to give money back to the Governor which caused the outpatient and inpatient sectors to close down and they lost so many beds that if you had someone that wanted to go into treatment, a bed wasn't available. We need to contact our legislatures to let them know this has to be a priority to open those sites again so people have a place to go. The Mayor has some connections to someone who runs these treatment centers and maybe he could invite them to a meeting to let us know what is available and what we need to do to connect those people to services.

The Mayor would like to conduct these meetings the third Monday of the month on a quarterly schedule. He suggested a June and September meeting. The next meeting will be scheduled for June 27th at 5:00 as June 20th is a holiday, Juneteenth.

ITEM #5 - ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Chad Leyton suggested visiting their booth whenever they are at an event to say hi as this will attract many more people to them.

Lori Kibbe stated Alare Caring has a program called the Believe Program which brings in nursing services into sober homes which has been successful. It helps people coming out of detox facilities.

Frank Caputo reported on the Accessline by Wheeler Clinic which provides transportation for people who want to get into detox or rehab and it is funded by DMAS. They are having difficulty finding beds. He will do some research into finding more beds through area hospitals. Accessline number is 211.

May 8th – May 14 is National Prevention Week.

There is a new Medical Director at Behavioral Health at Bristol Hospital and her forte is dual diagnosis and they are looking into opening a dual diagnosis unit at Bristol Hospital. They just need to allocate the money.

DEA take back day is next Saturday at the Police Station behind the building. Lt. Osborne will have a flyer to share with everyone.

A flyer will be going out on events that B.E.S.T. will be hosting.

Pride Survey has been implemented in the schools which collects data about youth engagement with substances. The teachers have the surveys and will be conducting it in the 8th, 10th and 12th grades. The survey will be for those students whose parents have opted into it.

NAMI Walk is the 3rd Saturday in May.

CHAT MESSAGE ITEMS:

Angie Andrukiewicz

<https://bbhd.org/opioids/> has a list of our local resources (thevan/cobra/root center), etc. BBHD is discussing a permanent needle exchange – will keep everyone posted with updates I will have updated opioid and suicide related data each meeting! Here is a website to find treatment as well: <https://findtreatment.gov/results> just put in the zipcode

Kay White

Anyone who wants hours of the mobile van hours please contact me or Angela – kwhite@ct-hra.org

Leandeo Encarnacion

If anyone is interested in learning more about Unite Us please email me leandro.encarnacion@uniteus.com

Gina Rose

To refer someone to Methadone, Suboxone, Vivitrol treatment options or Intensive out patient programs, counseling, and alternative treatment like Ketamine or Trans Magnetic Stimulation call Root Center for Advanced Recovery 1-800-862-2181. There are less barriers to treatment than ever before, only needing insurance IF you have it and an ID, which can include a birth certificate or social security card.

Root Center for Advanced Recovery representative Gina Rose LCSW Senior Counselor and Community Outreach professional can be reached at 860-973-0203 for questions/information

Karen Kiley

NAMI Walk 3rd Saturday in May. Always a lot of great info at all the booths. I will be at Beacon-stop and say hello.

Mayor's Opioid Task Force
Minutes: April 18, 2022

ITEM # 6 – ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, June 27th at 5:00 in the Bristol Library, 5 High Street, Lower Level, Meeting Room 3.

Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano
Mayor's Opioid Task Force