

Drug Commission Meeting
September 11, 2018, 1:30-3:30pm
Downtown Courthouse, 415 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, MO
Legislative Chambers
Minutes

Present:

James Witteman, Jr.
Keith Query
Lanna Ultican
Gene Morgan
Mark S. Bryant
Melesa Johnson
Larry Beaty
Dr. Joseph Spalitto

Also Present:

Vince Ortega, COMBAT
Jean Peters Baker, JACO Prosecutor
Jay Hayden, County Counselor's Office
Major Helen Burke, KCPD
Theresa Galvin, JACO Legislator
Ashley Burke, Assistant to County Executive Office
Celestine Williams, Deputy Auditor
Teesha Miller, PDMP
Jane Cavanaugh, Legislative Aid
Winifred Jamieson, Legislative Aid
Jennifer Dameron, JACO Prosecutor's Office
Tammie, Jordan, COMBAT
LaTasha Bunting, COMBAT

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM.

Additions to Agenda:

There were no additions to the agenda.

Mark Bryant motioned to approve August minutes with the correction of removing Keith Query from the list of those present at the meeting; Gene Morgan seconded; motion passed.

Jean Peters Baker – Court Ruling

Jean Peters Baker reported on the court ruling that COMBAT is now under the Prosecutor's office. She's excited to work with COMBAT. Jean Peters Baker, Jennifer Dameron, and Gina Robinson will help and assist COMBAT as we move forward. Jean Peters Baker stated that Frank may appeal the decision; however, she is going to move forward. The Executive Director position for COMBAT will be posted this week, nationally, for 30 days. She will have public interviews and she expects it to be a 30 day process.

Commissioner Gene Morgan asked who will be appointing and reappointing the Drug Commissioners. Jean Peters Baker stated that the County Executive will still appoint and reappoint the Drug Commissioners.

Reports from Ex-Officio Drug Commission Members

Major Helen Burke with KCPD reported that there were 23 fatal overdoses and 15 non-fatal overdoses. There has been a large uptake in powder substance in August. They were seeing lots

of Marijuana; however, there has been more powder substance in the past month. One of their canines found 9.3 kilos of Fentanyl. The mayor tweeted about KCPD for the discovery, saying that they have saved many lives.

There were no updates from the Drug Task Force.

Old Business:

ESRI/GIS/Meeting

Vince Ortega reported on the ESRI/GIS meeting. He mentioned how ESRI Software Company wanted to complete a case study on the COMBAT's hot spot Violence Reduction Initiatives. Vince was not satisfied with the final outcome, although the citizens and other government agencies would be able to view what types of projects COMBAT is working on from the ESRI hub platform. Vince reported that KU Professor Dr. Jomella Watson-Thompson is conducting a similar violent crime hot spot project/study in Wyandotte County to systemize this collaborative initiative. She wants to partner with COMBAT to help formalize a system. Vince believes that it will be a great partnership.

Raytown Hotspot Meeting

COMBAT has an initiative to put CCR in Raytown's Alternative High School. Also, COMBAT would like to fund some night classes at the Herndon Career Center. The classes will be from 5-7 PM. It will be for adults aged 18-25 years old and it will be geared towards the trades. We're hoping to have a construction class and GED program.

Commissioner Melesa Johnson asked if we're using social media for the classes. Tammie replied no, not at the moment. Vince stated that this is a pilot program and we will have to see what their capacity is first. Commissioner Lanna Ultican asked if Fort Osage still had their vocational center. She mentioned that Fort Osage and Independence use their vocational school together. Melesa Johnson is willing to post about the classes on her Facebook page and suggested that the Prosecutor's office should do the same.

New Business:

Empowerment Organization for Change - Suspension of COMBAT Funding

COMBAT (Tammie Jordan) made a site visit with the Auditor's office (Celestine Williams) at Empowerment Organization for Change. They observed several violations during the visit. There was no monitor on site so COMBAT staff suspended their funding based on the safety of the clients. According to Scott Johnson with the Missouri Coalition of Recovery Support Providers, Ms. Penny Rice's organization is certified as a level 2 provider and should have a live-in monitor. During the site visit, she did not have one.

Tammie Jordan and Celestine Williams both reported that they felt endangered during the site visit and Tammie mentioned how there is no protocol on the safety of staff during these site visits. Tammie also added that Penny Rice had no staff other than herself during the site visit.

and how hostile Penny Rice was towards them. Celestine reiterated that Penny Rice was very combative and accused them of being racist during the site visit. Penny even threatened to go the Legislators and alone with bad publicity about COMBAT. Regarding the site visit, Celestine mentioned that Penny locks the larger bathroom for her own personal use. Vince stated that Tammie doesn't frighten easily and she was frightened.

Commissioner Keith Query asked if it was a routine visit. For COMBAT, it is. Commissioner Gene Morgan mentioned how she put in her application that it would be her and one other staff member doing all of these services. He stated that she would need at least 6 people to have 24/7 coverage. He also suggest that she should have some time to correct this. Gene Morgan suggested that Penny Rice attend the next meeting. Commissioner Mark Bryant felt that the issue concerning the safety of the employees need to be addressed, however, it is a separate issue. He also mentioned how she was a new funder and has been with COMBAT for less than 90 days. Mark Bryant suggested that Vince get a hold of her and give her 30 days to respond. Commissioner Larry Beaty stated that he was concerned about the personal safety of clients and staff. He believes that this is a toxic situation. He wouldn't want to work with her. Jim Witteman stated that site visits should no longer be conducted alone and that he was concerned about Penny Rice's behavior. He noted that he did not want to discuss the facts since Penny Rice wasn't present at the meeting. Commissioner Dr. Joseph Spalitto wanted to terminate her due to the way she treated staff. He trusts the staff and suggested that we stop the funding. Melesa Johnson stated that she might have felt like her livelihood was being attacked since she's a small operation. Mark Bryant and Gene Morgan both wanted COMBAT to continue funding Empowerment Organization for Change until we hear her side of the story.

Gene Morgan motioned to recommend that COMBAT staff reinstate funding for Empowerment Organization for Change until Penny Rice comes in for a review in 30 days; Mark Bryant seconded; motion passed with objections from Jim Witteman and Larry Beaty.

Tammie reminded the commissioners that Penny Rice doesn't have a financial audit. Jay Hayden mentioned that it's a contract requirement to have an audit. The financial audit has to be done by a CPA. A check shouldn't be released until she has an audit.

Discussions:

There were no discussions.

Announcements:

There were no announcements.

The next Drug Commission meeting is on Tuesday, October 9th at the Jackson County Courthouse.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 PM.