

Drug Commission Meeting
November 14, 2017, 1:30-3:30pm
Downtown Courthouse, 415 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, MO
Legislative Chambers
Minutes

Present:

James Witteman, Jr.
Keith Querry
Lanna Ultican
Gene Morgan
Mark S. Bryant
Melesa Johnson
Dr. Kelvin Walls
Dr. Joseph Spalitto

Also Present:

Vince Ortega, COMBAT
Jaime Masters, Chief of Health Services
Jean Peters Baker, JACO Prosecutor
Jay Haden, County Counselor's Office
Dan Cummings, Drug Task Force
Chief Byron Price, Drug Task Force
Kevin O' Sullivan, KCPD
Darran Washington, KCPS
Dr. Diane Peterson, Medical Examiner
Vanessa Kerner, GIS Developer
Theresa Galvin, County Legislator
Brittany Brown, Legislative Aide
Tammie, Jordan, COMBAT
Joan Dickey, COMBAT
LaTasha Bunting, COMBAT

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

Additions to Agenda:

Jay Haden from the County Counselor's Office reported on the proposed revision of Chapter 93. He reported that the Legislators are in the process of changing the County Executive's appointment of Drug Commission members to the Legislators and giving the prosecuting attorney the authority to appoint the COMBAT director. However, some legal issues have been raised. Also, he reported that the ordinance got perfected yesterday at the meeting. It's not final but it's in the process.

Mark Bryant asked if would there be a conflict of interest if the responsibilities of the Executive with respect to COMBAT are switched from the County Executive to the County's Prosecutor's office since the Prosecutor's office receives COMBAT funds. Mark Bryant also asked what the legal issues were. Jay replied that there were legal issues over whether the Legislators could restrict the Executive's power to appoint members to the Drug Commission to people recommended by the Legislator.

Chapter 93 Proposed Changes

Jim Witteman, Mark Bryant, and Melesa Johnson worked on the proposed changes to Chapter 93. They changed it to where “COMBAT Commission” is consistent throughout Chapter 93. Jim Witteman mentioned that the Legislators are the only ones who can change it and that there will need to be a separate ordinance in order to make these changes since you can’t change what has been perfected. Jay Hayden agreed. Melesa Johnson stated that the Drug Commissioners can still vote on it now. Melesa Johnson moved to approve the recommendation of the changes reflected in Chapter 93, Mark seconded, recommendation passed.

Gene Morgan moved to approve the October minutes, Mark seconded, motion passed.

Reports from Ex-Officio Drug Commission Members

Jean Peters Baker reported that she may oversee COMBAT. She was approached by several legislators to see if she would do it. Mike Sanders approached her three years ago to see if she would take COMBAT but she chose not to do so. She also mentioned that she supports the changes to Chapter 93 and that she will be happy to oversee COMBAT. She believes in COMBAT and in Treatment, Prevention, and Law Enforcement. She stated that there will be a conflict of interest regardless because all County Departments receive some funding from COMBAT.

Keith Querry asked if Mike Sanders offered why he wanted to change control of COMBAT. Jean Peters Baker stated that there were several reasons why he wanted to change control of COMBAT, including the weight of the burden he was feeling at the time and some personal issues. Melesa Johnson stated that Jean Peters Baker was very hands on with a lot of the programs and mechanisms of crime prevention and reduction in her office and asked would her relationship and oversight of the Prosecutor’s programs look a little bit different than maybe some other County entities that are receiving COMBAT funding. Jean Peter Baker responded that she will always listen to the experts and follow that.

Mark Bryant asked how we would navigate since a significant portion of the pie does go to the Prosecutor’s office and she would be overseeing it. He also stated that he is not interested in any department heads receiving funds from COMBAT to be in charge. He wants COMBAT to remain transparent and as conflict-free as possible. Jean Peters Baker stated that she will say no to certain things and decisions on funding that are made through the Executive Director’s direction/recommendations. For instance, saying no to an organization that is already very heavily funded or has substantial financial reserves.

Gene Morgan asked if Jean Peters Baker would be doing the annual review of the COMBAT Executive Director or the County Executive. Jean Peters Baker responded that she wasn’t sure, however, if COMBAT moves under the Prosecutor’s office she would have a committee choose the Executive Director. The committee would include two Legislators, the chair of any drug program, the chair of the Drug Commissioners, the chair of the Legislature, and the Sheriff. Also, there will be an organization that will oversee the process of the selection.

Kevin O' Sullivan from KCPD presented three KCPD Crime Maps by drug arrests. The high crime areas were very similar in 2016 and 2017. High crime areas included Independence Avenue, the Prospect area, and the Westport area. He reported that it has been that way for 30 years. Also, he reported that there was a correlation between drugs and violent crime. 2017 YTD, there were 407 suspects of violent crime and through the search warrants, 400 hand guns, 50 assault rifles, 50 other shot guns or rifles, and 8 explosive devices were recovered. Kevin stated that drug sellers, guns, and violence were all linked together.

Mark Bryant asked if these maps included teenage kids stopped with marijuana. Kevin O' Sullivan stated that a small amount of these maps included teenage kids with marijuana. Mark Bryant also mentioned that South Kansas City and North Kansas City weren't on the map. Kevin mentioned that they both would have smaller crime areas.

