



Social Services and Public Safety Committee

May 14, 2024

Summary and Motions

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. Vice Mayor Wu and Council Member Sheehan were also present as non-voting members.

I. Approval of April 9, 2024 Committee Meeting Summary

Motion by Gray to approve the April 9, 2024 Committee Summary. Seconded by Plomin. Motion passed without dissent.

II. Substance Abuse Intervention Program Update

Carmen Combs Marks, Substance Use Disorder Intervention (SUDI) Program Coordinator in the Department of Social Services, began the presentation with an overview of the program. The city's Substance Use Disorder Intervention Program is a resource for individuals searching for information about substance use, addiction and treatment services. She spoke about the Expanded First Responders and Community Partners Overdose Prevention Project (EFRCPO), and she reviewed the 3 goals under that project. She mentioned outreach efforts and highlighted the distribution of Naloxone in the community. She spoke about challenges and said Lexington - Fayette County ranks 12th among Kentucky's 120 counties burdened by the opioid crisis. She mentioned the increase in opioid deaths in Kentucky from 2018-2019 and she spoke about the need for expanded initiatives to combat drug overdose.

Scott Luallen, Overdose Prevention Coordinator, spoke about outreach efforts and training at various sites in the community. He reviewed those sites which include sober living programs, treatment centers and day missions, and recovery clubs. He spoke about implementing non-traditional outreach at various locations in the community. Luallen pointed out he identifies opportunities based on data and observation.

Marks provided clarification on sober living homes in neighborhoods, and she mentioned an information session taking place on May 21. When asked if we are still seeing an increase in overdose, Marks said it depends on fatal or non-fatal, but she feels it is stable since the pandemic. Speaking about the Opioid Abatement Commission, Marks said they meet monthly and there is a portal on the website where people can submit requests for presentation. She noted there is a time for public comment at the end of the meeting.

When asked if there is a plan to start spending the opioid abatement money, Marks said they are assessing resources to ensure they are making the best decisions. She said there needs to be a good foundation first to determine what is needed. Speaking about state legislation regarding HB248 and required certification for sober living houses, Marks said they are ahead of that, and certification will be required by the end of the year. When asked who to contact to check on certification of a sober living house, Marks said they are working to get information on this as some questions are still unresolved. There was a request for definitions to provide a distinction between recovery centers and sober living homes. No action was taken on this item.

III. Crime Victim Paid Leave Policy

Stephanie Theakston, Domestic & Sexual Violence Prevention Coalition Coordinator, began by expressing support of the Crime Victim Paid Leave initiative. She explained Domestic Violence is not a private or personal matter, it extends beyond the home to every part of a survivor's life. She noted this is especially true for the workplace. About 1 out of every 3 women and nearly 1 in 10 men have experienced domestic violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime and reported at least one violence-related impact, such as Injury, posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, concern for safety, ongoing fear, needing help from law enforcement, and missing at least one day of work. Because employment can empower survivors by making them less financially dependent on abusive partners and counters isolation efforts by allowing interaction with coworkers, people who are abusive often target workplaces to create stress for the survivor. Work also allows for predictability of location and hours so survivors are easy to find. Theakston spoke about how important it is to provide a safe and supportive environment for people who are experiencing violence.

Some of the ways in which this policy benefits the workplace is it leads to less absenteeism, lower staff turnover, greater productivity, fewer safety risks, and better morale. A big part of the *It's Time* initiative is that it provides policies to support survivors and workplace safety such as paid time off to address the effects of abuse, policies regarding confidentiality, workplace safety, and accountability. Theakston reviewed the proposed ordinance and noted Louisville has had something similar in place since 2023. She highlighted paid leave authorized by this ordinance does not roll over/carry forward and there will be consequences for fraudulent requests. Paid leave under this policy will run concurrently with protected leave under FMLA to the extent leave is taken for an FMLA-qualifying condition. Marks explained any employee who has been a victim may request leave to seek medical attention, obtain services, obtain counseling, relocate, take legal action, or take other action to meet needs resulting from domestic violence or crime.

Theakston said she does not feel like this policy has been widely adopted in Fayette County; however she hopes that by LFUCG taking this step, it will encourage other employers to take this step as well. To address which employees are eligible and if this policy is extended to sworn employees, Cravens said the ordinance references classified civil service employees, but there is language in Chapter 22 for unclassified and Chapter 23 for sworn employees that links back to this. Speaking about documentation, Theakston said it would go through Human Resources (HR) so the employee might need to show medical documents but will not be required to submit a police report or protective order. Glenda George, Director of HR, said 240 hours is the maximum unpaid leave after other leave has been exhausted. If additional leave is needed, George said it would still be unpaid leave.

Speaking about documentation and what assurances an employee has for discretion and privacy, George said all records maintained by HR are confidential and these records wouldn't be treated differently. When asked if other types of abuse besides physical would qualify, Theakston mentioned the ordinance references emotional and financial abuse as well. When asked if this would be at discretion of HR on each case, Cravens mentioned examples in the ordinance of the type of documentation that could be provided to substantiate a request.

Speaking about the financial impact calculation for average non-sworn base salary – annually that average would be \$61,372 which results in an hourly rate of \$29.51. 56 hours at that rate would total \$1,652 and the total compensation would be \$2,285 (includes benefits, etc.). Cravens spoke about work-related incidents. He explained this is trying to solve private issues, not work-related because there are already

measures in place for work-related incidents and injuries. Cravens highlighted a proposed amendment to clarify this leave is not available for work-related incidents or work-related injuries.

Motion by Plomin to approve Section 21-37.4 of the code of ordinances of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government to authorize up to fifty-six (56) hours of paid leave and up to two hundred and forty (240) hours of unpaid leave per calendar year for classified civil service employees who are victims of domestic violence or a crime, for needs related to or resulting from domestic violence or the crime [including the following amendment: *leave granted under this section is not available for (1) work-related incidents, or (2) work-related injuries.*], effective upon passage of council. Seconded by Gray. Motion passed without dissent.

IV. Expanding the Mental Health Court with an Aftercare Program

Bill Buckman, Fayette Mental Health Court Coordinator, explained the intersection of mental health and substance abuse with 90% of participants having both mental illness and substance use disorder and 32% of those have multiple drug and alcohol dependencies. He spoke about maintaining sobriety and said 60% of participants manage to stay completely clean during their time in the program. He mentioned the recidivism rate which is close to 50% in Kentucky. One year after graduation, that rate falls to 17.7% and regular participants in the alumni program are down to 7%. He explained the ripple effect which shows as individuals heal and maintain wellness, families, neighborhoods, and communities also heal and become more functional. He mentioned the community block grant in the amount of \$180,000 which has led to an increased number of referrals from judges and attorneys.

The Alumni Group continuing care program is thriving. In the behavioral health field, it's notoriously difficult to get voluntary participation in what is known as "aftercare" or "continuing care," especially with clients who were receiving care as part of a court diversion program or who were court-ordered as a condition of probation. Several committee members applauded the work being done on the aftercare program and expressed support. Buckman explained trauma informed care is a thread that runs through everything they do. In aftercare, there are twice weekly meetings (group therapy) to talk about everything and get feedback from peers. Buckman clarified what they mean by trauma informed care is they want to create a safe place by making it a supportive community for people. No action was taken on this item.

V. Items Referred to Committee

No action was taken on this item.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.