

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE OPIOID ABATEMENT FUNDING ADVISORY BOARD**

Date: February 13, 2023

Present: Christi Hankins – Escambia County Senior Assistant Attorney
Kari Garrett – Escambia County Assistant Attorney
Tommy White
Matt Infinger
Catherine White

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

Minutes prepared by Tina Arroyo – Assistant to the Board

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.
3. Approval of the minutes from January 9, 2023.

Motion: To approve the minutes from January 9, 2023
Made by: Matt Infinger Seconded by: Tommy White
Disposition: Motion unanimously passes

4. **Public Forum** - Speakers limited to 2 minutes each.

1. **Stephanie Shepard** – Touching base about the community workshop as well as the Surveys that were sent out. I received 70 responses. The Hope Above Fear Committee Board is here. We've been discussing and moving towards wanting to post billboards across the county. There are many other states that have been doing to just bring awareness to the community.

How is the school district involved in any way? We were talking about dare like when we were kids you know there was a dare program in the schools.

Community working together with some other non-profits such as like health and I think it's health and health and community and then there's also Valerie's house and I know that the first one they offer Narcan and then Valerie's houses for grief support and so just working with other non-profits to host some community events.

The Hope Above Fear Committee has established a board and bylaws. We have applied for a 501c3, we have monthly meetings.

I posted three different surveys, one for 13 –19-year-olds. One for parents, and one for relatives. The one that had the highest responses was the youth survey. I can just briefly go over some of those points. 91% of the participants were between ages of 16 and 19. 47% of participants reported that they are currently in, or their last school attended was high school. 36 of those respondents specifically were from Booker T Washington. 72% reported that their current or last school was in Escambia County. 97% reported knowing someone from school that is currently using a substance. 97% reported driving or has been the driver under the influence. 80% reported that they know someone who has tried fentanyl. Only 28% reported that they have access to Narcan at home. 61% reported that most of their social group uses drugs. 77% reported that they know someone who should seek or be offered help for substance abuse of that 77%, 5% were referring to themselves, 42% were referring to a friend and 30% was referring to a family member. 37% reported currently using substances and wishing that they could get help. 63% reported that they have tried to stop using substances in the past. 42% reported that they have asked for help to stop or slow down they're using. 88% said that they did not know anywhere locally that they could seek help for substance abuse.

The relative one was the next one that had the highest responses. 96% reported that they had a relative between the age of 13 and 19 who has or is struggling with substance abuse. 64% of those respondents live in Escambia County and 16 live in Santa Rosa or Okaloosa.

The question of how old was your relative when they first began struggling with substance abuse, 76% were 16 years old or younger. Is your relative currently struggling with substance abuse? 32% said yes but of the 68 that said no 52 of those reported that their relative was deceased due to drug overdose. 91% said that they feel as though it is easy for adolescents to access substances in school or within their community.

As far as the relative who struggled or is struggling with substance abuse, do they have access to Narcan? 76% said no.

Do you feel that our community needs more resources to assist with adolescent substance abuse and that was a 100% percent from all respondents.

Do you feel that adolescents ages 13 to 17 struggling with daily substance abuse would benefit more from outpatient or inpatient. 87% reported inpatient.

These surveys were put out on Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and were sent to eight teenagers and they were asked to share.

4. **Public Forum** - Speakers limited to 2 minutes each.

2. **Rodney Jones** - I'm the executive director of New World Believers, we're a community-based organization of 501c3 organization. The reason we're here because I had an opportunity to hear about the Opioid Abatement Advisory Board and saw that there was a need in the community. My organization, we currently contract for the Department of Juvenile Justice. We're serving juveniles up to the age of 19, providing substance

abuse treatment as well as behavioral modification. We also provide additional wraparound services that are associated with the parents. 90% of the youth who live at and below the poverty line find that there is at least one person in their household if not them who are abusing substances. We do a program called family form and bridges out of poverty. It kind of helps the families to navigate and to stabilize within the Dynamics of their own community. I am a returning citizen as well as a former addict. Heroin and cocaine so I had an opportunity to experience that way of life but not only in that perspective, I had an opportunity to be the program manager for a Therapeutic Community. That is a community that's associated with addiction as well as mental health dispositions so we did dual diagnosis while in that Therapeutic Community, not just offering substance abuse treatment but helping individuals to stabilize so that they can go back into the community and navigate a lot better. Meaning these individuals that come there, they'll receive substance abuse. If they're missing GED's we help them to stabilize and get their GED's. Any social services that are necessary, we kind of helped them, we plug them into those services so that they can be a better and more productive individual once they leave our Treatment Center as well as I have the experience not just from um using substance or abusing substance or being in that environment. I have a Social Work degree from the University of West Florida and that was good to help navigate individuals to different resources within the Dynamics of our community. Also, I am a clinical mental health counselor of Psychology by degree. I did my postgraduate work at Walden University for Clinical Psychology. I am a certified EMDR therapist as well as a certified emotional intelligence therapist.

3. **Lindsay Von Kruger** - I'm secretary of the board of Hope above fear. I would like to say we would love to partner and speak about any opportunities we could partner with.

4. **Dr. Calvin Avant** – I'm the executive director of Unity in the Family Ministry Inc. and we're located at 615 North W Street 32505. We started talking about some of the things that are needed inside of a program and when you start you know you said you're looking to do inpatient but one of the things that he made mention of is behavior modification. I presently am teaching a behavior modification class out to the county jail to the juveniles have been adjudicated as adults been doing it for the last 10 years. Maybe where we need to be able to address the addiction is one of the issues but that's not the only issue that many of them come with. With the behavior modification we start speaking to those other issues. So when you're looking at putting your total program together you want to make sure that it is something that is added on and as Mr. Jones said if you don't involve their parents you can get them all cleaned, straight and headed in the right direction and they still got to go back in that same hole again. You've just wasted a lot of money. I used to have an opioid addiction. I've been clean for over 40 years, and we started working toward helping people in the world so that we could start seeing some changes. My whole life has been dedicated to this population and wanting to be able to see some changes and so I'd truly like to be a part of thank you.

5. New Business

The next step is to set aside a couple of dates to have a workshop and vote on which date would be best.

The two dates proposed for the workshop are March 27th or April 24th from 4pm – 6pm in the BCC Chambers. We need to reach out to the following:

Health Department
Medical Examiner's Office
Hope Over Fear (Stephanie Shepard)
New World Believers (Rodney Jones)
Pensacola Police Department
Escambia County Sheriff Department
Lakeview
CDAC
Escambia County School District

Motion: To approve the first Monday in August for the annual meeting date
--

Made by: Matt Infinger Seconded by: Tommy White
--

Disposition: Motion unanimously passes

Motion: To approve the bylaws for the Opioid Abatement Funding Advisory Board
--

Made by: Tommy White Seconded by: Matt Infinger
--

Disposition: Motion unanimously passes

The next meeting will be Monday, March 6, 2023 at 10:00am in the BCC Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Vice Chair White declared the Opioid Abatement Funding Advisory Board adjourned.