

NORTHERN LAKES COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

CONSUMER ADVOCACY COUNCIL MINUTES

DATE: July 13, 2011
TIME: 1:30 p.m.
PLACE: Northern Lakes CMH (105 Hall Street, Traverse City, Michigan)

PRESENT: DL, CP, GP, JN, KS, CR, DT, MB.

GUESTS: Captain Morgan and TK.

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

KS welcomed those in attendance. Introductions were completed.

II. ACCEPT MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 8, 2011

JN made the motion, supported by DT to approve the minutes of June 8, 2011.

III. PRESENTATION BY LAW ENFORCEMENT (CAPTAIN MORGAN)

JN introduced Captain Morgan from Traverse City Police Department to speak about public safety and other concerns. Captain Morgan provided a brief summary of his background. He shared statistical information starting in January 2011: 13,146 calls, out of those there were 97 assault complaints, 37 breaking and enterings, 20 sexual assault complaints, 50 domestic assault complaints, and 255 larceny complaints. He noted we live in a very safe community and have been fortunate to have a good sized police department given the size of Traverse City. They do find themselves understaffed when there is a large event. Are down four positions from 34 to 29 people (21 road patrol). Reserve officers are utilized as needed and are paired with an officer for assistance. As the population grows outside of the city limits they see a steady increase in the need for services. The population in the city limits has grown minimally for a total of about 15,000. Daily it is over 30,000 and they are funded for only 15,000. He noted that their department is shrinking. They no longer have community police officers and now only have two sector officers left. As unemployment continues to go down crimes go up. They put 3 to 4 cars out and that is 24/7. Members expressed concern about the homeless population and what type of collaboration there is among the community agencies.

Captain Morgan identified that with crime in general they find that larcenies are a crime of opportunity and common sense and preventative steps are what is needed not to be a victim. Keep your stuff out of sight in your car, keep it locked and park in a lighted area. People are victims of assault if they are out late at night or early in a.m., partake of alcohol or become involved in an altercation with someone that is not thinking right. They encourage people not to step into things when you are around someone you don't know. It is best to ignore and go on about your business. Don't break up a fight or argument. The vast majority of sexual assault crimes are committed by persons known to the victim and a lot of times there is alcohol involved. Crimes against person there is a definite connection between alcohol and the crime. There is a lot of abuse of alcohol and a lot of people's lives are affected or to become a victim.

Question – Do you find that most women who are sexually assaulted don't press charges because they feel that it is going to be turned around and they are going to be accused of it? Response – It is a good question because that really is something they don't know. They only hear of the ones that have approached them and filed a complaint. After that process has started there is a lot of support. He identified agencies that support women who are sexually assaulted.

Question – Other substances that seem to be frequently misused inappropriately? Response – Did not bring the statistics. Does not know of overdose deaths this year. Do have an issue in the city with abuse of prescription medications. The vast number of overdosed deaths are from prescription medications such as Methadone. Had a marked increase in overdosed deaths. Suicides are linked to substance abuse as well. Approximately 7 or 8 Methadone overdose deaths last year and this year a couple more plus Heroin which is making a come back. They take complaints every week of individuals who report their prescription stolen so they can get more.

Question – Has been unfortunate in circumstances where she has been next door to domestic violence. What is the best way to handle that? You later become the victim. Response - The domestic violence laws mandate police respond. If you suspect domestic violence call 911. They can go to the residence and if no one answers they have the right to enter. If they see any evidence of violence they are mandated to take action. All the laws are in place to protect the police from false arrest and to protect the victim of the domestic violence and to get them separated. If you suspect any type of violence in a residence call the police. A complaint can be filed anonymously. They are a little bit hand tied when they can't substantiate that something is occurring except with the anonymous call. They need more information.

If you go to the hospital and fill out any kind of paperwork they ask if you are being harmed or threatened by anyone or afraid of anyone in your home. A lot of doctors or possibly dentists can also ask those questions. Are they mandated to report that information? Response – It is a state law for medical care providers – mandatory reporters. For any type of sexual abuse, domestic violence, child abuse you are required to report.

