

COMBAT Commission Meeting
February 11, 2021, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Zoom Meeting
Minutes

Present:

Mark Bryant
Stephanie Burton
Larry Beaty
Arimeta Dupree
Alfred Jordan
Dr. Joseph Spalitto
Elizabeth Williams

Also Present:

Vince Ortega, COMBAT
Dawna J. Shumate, COMBAT
Jean Peters Baker, JACO Prosecutor
Jennifer Dameron, JACO Prosecutor's Office
Jay Haden, JACO County Counselor's Office
Theresa Cass Galvin, Jackson County Legislator
Keron Hopkins, COMBAT
Holli Crowley, COMBAT
Tammie Jordan, COMBAT
LaTasha Bunting, COMBAT
Joe Loudon, COMBAT
Dr. Robert Cordell, Raytown School District
Major Derek McCollum, KCPD
Chief Bob Muenz, Blue Springs Police

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM.

Minutes Approved:

Dr. Joseph Spalitto motioned to approve the November 12, 2020 meeting minutes; Arimeta Dupree seconded; motion passed.

DISCUSSION:

New Commissioners

COMBAT Director Vince Ortega introduced three new commissioners, Stephanie Burton, Alfred Jordan and Elizabeth Williams. Chairman Larry Beaty encouraged all commissioners to attend meetings of COMBAT's STRIVIN' Initiative participants to learn about the holistic approach COMBAT and its partner agencies are taking to address substance abuse and reduce violence, with an emphasis on agencies working together.

Getting Individuals Into Treatment, Rather Than Into The Criminal Justice System

Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker alerted Commissioners that COMBAT administration will be rigidly enforcing new rules prohibiting use of COMBAT funding for capital improvements. She also noted that the Prosecutor's Office and COMBAT will be working with community partners to get individuals into treatment programs more effectively than in the past. She emphasized that data indicates that less than 30 percent of individuals with drug offenses have a violent nexus related to their offense. Public safety concerns, she stressed, will determine what is in the community's best interest regarding which individuals should be directed to treatment, rather than involvement through the criminal justice process.

Commissioner Stephanie Burton has about treating individuals with a dual diagnosis (a diagnosis of having both a mental health issue and a substance use disorder). Prosecutor Peters Baker pointed out the use of treatment-based models, with the Prosecutor's Office and COMBAT diverting individuals to ReDiscover for full analysis of those individuals' health needs.

Peters Baker added that not all "drug problems" need to be addressed in the criminal justice system. Most individuals, she said, need to be sent directly to a treatment facility as data shows most drug-related offenses do not involve violence, even when use a broad definition of violence.

Chairman Larry Beaty emphasized the need for trauma-informed care to be provided to holistically treat substance use disorders.

Violence Cases Top Priority

Prosecutor Peters Baker stressed the need for criminal justice resources to be directed toward violent crimes (homicides and non-fatal shootings), especially after the COVID-19 pandemic closed courtrooms and suspending trials. Treatment is often the better option for resolving drug-related cases.

Introductions

COMBAT staff and KCPD Major Derek McCollum introduced themselves to the new COMBAT Commission. Major McCollum noted that he will provide activity reports to the Commission and that most of the KCPD Narcotics & Vice Unit's based almost all its activities from crime tips from the community, as well as an analysis of crime data directing the unit which locations need its attention.

Blue Springs Police Chief Bob Muenz introduced himself as chair of the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

NEW BUSINESS:

Raytown School District STRIVIN' Initiative

Dr. Robert Cordell of the Raytown School District discussed the district's application for funding of a social worker to serve the district's three middle schools to help address the high demand among the 1,900 students in the three schools and those students' families needing social services.

The recommendation to approve the district's application was tabled.

Meeting adjourned at 11:44 AM.