



Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee Minutes

Tuesday, May 12, 2020, 5:30pm, Remote Meeting

Committee Attendance:

Belinda Ray, Chair (District 1), Tae Chong (District 3), Pious Ali (At-Large)

Councilors in Attendance:

City Staff:

Kristen Dow, Director of Health and Human Services; Adam Harr, Executive Assistant for Social Services; Keith Gautreau, Frank Chief; Chief Clark, Police Chief; Caity Hager, Emergency Management Coordinator. Bridget Rauscher, Chronic Disease Prevention Program Manager.

Meeting called to order at 5:35 PM.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Announcements

- None

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Approval of Minutes

- Councilor Chong moved to approve the minutes, Councilor Ali seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – COVID-19 Update

Caity Hager, Emergency Management Coordinator

- Cases in Country: 1,359,319 with Hotspots near us in Massachusetts and New York.
- States across the country who have stay-at-home orders are experiencing protests.
- States that have started to open are seeing crowds in parks and fear new infections.
- Rural concerns: prisons and nursing homes account for many infections.
- New: distribution of Remdesivir to treat severe cases of COVID-19 in hospital.
 - o Maine received 10 cases which is enough for 50 patients.
 - o 1,477 cases in Maine
 - o 913 recoveries
 - o 202 cumulative hospitalizations
 - o 65 deaths
 - o 34 people are hospitalized currently; 17 in critical care with 8 on ventilators.
 - o 20-30 cases seen a day.

- Stats per 100,000 residents in other states compared to Maine's 110 cases per 100,000 residents:
 - o MA: 78,462 cases, per 100,000 is 1,138
 - o NH: 3,160 cases, per 100,000 is 232.
 - Twice the rate of Maine.
 - o RI 11,614 cases with 1,096 per 100,000.
- Outbreak at Tyson Foods found 51 positive cases after universal testing.
- State lab testing capacity tripled through a partnership with Idexx.
- Contract tracers are being trained to increase capacity for when needed.
- Maine CDC will continue to concentrate on universal testing at long term care facilities and congregate care facilities (group homes and homeless shelters)
- Sentinel Testing: controlled randomized testing at healthcare facilities to get a handle on prevalence of disease.

Committee Questions and discussion.

- Chair Ray thanked Caity for the per 100,000 data to outbreaks in other states in perspective.
- Chair Ray asked about Remdesivir.
 - o It is used for the most critically ill in hospital.

Chief Gautreau, Fire Department Update

- The situation is stable at the hospital.
 - o Expected to remain this way for the near future.
 - o Planned for a spike, and are prepared for one.
- 1/3 EMS calls are U21 positive (U21 means COVID confirmed)
- Able to test more, with that to increase with the Idexx partnership.
- Preparing for the City to start opening and are expecting an increase in call volume.
- Vermont is the only state experiencing fewer positive cases.
- Suspects more positive cases in the City.
 - o Tyson Foods positive case
- Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)
 - o Giving more information on 911 calls help responders prepare (wearing PPE).

Committee Questions and Discussion.

- Councilor Chong asked if the CAD information is shared with the Police Department.
 - o Yes; it is one dispatch system that both Fire and PD can see on Mobile Data Bases (MDB)
- Councilor Chong asked if is there a map that is shared showing where there are positive cases.
 - o Yes, shared between the CDC.
 - o Chief Gautreau wished more information would be shared by the State.
- Councilor Chong asked if there are enough PPE and what people can do to support firefighters.
 - o N95 are still a concern at 25% of what is requested.
 - o Burn Rate (what is used per week) 220 N95 masks per week.
 - Increasing slightly due to more COVID positive cases.
 - o Other entities around the State are also receiving 25% of what they asked for.

- Chair Ray asked if Fire still only has 1/3 of the PPE they need.
 - o Yes; masks are still at 1/4 of what is requested.

Chief Clark, Police Department Update.

- 2nd Covid Positive Officer has recovered and returned to work.
- Slight increase in calls.
- Officers are assigned to the Expo and Sullivan Gym.
- Using the arrest wagon to minimize contact.
- Issuing summons instead of arrests when appropriate.
- Decon one is decontaminating vehicles,
- The Academy Cadets.
 - o 7 officers ready next week.
 - o Will need Field training to be fully certified?
- 240 Masks used last week.
 - o Medical Calls sent involve Fire.
 - o More People are wearing masks; wearing a mask is how to help the PD.
- June 1st is still the target date.
- Business Related calls are sent to permitting and inspections.
- Individual related calls are sent to community policing.
 - o People become voluntarily compliant when educated.
- Summer
 - o Looking to train summer downtown cadets.
 - o Training permitting and inspections.