Question – If you see someone getting beat up on the street and you don't want to get involved but you call 911 and you do it anonymous will they come? Response – Yes. It was noted that most people don't want to get involved. He noted if that is the person's feeling that is fine, call anonymously. They will respond. He is only speaking for the City Police. They would be there real quick. Sometimes in other counties there may be a delay.

Question – If a crime was happening would they come to Leelanau County if it was close? Response – they have an annex agreement. Leelanau County would be the first responders and the City Police would have to be asked.

Question – Incident(s) occurred where people were walking to appointments or programs here that were carrying their purse and someone came up behind them and took their purse. Once that happens and they get away with it they tell someone else. Any tips on what can be done? There are a lot of consumers that walk or ride the bus is there anything they can do defensively? Response – They had a guy that was doing just that a year ago. Tips to give to ladies is to be vigilant about your surroundings, look assured of where you are going, when you look out of place or lost or confused you stick out. Don't carry articles that are expensive in view, carry handbag close to your body, only carry what is necessary.

Question – Is it legal to carry pepper spray? Response – there are pepper sprays that are legal to carry. There are sprays that the pepper is too high and there are some that can be used for personal protection. If you are going to offer resistance then you run the potential of becoming the victim of a crime against yourself. He is not advocating to not defend yourself but you need to be careful of the person you are encountering because you don't know of the consequences.

An example was identified about riding bikes on the TART trail. Providing individuals with bikes who use it for their transportation and make them more mobile so they can commit more crime. Response – We have a very giving community and there are programs now in place to support people that are in a homeless situation throughout the year. A method of shelter is provided, break city ordinances, way to heat the makeshift home, food, circuit of hot meals, place to go and sleep if needed. Because of those things being in place they have seen an increase in the homeless population in town. The vast majority of those are good people. There are a percentage of those who have alcohol and substance abuse problems and that group cause them a lot of work. The substance abusers are a constant flow of their calls. They have a person at Goodwill who deals with homeless outreach program at Munson Hospital because they have a real problem with substance abusers abusing alcohol so bad that they can't take care of themselves. They are called and call an ambulance. Munson is required to take them and provide assistance until they sober up. They deal with them the next day which happens daily. It costs a tremendous amount of resources and money. They are trying to come up with some type of solution to break the cycle.

Question – Panhandling is it legal? If they see someone doing it should they call 911? Response – No. Call us and they will put a stop to it. Referenced an incident at the Grand Traverse Pie Company. Identified homeless people were going from car to car at the county building and no one was doing anything about it.

Captain Morgan identified that they used to have a dedicated officer downtown that was funded by the Downtown Development Association and the funding went away.

Why aren't we meeting with law enforcement and other organizations to find solutions to homelessness? Examples were provided about how this is affecting our community and everyone's safety. Captain Morgan identified that they are there to address the issues that are criminal in nature. Until people start to speak up about things like this it will continue to roll on.

Question – What about the situation with medical marijuana is that being abused? Response – Medical marijuana law is a shame and are not enforceable. The collectives are not operating like they are supposed to and there is nothing they can do. A collective is supposed to be a qualified caregiver who can have up to five patients. Patients come and get their medical marijuana. They are allowing other patients to come in. There is a stipulation about patient to patient transfers which makes what they are doing is untouchable. The Attorney General has written an opinion that says they are violating the law but until the local prosecutor decides to take that on they can't do anything.

Question – Have you seen a lot of internet scams? Response – Absolutely. They have one officer that is dedicated to fraud and crimes. It is a big problem especially for the elderly population. Examples were provided.

Question – What is the impact of the local smoking ordinance? Response – have taken all of the smokers out of the bar and put the smokers in front. It is enforced by the Health Department. They haven't seen any affect except it has contributed to some of the violence. You put all of those people in one area and sooner or later someone says something that someone doesn't like. They get a call once in a while and they have to deal with a trespassing issue.

Question – In the past they have had beer tents at the Cherry Festival. Have there been lot of fights? Response – They always have fights in the beer tent its just how many. They just staff for it. The same with the volleyball courts. They now staff it appropriately. Boats? He noted this year when they started having issues with the boats mooring together they made a coordinated effort with the Fire Department. They loaned them a jet boat and put two officers on it, enforced things and the rest of the week they knew they were watching. Identified incident with the swan.