Chief Byron Price of the Drug Task Force reported that they were in the process of updating their MOU. They need a current and updated MOU for a JAG grant. He also reported that one of the 13 agencies isn't active. Jim Witteman asked which jurisdiction wasn't participating and Chief Byron Price stated that he would rather not say. Gene Morgan asked if the Drug Task Force would ask more from COMBAT if the JAG grant falls through. Dan Cummings stated that the JAG grant funds 5 positions and 2 vehicles. He didn't have any statistics of violent crime. The Drug Task Force is not a police department and they do not respond to homicides, rapes, robberies, or aggravated assaults. They are currently working on 2 heroin overdoses in Independence and Lee's Summit. The Drug Task Force doesn't do violent crime, they do violent drug dealers. He reported that 25% of the cases investigated are associated with violent crime or violent offenders.

Melesa Johnson asked if the Drug Task Force helps officers with the hotspots in regard to substance abuse. She asked if they offer officers any resources to aid in the substance abuse reduction in the area. Dan Cummings stated that they work with First Call and ReDiscover, and yes, if they ask for help they give them help. He stated that drug addicts need help, drug dealers need his attention. Melesa Johnson stated that resources should be offered across the board whether they are drug users or drug sellers. Jim Witteman asked how much the Drug Task Force goes into KCPD's territory or how much does he work with KCPD as a taskforce. Dan replied that they work with KCPD every day. Mark Bryant pointed out that COMBAT funding has a minority goal of 20% and in the future, he will be asking about the goal and how close we're getting to it.

Old Business:

There was no old business.

New Business:

State of Jackson County Discussion

Jaime Masters told the Drug Commissioners that COMBAT wanted to let them know what the state of Jackson County was as it relates to what COMBAT is concerned about violent crime and drugs.

Vince Ortega and Vanessa Kerner reported on Part 1 Violent Crime stats. Since 2012 COMBAT has been collecting Part 1 Violent Crime stats (aggravated assaults, homicides, rapes, and robberies). COMBAT collects data from 11 departments/cities monthly. Vince provided everyone with the FBI definition of violent crime. He reported that Kansas City is #6 on most violent cities in the nation. Vince and Vanessa presented data from 2016 to 2017. COMBAT is using this data to address where we would like to see our resources go. In 2016, there were 8,153 violent crimes and in 2017 there were 5,885 violent crimes.

Jim Witteman would like to know who our agencies that we're funding are, where are their locations, and how do we get these agencies to start working in these areas. He would like to get the agencies to work together. Vince explained that this was to show where the crime is and where we would like our resources to go. He went into detail about how the South Kansas City initiative got started. The Drug Commissioners agreed that they would like more of this outreach and working in areas with crime. Jim Witteman asked who the stakeholders in these hotspot areas were.

Student Challenges – Darran Washington, KCPS

Darran Washington from KCPS, who does discipline hearings in the district, reported that the biggest issues are bullying and social media. Bullying and social media ties into gang violence, weapons, drug possession, and assaults. He also deals with Juvenile Court and stated that there were a lot of first degree robbery violations. They have a mental health department in the school district and thanks to Dr. Bedell, they have a lot more partnerships and are connected with services. They work with Mattie Rhodes, Aim 4 Peace, and Center for Conflict Resolution. He also mentioned that they have several mentoring programs. Darran stated that we have a huge trauma issue and that there's a significant change in the students today than before. Facebook live is a problem. He stated that things are getting worse and that some of their kids are in the data presented and they are still going to their schools and that's scary.

Gene Morgan asked if they were reaching out to more organizations to assist with kids with violent or more aggressive behavior. Darran stated that they are and they have a very good turnaround when partnering with others.

Violent Deaths – Dr. Diane Peterson, Chief Medical Examiner

Dr. Diane Peterson, the Chief Medical Examiner, reported on drug related deaths. In 2016, 29% of accidental deaths were illicit drug related in Jackson County. Methamphetamine was the #1 drug for drug related deaths. There were a little Cocaine and PCP deaths. 34% of deaths were Opiate related in Jackson County, 57% of accidental deaths were from illicit drugs, and 26% were deaths due to drug prescriptions and other Opioids. In 2016, 93% of suicides were related

to prescription drugs and 29% were Opioid. In 2017 YTD, there have been 43% Opioid related deaths and this year there were more Opioid deaths than illicit drugs. In 2016, 89% of homicides were gun related and 47% of suicides were gun related. In 2017 YTD, 86% of homicides were gun related and 57% of suicides were gun related. Gene Morgan asked if alcohol plays a role in drug related deaths and Dr. Diane Peterson replied that alcohol can play a role in it. Gene Morgan asked what advice Dr. Diane Peterson would give COMBAT on priority in using COMBAT funds. Dr. Diane Peterson recommended funding money on education of anger management and coping skills.

Joan Dickey presented COMBAT drug stats. Marijuana was the highest substance used, however, she stated that it's frequently code for alcohol. Second, was Methamphetamine or other amphetamines, and the third highest substance used was Cocaine/Crack.

Jaime asked the Drug Commissioners if they wanted a working holiday lunch for their next meeting. Melesa Johnson wanted one. Jim Witteman stated that he would talk to Jaime.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.