

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORKSHOP OF THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

SEPTEMBER 8, 2022

Present: Commissioner Jeffrey W. Bergosh, Chairman, District 1
Commissioner Douglas B. Underhill, Vice Chairman, District 2
Commissioner Steven L. Barry, District 5
Commissioner Robert D. Bender, District 4
Commissioner Lumon J. May, District 3
Sharon Harrell, Finance Director, Clerk and Comptroller's Office
Wesley J. Moreno, County Administrator
Alison Rogers, County Attorney
DeLana Allen-Busbee, Administrative Specialist, Clerk and Comptroller's Office
Jose Gochez, Agenda Program Coordinator, County Administrator's Office

Location: Ernie Lee Magaha Government Building, Board Chambers, First Floor
221 Palafox Place, Pensacola, Florida

Report prepared by: DeLana Allen-Busbee

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Chairman Bergosh called the Committee of the Whole (C/W) Workshop to order at 9:02 a.m.

2. Was the Meeting Properly Advertised?

The Board was advised by DeLana Allen-Busbee, Administrative Specialist, Clerk and Comptroller's Office, that the meeting was advertised in the *Escambia Sun Press* on September 1, 2022, in the Board's weekly meeting schedule.

3. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The Board observed a moment of silence and Commissioner Bergosh led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Board Items

I. Discussion on the Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE)

A. Board Discussion – The C/W viewed and discussed a PowerPoint presentation, entitled *Coordinated Opioid Recovery – A Network of Addiction Care*, presented by EMS Chief David Torsell, and the C/W:

(1) Was advised by Chief Torsell that:

- Escambia County EMS and Public Safety has partnered with local healthcare providers and created a committee to launch a program called Coordinated Opioid Recovery, or CORE.
- Partners include Escambia County EMS, Community Health Northwest Florida (Chandra Smiley), which is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), Florida Department of Health (Marie Mott), HCA Florida West Hospital (Dr. Mark Stavros and Tiffany Faulkner), Baptist Healthcare (Mike Rauch and Health Olmstead), and Ascension Sacred Heart (Christie Jandora, Drew Stringfellow, and Wes Morris).
- The overdose situation in Escambia County is horrendous; in 2022 to-date there have been 1,423 EMS responses for overdose and 1,143 doses of Naloxone (commonly known as Narcan) administered, compared to 1,095 EMS responses and 1,391 doses of Narcan in all of 2021.
- One of the most alarming situations Chief Torsell has encountered was an infant needing to be revived with Narcan.
- Narcan only treats opioids and if someone does not have opioids in their system, it is harmless.

(2) Heard comments of concern from Commissioner Bergosh regarding why the issue is so concentrated in our area and heard Chief Torsell's explanation which includes the location of our community; heard comments from Commissioner May concerning poverty playing a role in the issue as well;

(3) Was advised by Dr. Stavros that addiction is a brain disorder, not only a behavioral disorder, which needs to be addressed from a medical standpoint as well, and that at one year the relapse rate is over 80%;

(4) Heard comments from Commissioner Underhill regarding the need for more law enforcement action to go after drug dealers and remove the drugs from neighborhoods, and that efforts should be concentrated where the data shows the problem exists;

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AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Continued...

I. Continued...

A. Continued...

- (5) Heard comments from Commissioner May supporting funds and energy being put into prevention programs;
- (6) Heard an inquiry from Commissioner Bender regarding the availability of Narcan and whether, as kits become available through county health departments, staff can partner with other areas to ensure that the products do not exceed shelf life in smaller counties who perhaps do not have the same needs as other larger counties;
- (7) Was advised by Chief Torsell that there is a system in place to utilize Narcan that is nearing expiration;
- (8) Heard comments from Commissioner Barry supporting prevention programs and that while a reactionary response is understandable to move people from a dangerous situation to one where they can get care, trying to have fewer instances of need by allocating resources to mental health and prevention would seem to have a lasting effect and make a larger impact in the long-term;
- (9) In response to an inquiry from Commissioner May regarding how the program will continue if the State stops providing funds, was advised by Chief Torsell that the funding on the front end will be to train staff and also to build a separate area in hospitals for patients to receive care outside of a chaotic, emergency room-type environment; once these rooms are built, there will be no need for repeat funding and this program is sustainable;
- (10) Was advised by Chief Torsell that he requested \$1.4 million for Escambia County;
- (11) Heard comments from Chief Torsell concerning the need for wrap-around services, which this program would provide, and a review of the program's Addiction Stabilization Model and its three main components: Rescue Response, Stabilization/Assessment, and Long-Term Treatment;
- (12) Discussed reporting data and the impact of fentanyl on addiction/overdose numbers and concerns;

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AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Continued...

I. Continued...

A. Continued...

- (13) Discussed transportation needs and services in the program and was advised by Chief Torsell that the plan is to work with ECAT for available vehicles and hire two EMT drivers to pick up and drop off patients; the vehicles are free from ECAT, the staff will be paid for through the State, and the fuel has been put into the program's budget;
- (14) Was advised by Chief Torsell that follow through with patients is extremely important to ensure success so this program would perform that continual follow-up and support; Palm Beach County has a similar program with around an 83.5% rate of success;
- (15) Discussed the method by which funding is disbursed and the frequency data will be provided (monthly or quarterly), and that as data is provided to the State, funding will be disbursed accordingly; also discussed how often the funding requests will need to come to the Board;
- (16) Discussed creating a data dashboard and was advised by Chief Torsell that the program will hopefully start at the end of October;
- (17) Was advised by Dr. Stavros that even after a patient has gone through withdrawals, cravings can persist, which he compared to the craving a drowning person has for air, and that medications can help to curb and stop these cravings;
- (18) Discussed the cost of care at Community Health Northwest Florida and a sliding payment scale, as well as whether the County could have access to the lower pricing schedule to purchase medication and/or whether the correctional facility could qualify as a FQHC to access the lower costs for care; Ms. Smiley advised that she would look to see if there is a way to partner with the County;
- (19) Heard comments from Commissioner Barry requesting staff to run a comparison of amounts paid for which medications, especially in Public Safety and Corrections, to determine if there is any cross reference with the 340B drug discounts; and

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AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Continued...

I. Continued...

A. Continued...

(20) Was advised by Ms. Mott that funding is expected at any time and heard comments from Commissioner Underhill supporting temporarily fronting funds out of reserves until the Item can come to the Board, once the money is guaranteed to come to Escambia County; and

B. Board Direction – None.

II. Discussion on Minority Procurement

This Item was not discussed, but the C/W agreed to add this Item to another Committee of the Whole Workshop.

Speaker(s):

Brian Wyer

FOR INFORMATION: The Board agreed to waive fees to re-permit projects with permits pulled by Banks Construction and LaCoste Construction and was advised by County Attorney Rogers that a Resolution will be brought to the September 22nd Regular Board Meeting to memorialize the action.

5. Adjourn

Chairman Bergosh declared the C/W Workshop adjourned at 10:25 a.m.