



COMBAT Commission Meeting Minutes
January 14th, 2025 10:00 AM – 11:50 AM
Zoom Only Meeting

Present: Larry Beaty, Joseph Spalitto, Mark Bryant, Liz Williams, Lanna Ultican, Arimeta DuPree

Also Present: Vince Ortega, Dawna J. Shumate, Tammie Jordan, Elle Larson, Joseph Loudon, Shannon Bobo, Major James Buck, Chief Bob Muenz

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM.

APPROVE MINTUES – September 10, 2024

Joseph Spalitto motions to approve the minutes; Arimeta DuPree seconds.

DISCUSSION:

Kansas City Police Department's Report

- Major James Buck reports significantly increased narcotics seizures compared to the prior year, including 27 kilos of cocaine, 1,300 kilos of marijuana, 240 kilos of meth, 28 kilos of PCP, 33 kilos of fentanyl, 14 kilos of ketamine, and 293 firearms. Despite this progress, the large volume indicates a growing drug trafficking problem. He notes that these numbers exclude additional seizures from a Federal Strike Force operation.
- Major Buck explains that meth remains the dominant drug in the area. He raises concern about the prevalence of ketamine, which can make opioid overdoses resistant to Narcan. This necessitates multiple administrations of Narcan—often more than what end users carry—reducing the chances of successful overdose reversals without EMS intervention.
- Commissioner Joseph Spalitto asks: **“Is ketamine being stolen from veterinary clinics or is it being brought in from somewhere else?”** Major Buck explained that **while precise sourcing remains unclear**, the KCPD does know ketamine is being **shipped from elsewhere**.
- Major Buck shares overdose data: 279 suspected overdoses in the Kansas City/Jackson County area in the past year, with 143 of those being fatal. He notes these figures are labeled “suspected” due to the lack of confirmed lab results or official reports.

Jackson County Drug Task Force's Report

- Chief Bob Muenz (BSPD) shares highlights from the Task Force's activities, including an upcoming annual report. The force focuses on the nexus between drugs and violent crime but also handles nuisance complaints. A notable Oak Grove case started as a nuisance issue and escalated into a federal case involving multiple sources, showing the depth and flexibility of their investigations.
- The task force continues to seize large quantities of fentanyl and firearms. Chief Muenz also mentions the discovery of 17 homemade explosive devices, emphasizing the risk level of the environments these investigations uncover.



COMBAT Commissioners' Discussion Items

- Commissioner Liz Williams and Deputy Director Dawna J. Shumate discuss current commissioner vacancies, confirming one active vacancy and several members who have termed out but can remain until replaced. Dawna explains a redistricting issue delayed progress, but now efforts are underway to fill seats.
 - o Commissioner Mark Bryant raises a procedural question about whether it's the Commission's role to fill vacancies, to which Dawna and Liz confirm that the county executive is responsible but accepts recommendations.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **2025 Funding Process and Allocations Overview:** Tammie Jordan (COMBAT) states the funding application process remained unchanged, except for dropping the two-year audit requirement. Of 122 applications received, 107 agencies are recommended for funding—68 for prevention, 22 for substance use treatment, and others for law enforcement. The total recommended funding amount is \$14.7 million, with a \$2.6 million balance remaining. Later on, Tammie adds there is no formal appeal process for agencies scored low—they must reapply next year. Notifications to agencies are sent via email.
- **Prevention Funding Recommendations & Scoring:** Tammie outlines that 79 prevention agencies applied, and 68 were recommended, including 9 of 18 new applicants. Scoring ranges determined funding levels, with new agencies capped at \$100,000. Scoring combined external reviewer scores, site visits, and monthly reports.
 - o Several agencies are not recommended for funding due to low scores or compliance issues, including Base Academy (score 70), Boys and Girls Club (compliance failure despite score of 94), Children of Homicide Victims (score 46), and Hope City (score 34). Independence Fire Department also applied but did not align with program goals.
- **Issues with Reviewing Funding Recommendations:** Commissioner Arimeta DuPree, Commissioner Mark Bryant, and Commissioner Liz Williams discuss the need for more visibility into how applying agencies address crime. They express frustration that COMBAT staff did not provide presentations on the funding applicants and make suggestions on how to proceed—such as sending them the applications or delaying a vote until the agencies have presented their programs in more Commission meetings at later dates.
 - o In turn, COMBAT staff expresses confusion because COMBAT's Office Administrator had emailed 3 times (December 10, 2024; December 24, 2024; January 10, 2025) to inquire about the Commissioners' questions or funding application requests prior to this meeting—which received no replies. Tammie Jordan and Commissioner Liz Williams confirm they had also emailed to inquire about questions and application requests and had received no response.
 - o Vince Ortega stressed that delaying the vote could significantly harm agencies, as it would subsequently delay funding. He adds that all the Commissioners are invited to participate in COMBAT's STRiVIN' meetings—which are attended by COMBAT funded agencies, as well as Commissioner Larry Beaty and Commissioner Liz Williams.