Committee Questions and Discussion.

- Councilor Chong asked if states that are opening have seen increases in certain types of crime and if there are any noticeable trends locally.
 - o Locally traffic offenses have increased due to a perception that there won't be enforcement.
 - o Crime was down locally in march about 34%
 - Looking for an increase in DV and incidents involving children calls but there were none.
 - Concern that there are not as much access to mandatory reporters with schools closed.
 - o No noticeable upticks in types of crime locally or nationally.
- Councilor Chong asked about a correlation between an increase in opioid use and an increase in crime and if that was seen here.
 - o Chief Clark said they are tracking overdose data in a new using an OD map that is shared with public health.
 - This is not compared to crime.
 - o January – April
 - Compared to crime rates at the same time last year, there is a slight decrease.
- Councilor Ali thanked the Chief and did not have questions.
- Chair Ray asked about the situation in Bayside.
 - o There has been an uptick in calls relative to the small gap seen in March.

- Bail conditions were placed on Chronic offenses (crime or quality of life)
 - Able to put bail conditions that would not allow someone back in a particular area.
 - May place no cruising signs in the area to help enforcement.

Director Kristen Dow, HHS Department Update

- Public Health.
 - Education on face coverings.
 - Providing technical assistance on public health related questions around the reopening plan.
 - Seeing more people at the clinic.
 - Additional Tuesday and Thursday STI clinic appointments
 - Wednesday appointments for the free clinic
 - Seeing new patients.
 - The disease investigator was focused on COVID-19 and will come back to the clinic.
- Barron Center.
 - People screened at entry
 - Staff and residents are wearing masks and face coverings.
 - Weekly communication to families and residents (a requirement of the state for all long-term care facilities.)
 - Visits for families through sliding glass doors and scheduling skype calls.
- Office of Elder Affairs.
 - 20 people had signed up for the meal program and it is up to 45 people now
- Social Services
 - 147 Hotel placements (86 two weeks ago)
 - Short term and will end once the Oxford Street Shelter opens to the public again.
 - Denial rate is 4.98% so far in may due to new applicants.
 - Have been issuing 60-day assistance to limit contact.
 - Operating seven days a week at the General Assistance office
 - 100 people per night are staying between the Expo and OSS.
 - 2nd round of Universal Testing at OSS and Expo:
 - 4 positive results out of the 94 people tested.
 - 4% positive rate; national rate for shelters is 33%.

Committee Questions and Discussion

- Councilor Chong asked if people receiving GA are being given masks. He fears people are reusing dirty masks.
 - It has been discussed.
 - Shelter guests are given masks.
 - GA clients are given a mask if they present without one.
 - Donations for clients would be helpful.
- Chair Ray asked if the 45 people in the meal program are volunteers or receiving meals.
 - 45 people are matched with a volunteer and receiving meals.
 - There is a link on the city site to get involved.
- Chair Ray asked about the State-funded shelter in Sullivan Gym.

- o They are consistently at 50.
- o USM will need the gym back and are planning on ramping down some time between June first and June 15th.
- o Its closure will be a challenge and there is a search for an alternative site for Preble Street and the State to resume sheltering while social distancing.
- o Councilor Ali referenced an email from the public recommending the Boys and Girls Club or the Portland Public High School.
- Chief Gautreau said that to have so few first responders and frontline staff infected for a city our size is remarkable; the plan and support from the City is amazing.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Review of Maine's 2019 Drug Death Report

<https://portlandme.civicclerk.com/Web/GenFile.aspx?ad=5359>

- Statewide: 2019 rise over 2018:
 - o 380 drug deaths in 2019
 - 7% increase over 2018.
 - 318 due to opioids.
 - 85 caused by a combination of at least 2 substances.
 - 22% increase in cocaine deaths
 - 81% increase in methamphetamine deaths.
 - Only 29% had naloxone present.
 - Lack of access.
 - Using alone
 - o 354 in 2018.
 - 283 due to opioids.
- In Portland: 2019 rise over 2018
 - o 55 total overdose deaths in 2019
 - 41 deaths due to opioids.
 - o 44 total overdose deaths in 2018.
- Needle Exchange Program in 2019:
 - o Collected 257,187 syringes.
 - o Distributed 221,000.
 - o Made 17,00 referrals to services and substance use disorder treatment.
 - o Dispensed 1,330 doses of naloxone
 - o Clients self-reported:
 - 199 overdose reversals
 - 12 fatalities.
 - 30% of these included a call to 911.
 - o Demographics
 - 3,550 enrollees
 - 65% male
 - 35% female
 - 96% are white and English speaking.
- Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction Program
 - o Technical Assistance

