

**Mayor's Blue Ribbon Citizens Crime Advisory Committee Meeting**

Monday, March 15th at 12:30pm

Virtual Meeting

**Committee Members Present:**

Mike Cazal, Bill McMurray, Whitney Lanning, Chris Connally, Marty Novak, Bill Puett, Ron Holliday, Angie Tatro, Jennifer Gentry, Bryan Carter, Robert Corder, Jill Voltmer,

**Call to Order:**

Committee Chair, Mike Cazal called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m.

**Mission Statement:**

Mike Cazal restated the mission statement of the Crime Committee.

**Minutes of Last Meeting: December 14, 2020**

Mike Cazal reminded the Committee that the minutes of the last meeting had been sent out with the meeting invitation. Mike asked if there were any questions or recommended revisions to the meeting, there were none. Mike Cazal made a motion to approve the minutes; a member seconded – the motion passed unanimously.

**Updates from Law Enforcement and County Prosecutor:**

Sheriff Bill Puett – Sheriff Puett said it's been really hard to keep the crime under control when the laws don't allow keeping people in jail for an extended period of time. The recent human trafficking case which was collaborated with many agencies went really well and shows what can happen when we work together. Our local deputies work really hard and should be praised as in a recent case in Dekalb, MO in which a car and passenger were under freezing water during a 20 degree day and a deputy went in the water to try to save the individual. The individual was saved, but eventually passed away at the hospital. A partnership between local, state and federal agencies are helping with local drug cases, although the cases are still high. In 2020, in Buchanan County there were 420 drug felonies and \$4.3 million drugs seized.

Chief Chris Connally – Chief Connally showed a crime statistic slide show. Part 1 crimes down compared to the last 2 years. Total crimes down. Aggravated assaults up in December 2020 / January 2021, but down in February 2021. Simple assaults down compared to last 2 years. Robberies going down since 2001. Property crimes down. Lowest burglary rates since 2000. Motor vehicle theft down in the last 2 months, but up in the last 2 weeks. Shoplifting down. Catalytic converter thefts up. Several homeless referral programs. There are now two mental health workers from Family Guidance Counselors who are available to help the police department. CAP is willing to respond the homeless calls for panhandlers. YWCA is offering victim services. Doxing legislation in process that would keep law enforcement, corrections officers, prosecutors, etc. family information private and off of the internet to keep their family safe. Currently, there is a citizens committee, neighborhood watch program and hopefully a future kid's camp. Trail watch needs volunteers especially retirees with a flexible schedule.

Buchanan County Prosecutor Ron Holliday – During COVID19 the status of court system structure changed temporarily. There were 4 phases: phase 1 – most restrictive which was most of last year; phase 2 – last 2 months; phase 3 – currently; phase 4 – near future. The last jury trial was February 2020. There were 2 murder cases in the last 2 weeks. The sheriffs office is working diligently with the prosecutor's office. Discovery rules changed in the last year. The prosecutor's office lost an office manager last year to COVID19 and lost a paralegal who retired. The office will be doing more hiring in the near future. Just hired a new attorney. Ron is co-chair to a legislative committee and has learned a lot. There is a 24-48 hour rule in legislation right now in which dangerous felony cases have to be dealt with within 48 hours instead of 24. There is currently no backlog in the office – worked hard to get them moved during COVID19.

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CITY CLERK

**Update from Dr. Robert Corder, Colby Puckett Center:**

He appreciated everyone's congratulations for his Presidential Award. He's been working at Colby Puckett for the last 2 years dealing with the local drug crisis. Opioid addiction – the center uses a combo of 2 drugs to help the person's withdrawals and cravings, although there have been individuals who abuse this. The center normally allows up to 30 patients in one year, but Dr. Corder has seen 30 patients in the last 6 weeks. They have had 537 patients since September 2018. There are over 200 active patients being seen currently. There are patients who want help and those who do not. Dr. Corder works one day a week. Current problems: 1) would like to be able to help prisoners who are going through withdrawals 2) patients in ER who have overdosed are unable to get treatment right away and instead are sent to the psych ward 3) huge epidemic of fentanyl; China can legally mail it to the U.S.; hard for police officers to apprehend someone who is high on fentanyl because they could die if they touch the drug due to high potency 4) August 2021 was a record for opioid overdose deaths. Colby Puckett Center sees people, not just locally, but from all over Northwest Missouri due to being free.

**Update from Jennifer Gentry, Family Guidance:**

There are mental health services for youth even at an early age. They continue to work with the law enforcement and schools to take care of the youths needs as early as possible. BCA helps the kids from going on the run if there are issues in the family.

**Update from Whitney Lanning, CAP:**

CAP Representatives have been placed at various places to make it easier for emergency assistance for local citizens.

**Committee Priorities for 2021 – Discussion****Presentation:**

Bill McMurray presented Whitney Lanning a Certificate of Appreciation for being Chair last year for the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Citizens Advisory Crime Committee.

**Public Comment**

Chairman Mike Cazel noted that Capt Stratton from the Highway Patrol was absent due to being out of town on business. He also mentioned using the Crime Stoppers Poster around town. You can obtain extras from the St. Joseph Convention Visitors Bureau.

**Next Meeting:** June 14th, 12:30pm

**Adjourn:** 1:30 p.m.

**Prepared by:** Tina Cotton