



## **Social Services and Public Safety Committee**

March 14, 2023

### **Summary and Motions**

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Chair Reynolds called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Committee Members Ellinger, J. Brown, Fogle, Monarrez, Gray, F. Brown, Baxter, Sevigny, and Plomin were in attendance. Council Members Sheehan, Lynch, and Vice Mayor Wu were also present as non-voting members.

#### **I. Approval of January 24, 2023 Committee Summary**

Motion by Gray to Approve the January 24, 2023 Committee Summary. Seconded by Baxter. Motion passed without dissent.

#### **II. Community Paramedicine Program Update**

Chief Jason Wells, with the Lexington Fire Department, introduced the paramedicine team and Captain Seth Lockard began the presentation by reviewing the history of the program since the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) was awarded in 2017. He spoke about the process for referrals and how they are responded to depending on which type of response team is necessary. He reviewed the 2022 calendar year which included over 350 unique individuals and over 1,800 non-fatal overdoses. Wells reviewed a graph for EMS call volume by year from 2010-2022 which showed a steady increase each year. He spoke about why this program works and the ability for Paramedicine to team up with law enforcement and social workers is helpful. He requested that social worker positions be permanent.

There was some discussion about follow-up and Lockard explained that it depends on the individual. Speaking about social workers, Lockard said they are looking at building a budget to look at models for what staff could look like. When asked if they are requesting additional buggies in the proposed budget, Wells said they would in FY25, but they are looking at more creative ways to make this work with what they have. Speaking about call volume and if they receive more calls than they can handle, Lockard said the response time is getting longer. Lockard spoke about the current program hours and said typically they work 7a - 6p. They don't typically see people on Friday because connections get lost that close to the weekend. When asked about peer support or other support for mental and emotional health, Wells said there is a robust peer support team and resources are available to them as needed. There was some discussion about future needs and making sure the program has resources available. Wells confirmed funding would help and they would reach back out to talk about a vision for the program. No action was taken on this item.

#### **III. Substance Use Disorder Intervention Program Update**

Amy Baker with Department of Social Services began the presentation with a review of Substance Abuse Disorders (SUD). She spoke about what it means to be in recovery; harm reduction strategies; and Narcan administration. She reviewed fatality trends in the U.S. from 1999-2021 which showed significant increases in the last few years. She also reviewed overdose fatality trends in Lexington since 2014 which showed that Lexington surpassed 200 overdoses in 2020 and 2022. She mentioned some of the highlights for the program and she spoke about the Mayor's Substance Use Disorder Advisory Council. Speckert spoke about the National Opioid Litigation, beginning with lawsuits filed in 2017. She mentioned that

resolution of these cases tends to proceed along three tracks (Bellwether trials, bankruptcies, and settlements). She spoke about settlement payments and said every defendant has a different settlement term. She pointed out that it is difficult to predict when payments will be made and said the proposed settlement is currently in an opt-in period. She closed by reviewing next steps.

Speaking about options available if bankruptcy occurs before payment, Speckert said the obligation would appear on financials. When asked about comparative data for Lexington/KY/National trends for overdoses and if non-fatal overdoses are tracked, Baker said they track some. She noted the people of color percentage was 4% and now it is 14% so we have to pay attention to these numbers. Regarding media coverage, Baker spoke about the overdoses since 2018 and noted the number in 2020 was very high. No action was taken on this item.

#### **IV. Division of Community Corrections Update**

Scott Colvin, Director of Community Corrections began the presentation by recognizing the team from the division. He mentioned consultants from National Institute of Corrections (NIC) who assessed the condition of the facility and the operations of the division. The consultants addressed six administrative and operational elements. He spoke about employee retention and said current staffing is unsustainable. They are working on a plan to address staffing by using recruitment of new officers, retention of veteran staff, and reduction in the current jail population. He reviewed current recruitment efforts and plans in place for rebranding recruitment efforts by targeting certain groups and working with media. He noted the importance of employee recognition and acknowledgment and said recognition programs will be restarted. He reviewed recommendations for allocating resources by reviewing work schedules, internships, reclassifying positions, and eliminating high ranking positions. He spoke about improving relationships with unions and bargaining unit employees. There is also a Use of Force review and a Use of Force Board will be implemented within 60 days. He pointed out the assessment shows that current conditions of confinement are inadequate and he closed by reviewing the conclusion of the consultants' report.

Speaking about the top-heaviness and how this will be addressed moving forward, Colvin said staffing is reviewed regularly and he mentioned the need to re-establish relationships since COVID. Committee members spoke about the transformational culture which was needed and said the change that has happened in only 4 months speaks volumes; we are committed to help however we can and make sure conditions are what they should be. When asked about a survey for staff and if it was official, Colvin said it was unofficial and it came from FOP. No action was taken on this item.

#### **V. Items Referred to Committee**

Motion by Fogle to adjourn at 2:57 p.m. Seconded by Baxter. Motion passed without dissent.