- Education to community partners and businesses to implement an overdose prevention protocol.
- Primary Prevention
 - Work in schools and with families and parents.
- Target Outreach.
 - At shelters and recovery houses
 - OD Map
- Community Sharps Boxes
 - Collected by public Works and numbers get recorded.
- Virtual Presentations offered twice a day on Mondays.
 - Anonymous
 - People can be mailed naloxone after completed presentation..
- Healthy Hand Offs for Needle Exchange Program.
 - Minimizing people coming into the building.
- Methamphetamine Task Force created.
- Mobile Medical Outreach Program temporarily suspended as it occurs in the Oxford Street Shelter.
 - Received CDBG funding.
- State Emergency Medical Services looking to change the law on Leave Behind Naloxone.
 - EMS related first responders currently cannot leave behind naloxone.
- Funding for a patient navigator.
 - Similar to Oliver Bradeen's work but referrals will be made through direct outreach instead of 911.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – City staff report out on overdose prevention efforts

Committee questions and Discussion

- Councilor Chong asked that the needle exchange program is the reason we have a lower rate of opioid overdose deaths than the state; looking at the increase in overdose deaths due to cocaine and methamphetamine across the state, is Portland seeing an increase too?
 - There is not city-level data but it is likely.
 - Is there anything we can do to lower those overdose rates?
 - State task force is looking to put together a tool kit for response as interventions can be dangerous.
 - Keeping people as safe in their use as possible: using test strips to see if there are opioids/fentanyl in their supply.
 - Is there an increase in opiate deaths from quarantine making it difficult to get naloxone?
 - Possibly, but it is too soon to know.
 - What support is needed from the Council, such as test strips given to users?
 - Staying informed and share information with the community.
 - Fentanyl test strips are currently not offered but community partners do.
- Chair Ray asked if the overdose deaths attributed to opioids that are up this year were up over 2017; is there a tending increase.?
 - 84% in 2019

- o 85% in 2017

PD Overdose Update

- Each officer carries Naloxone.
 - o An officer was exposed to a white powder during an interaction from a gust of wind. It was believed to be fentanyl and the responding officer administered naloxone.
- Bridges for Maine Program
 - o Cumberland County Jail is a pilot location for Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) for people to receive treatment after reentry from incarceration.
- OD Map
 - o National platform that allows officers to enter information (date, time, type of drug, if naloxone was administered, gender and age).
 - o Data added is sent to partners when entered.
 - o Allows to monitor for regional spikes in neighboring communities.
 - DHHS reached out to Poison Control and do education when people who though they were using opiates found the effects were from stimulants.
 - o OD Map was used in March when the India Street and Needle Exchange were closed; the OD Map showed an uptick in overdoses prompting the program to open sooner. Having the data prompted fast public health intervention.
 - o Oliver Bradeen is the liaison to the Bridges for Maine program and other groups to provide resources for people with substance use disorders and their families.
 - He is working remotely and making more connections by phone.
 - More calls by officers for referrals since they cannot access him in the office.
 - o Data isn't collected but here is an anecdotal increase in stimulants: methamphetamine, cocaine and crack cocaine.
 - o No existing resources and looking at expanding drug court and wrap around services if the criminal justice system gets involved.

Committee questions and Discussion

- Councilor Chong asked how other communities experiencing methamphetamine overdoses working to prevent overdoses outside of drug courts? Are they giving out test strips?
 - o It has been an issue looked at out west for years.
 - No information on test strips.
 - Focus on prevention.
- Councilor Ray asked what follow up to the addiction workshop at the start of the year has happened.
 - o Public health will be meeting with in a couple weeks to follow-up.
 - o Recommendations will be part of the community health improvement plan.
- Fire's data shows January to Date 2019 had 76 overdoses and January to Date 2020 is 66.
 - o Narcan use is down compared to 6 years ago.
- Mobile Medical Outreach grant funding allows EMS provide services at the shelter.
- Councilor Ray asked about the rule change for first responders to leave behind naloxone; is it happening in the legislature?

- o Bridget said she believes it will be an emergency order from the governor and will confirm for the committee.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Next Steps

- The next meeting is June 9th.
 - o Fire will update on sprinklers.
- It is unclear if the meeting will be in-person or remote.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:02 PM.