Question – Would there be the potential for someone here to meet with a collaborative group? Greg noted that there is always potential to do that. Captain Morgan identified that there is a quarterly meeting at Munson. One of the big concerns is the problem with the homeless. He noted he could call John Bolde, Head of Safety and Security.

Question – How has the conduct been at Goodwill Motel for the people that live there? Have they kept it up and kept the place clean and neat? Response - He noted it is in Garfield Township and outside the city. They don't respond out there. The county does go there. Goodwill has pretty stringent rules.

Question – Where are Personal Protection Orders enforceable? Response – They are enforceable statewide and even out of state they can be enforced.

Question – Do they automatically get a copy of the PPO? Response – Once they are issued by the judge and are entered into the Law Enforcement Officer's Information Network and through NCIC nationwide. If you have a PPO against an ex-husband and are with them in Illinois and in need to call the police and once they run the person through NCIC they can take action. This has been in effect at least the last 7 or 8 years.

It was noted that many of our consumers are on medication or compromised and need to look out for themselves and wanted to know more about personal safety. The group thanked Captain Morgan for attending.

Terri joined the meeting. Concern was expressed about an incident that occurred several months ago at our Traverse House program. There was a question about eligibility requirements for consumers. Terri identified that we don't do criminal background checks on consumers. Consumers have rights to access any of the programs at NLCMH and so we can't prohibit someone who has a criminal record or whatever from accessing our program because they have the right to those programs based on their eligibility. On

the flip side other people that come here have the right to be in a safe environment. There are rules at clubhouse that people are supposed to abide by if they don't do the staff was to intervene with the person. KS identified that Club Cadillac would not allow a person into the program and it was noted that they would not jeopardize the whole program over one individual. Questioned how do you jeopardize a program for safety. Terri identified that there are rules about behavior during the course of being part of that program and if the person doesn't adhere to those rules there are steps that the Director takes up to excusing the person from the program. Noted the incidence has occurred again. Terri indicated that we have a responsibility for safety of everyone coming in this building.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT/ADVOCACY STORIES

Not discussed.

V. CAC ASSESSMENT

Not discussed.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Update on Budget – There was discussion whether chore services could be picked up by CMH since DHS was going to eliminate. Concern was expressed by members and Greg indicated that persons have the right to appeal thru DHS. He noted that for CMH if a person has Medicaid and has an assessed need for what is covered by Medicaid it could potentially be covered by Medicaid. CMH though does not provide chore services.

Greg provided an update on the FY 12 budget noting that there is a 3% reduction in the General Fund and additional money in Medicaid. A lot of discussion federally about Medicaid from debt ceiling expansion to block grants. There is going to be a reduction to entitlement programs. More likely that Medicaid would be reduced before Medicare. There will be some type of GF reduction between now and October. The replacement for Mike Head is Lynda Zeller.

Freedom to Work Amendment – KS reported that there is a meeting this week and the individual who will be presenting the bill will do so this week. Members were asked to call their state representatives and senators to get their support.

RCF Meeting – No meeting was held since the last meeting.

VII. CURRENT LITERATURE, ARTICLES AND MOVIES

Not discussed.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Network Providers – Greg distributed a handout (Provider Directory) and identified that this is a listing of people we contract with (people who deliver services to people). Place on the agenda for next month to respond to questions.

IX. AGENDA PLANNING

The next meeting is scheduled for August 10 in the Traverse City Office: Department of Human Services – Greg will invite Dawn McLaughlin and if she cannot attend invite the second in command. Possibly add Disability Network to a future agenda. Add Network Providers to the August meeting. It was noted that the dietician may attend September 14 meeting. Add mini-grants to the agenda.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Members were encouraged to make contact with Attorney General Bill Schuette to support chore services.

Mini-Conference is scheduled in Houghton Lake next Tuesday on July 19 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The next Mini-Conference is scheduled August 23 and will be focused on budgeting, time management, canning and freezing.

XI. MEETING EVALUATION/ADJOURN

None.

The meeting adjourned at 3:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Lavender, Recording Secretary

dsl (8/2/2011)