

**Town of Barnstable
Human Services Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2013**

Names in bold indicate action items.

Present:

Scott Fitzgerald, Chair, Bill Doherty, Charles Hetzel, Heidi Nelson, Mark Thomas and Paul Thompson (members), and Jen Cullum, Town Council Liaison to the committee

Guests:

Chief Paul Macdonald and Det. Lt. John Balcom, Barnstable Police Department

Absent:

Roy Richardson

Approve Meeting Minutes from November 12, 2013:

The minutes of the November 12, 2013 meeting were approved as written.

Guest Speaker- Chief Paul Macdonald and Detective John Balcom

The Chief began by saying that he and Detective Balcom were here to talk about the enforcement part of our response to the epidemic; the other important parts are education and treatment. The police force has been determined to make an impact on the epidemic. They prioritized crime analysis to learn more about the problem, and reached out to local establishments where drug use and sales were occurring, with positive response and results. For the most serious crimes, Part One crimes, 80 to 85% are related to the distribution or theft of narcotics.

A major strategy for our police department is partnering with other branches of law enforcement: one Barnstable Police Department (BPD) officer is assigned to the State Police Drug Task Force; five officers are on the Barnstable drug task force; and one officer is the liaison to the federal Drug Enforcement Agency on the Cape. The most effective tool has been the Barnstable street crimes unit, which include officers assigned from the other towns (Mashpee, Dennis, Yarmouth), because often drug crime in Barnstable affects nearby towns.

The BPD strategy has been simple: reduce violent crime on the Cape through reduction in narcotics crimes. The Chief reported that violent crime and drug crimes are both down on the Cape due to this approach. There were two major drug busts in the past week, and members of the committee praised the efforts of the BPD in these cases. It is widely known that BPD will pursue drug dealers off Cape so many of them from off Cape stay out of our territory.

The Chief recommends continued manpower support for narcotics enforcement. Another factor is distinguishing between the people who are trafficking and the people who are addicted and just need help. Sometimes bail is set low, and drug dealers are out quickly, dealing again. The

BPD re-arrests these individuals, even though they are awaiting trial on other charges. It helps to build the case if there are multiple arrests. The forfeiture program is important, the sale of confiscated property helps to fund drug enforcement.

The Chief and Detective Balcom responded to several questions from committee members:

The Police Department is not trained in Narcan. In Barnstable we have five fire squads, and they respond to calls very quickly.

Falmouth is not included in the street crimes unit. Falmouth 'is a whole different world.'

Neighborhood Watch is a valued partner in fighting drug crime. People watching for strange cars and other strange activity in their neighborhoods can really help the police.

The Chief supports the idea of the drug court, it reduces recidivism.

How can we dis-incentivize drug use through law enforcement- this is tough because people often deal or sell to support their habits. Staying straight means they are giving up their income as well as giving up getting high.

There is a full-time officer assigned to the high school, this helps with enforcement efforts with teens. Sometimes the parents cooperate, sometimes not.

The BPD works very closely with street outreach workers. The Chief is looking to fund to street outreach workers who would work for BPD. He said this is more effective and less expensive than having officers do street outreach, but he is looking at all models. He raised the example of the Salem Police Department Community Impact Unit, which has been effective in dealing with the homeless in that community. They are uniformed officers. There is a model program started in Memphis called Crisis Intervention Team that trains officers to address persons in mental health crisis on the street.

We have a program in the Barnstable County Courts that provides pre-trial probation and family counseling; the Chief recommends that it would help if the program had more publicity.

Although there is probably a lot of drug use in the schools, the BPD does not arrest a lot of juveniles for drug offenses.

Jen reported that she and Scott met with the Barnstable Youth Commissioners, who talked about the challenges in the schools; they serve as the liaison between the school and the town.

The Chief emphasized a major point: reducing drug offenses reduces violent crime in communities.

BPD uses social media to keep the community informed of the status of law enforcement efforts. The Chief recommends using the Tip Line for citizens to report crime.

A new crime watch group has been formed in Cotuit.

The Chief reports that BPD continues to work with convenience stores on the problem of spice and bath salts.

Charlie praised the BPD for their handling of household situations when kids are out of control.

The Chief stated that 'no good will come of it' when marijuana is distributed legally through dispensaries.

Scott thanked the Chief and Detective Balcom for attending today and building our information store regarding the problem of drug addiction in Barnstable.

Update of Possible Workshop Date

Jen reported that the town council had a mini-workshop where KC Myers, Cape Cod Times and former guest speaker at this committee meeting, spoke, as well as Scott and two parents of kids whose lives were tragically affected by drug addiction.

When we complete our interviews, we can discuss again the idea of a town council workshop.

Resource Library

Charlie requested permission to establish a bookshelf with resource materials for the committee and the community. Scott suggested that Charlie explore the idea of asking the library to create a reference shelf, and create a bibliography of materials that could be in handout form and distributed on the Town Hall information table.

Future Agenda Items

January 14, Mary Czajkowski, Superintendent of Schools

Invite Ray Tamasi to a future meeting?

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Heidi Romans Nelson