- Carolyn Whitney, the Executive Director of Sisters in Christ (Raytown STRiVIN' Hub), expresses hope that Commissioners will visit community sites to see the work being done firsthand.
- **Relevancy of Prevention Programs:** Commissioner Larry Beaty questions the relevance of funding for Kansas City Friend of Alvin Ailey, which he perceives as unrelated to law enforcement. Dawna J. Shumate and Tammie Jordan explain that programs like KCFAA provide trauma-informed, structured activities that keep youth off the streets and support their development, which is a core principle of prevention.
 - Tammie reaffirms that all agencies are required to use evidence-based programs, submit objectives and outcomes monthly, and undergo annual outcome reviews to ensure program effectiveness.
 - Branden Mims, the Executive Director of Greater Impact (Midtown STRiVIN' Hub), describes the complexity of serving high-risk clients, who often require multi-layered services addressing violence, trauma, mental health, and addiction. He emphasizes that prevention funding often covers wraparound services that indirectly support public safety.
- **Treatment Funding Recommendations:** Tammie outlines that 25 treatment programs applied, and 22 were recommended. Only 3 agencies were not recommended for funding due to low scores by outside reviewers (Counselors Obediently Preventing Substance Abuse and Peace Pieces) or because of compliance issues (Children's Mercy TIES Program). "New" treatment agencies (i.e. Treatment agencies that did not receive funding in the previous year) were capped at a \$200,000 maximum funding amount.
- **STRiVIN' Funding Recommendations:** Tammie outlines the 9 programs that applied for STRiVIN' funding—which is an invite-only form of funding for agencies with a significant role in the STRiVIN' initiative. Only one applying agency (Northeast Community Center) was not recommended for funding because their agency was not invited to apply. All other agencies applying for STRiVIN' funding received a score of 95 or higher and were subsequently recommended for the funding amounts they requested.
- **LESBI Funding Recommendations:** Tammie outlines for the 9 law enforcement organizations applying for Law Enforcement School-Based Initiative (LESBI) funding. The recommended funding formula for LESBI programs is determined by a student-to-officer ratio with an average officer salary of \$75,000 per year. Each agency is eligible for funding to support a maximum of 4 officers with a cap of \$300,000 in funding per agency.
- **Commissioner Joseph Spalitto moves to approve the 2025 Prevention Budget of \$3,276,978; Commissioner Lanna Ultican seconds:**

Larry Beaty: YES	Joseph Spalitto: YES
Mark Bryant: NO	Elizabeth (Liz) Williams: YES
Arimeta DuPree: NO	Lanna Ultican: YES



- **Commissioner Joseph Spalitto moves to approve the 2025 Treatment Budget of \$5,276,126.90; Commissioner Larry Beaty seconds:**

Larry Beaty: YES	Joseph Spalitto: YES
Mark Bryant: [Abstained]	Elizabeth (Liz) Williams: YES
Arimeta DuPree: YES	Lanna Ultican: [Absent]

- **Commissioner Larry Beaty moves to approve the 2025 STRiVIN' Budget of \$2,019,247; Commissioner Joseph Spalitto seconds:**

Larry Beaty: YES	Joseph Spalitto: YES
Mark Bryant: YES	Elizabeth (Liz) Williams: YES
Arimeta DuPree: YES	Lanna Ultican: [Absent]

- **Commissioner Arimeta DuPree moves to approve the 2025 Law Enforcement School-Based Initiative (LESBI) Budget of \$1,488,670; Commissioner Larry Beaty seconds:**

Larry Beaty: YES	Joseph Spalitto: YES
Mark Bryant: YES	Elizabeth (Liz) Williams: YES
Arimeta DuPree: YES	Lanna Ultican: [Absent]

OLD BUSINESS:

- Commissioner Joseph Spalitto questions the breakdown of COMBAT funding, referencing graphics and historical allocations (e.g., 9.5% for police, 6% for Law Enforcement School Based Initiatives, previously called "DARE"). He calls for measurable outcomes from funded agencies. Vince and Tammie confirm they can provide the [pie chart illustrating how funds are divided](#) and discuss efforts to analyze outcomes by tracking the movement of crime hotspots.
 - o Vince and Tammie clarify that although COMBAT still funds school-based programs called "DARE", those programs have evolved to utilize updated curriculums and fund the placement of school resource officers (SROs). The SROs also address truancy issues, perform crisis intervention, provide active shooter training, and more. The funding amount for law enforcement in 2025 is roughly \$1.49 million.

MOTION:

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM