Missoula City Council Public Safety and Health Committee Minutes

March 4, 2020
3:15 PM
City Council Chambers
140 W. Pine Street, Missoula, MT

Members present: Stacie Anderson (chair), Mirtha Becerra, Heather Harp, Jordan Hess, Gwen Jones, Julie Merritt, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, Bryan von Lossberg, Heidi West

Members absent: John P. Contos, Jesse Ramos

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1.1 Roll Call

The minutes for February 12th and February 19th were approved as submitted.

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Relationship Violence Services (RVS) Quarterly Update

Shantelle Gaynor with Relationship Violence Services gave a quarterly update. Relationship Violence Services was formed in 2017 but grew out of programs that have existed. The first program was the Crime Victim Advocate Program which was established in 1985. As these laws came into action, there were responses to crimes. The criminal justice system had to catch up with these crimes. Victims don't act like other victims of crimes. One of the things on domestic violence is people saying why does the victim go back? There are many reasons, but some people say they will be homeless, or they have cultural personal beliefs that make them stay. RVS will figure out how to work through it. There is a lot that gets built into those questions. Their services are to make sure people can access safety and to identify what safety is. When victims come in for services they will be helped in one of two ways; civil remedy and if there has been an arrest their advocates will get in touch. In domestic violence in particular statistics say that the average person has to attempt to leave 7 times before they actually leave. They will be there all times. Their services are free and confidential. Their advocates are highly trained. They also help with other crimes, such as home invasions. For the most part they focus on sexual and domestic violence. The last piece is that people do best when they have choices. In terms of of the city, they have one advocate that is co located with PD whose focus is sexual violence but can help with other crimes. They have one advocate that is partnered with the city attorney's office and the majority of her caseload is misdemeanor domestic violence and they have another FTE that handles walk-ins.

The last quarter they served 347 cases; 63% were for the city; 26% for the county; 11% were out of county or unknown. Of those they had 450 followup contacts. As an overview, 34% involved domestic violence; 38% involved stalking, harassment,
intimidation or violation of orders of protection; 17% include sexual violence; 1% child abuse related crimes, and 1% involved all other crimes.

Mirtha Becerra left at 3:35 PM

They do a client satisfaction survey and they get back great information and year after year they get high response of folks that need the services and they get good service and they would recommend the services to others.

The relationship violence services budget is over 1 million dollars. 59% of the funds are grants. Those are made of state grants. State dollars are shrinking. They also have federal grants. These are national competitions and it is highly competitive. In addition they have county funds, court fine dollars and the city makes up 16% of the funding. Historically the court fines from municipal court would come directly to their program. There was a 9500.00 match from city attorney's office that was a match one of their grants. In the 2012 investigation on Missoula's response to sexual violence city council decided to invest in primary prevention programming for the first time and that was general fund dollars. That primary prevention funding has been a catalyst for a phenomenal amount of work but it was also the first dedicated prevention funding from a local government in the state. Currently 16% of city funds got rolled into a single contract.

Heather Harp asked if we didn't have their program, does she have any idea of what they would be spending on the other side in terms of budget perspective? Shantelle said for every dollar spent on prevention you save 7, but that number is hard to pin down. Domestic violence run the gamet from a misdemeanor to a homicide, so it gets hard to pin down what the theoretical cost is. Between the lifetime trauma impacts, loss of work and the ongoing problems families have, it starts to become non calculable.

Sandra Vasecka asked about if this is for men women and children? She said some people do not leave because of pends and she asked if they do anything with that. Shantelle said they do not, but YWCA has a fostering program. There is not a great solution for folks who have large animals or a lot of animals.

Jenny Daniels, Coordinator for Just Response Program which is working with the system to ensure they are all working together because of the complicated crimes that Shantelle explained. She tends to look at funding and looking to close system gaps. They have time going to first step for sexual assault response; they have time going to co-locate the advocates; they have collaborative projects that they work on. They collaborate with training; they have case review that listens for system needs and what it is that is going on in the system and applying training. Strangulation is a specific example. They were not really privy to this or the dangers of it. It is a high prevalence and they decided they needed to give money to that; they were able to send three staff that were from the County Attorney's Office, the Police Department, and from Partnership Health Center/First Step to training, and they are training groups and individuals on the importance of understanding strangulation. They are changing policies and forums; They just got a practicum student who is dedicating 15 hours a week to human trafficking task force.

Sandra Vasecka said she was amazed about strangulation and how serious it is and how it has become a huge issue and she wanted to thank Jennie for bringing that up.
Julie Merritt asked what the result of the training looks like. Jenny said they can craft it for whoever the audience is. They just had it for the multi disciplinary team. They are working on a forum where the officers will be able to ask appropriate questions on things that are not being caught right now and to be able to use the new law. There is a consistent message throughout all of the people. That’s what’s important.

Kelly McGuire Prevention Division Manager at Relationship Violence Services spoke on their prevention work. They have 3.65 full-time employees in the prevention decision. That is 4 positions. Kelly does grant writing, administration, program supervision, grant writing, collaboration and a focus on health equity through one of the grants. Erica Ritsema focuses on teen dating violence prevention targeting youth, delivering education to youth, training to teachers, and policy work with school districts. Mary Furlong does prevention and outreach in rural communities. Brenna Merrill focuses on sexual violence prevention targeting adults using social media, marketing, working with bars and nightlife venues, and community workshops.

Rates of violence for intimate partner violence across the lifespan affects 1 in three people, both men and women. It is impacting a lot of folks. There are impacts on other issues as well.

26% of Missoula county students in grades 8-12 report they have been hurt or abused by someone in the past year. National surveys show that 87% of students say they have been sexually harassed.

In 2020 they secured four prevention grants totaling 250,000.00. One last year from the Montana Board of Crime Control for $125,000 over 2 years, one from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for $95,000 over three years, and one from the Montana Department of Health and Human Services, $25,000 for a community needs assessment, and $5,000 for curriculum kits. She is working on a grants application that is $500,000 over three years. It is pretty competitive. It would begin in September. That grant would focus on school-based prevention work as well as intervention. They would be able to fund a position at MCPS to focus on Title 9 which is the federal law that protects students from sexual discrimination. It would include training for school staff and law enforcement.

They provided healthy relationship and consent lessons to roughly 900 students in the City of Missoula. They collaborated with Missoula County Public Schools, Missoula Healthy Sexuality Network, Missoula city county health department and the Montana office of public instruction.

They did a youth risk behavior survey in 2019 which is for Missoula County high school students. Reported sexual dating violence decreased by 45% in 6 years. Reported physical dating violence decreased by 72% in 8 years.

Amber Sherrill asked about the health equity component. Kelly said the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has a program called Culture of Health Leaders. It is a leadership development program. She was selected to participate in that. It pays for 1/4 of her time to do leadership development. The program will work with her on what needs to be developed. It is focused on making sure that our prevention work is reaching everyone and doing things to make sure we are reaching our marginalized populations better.
Brenna Merrill is with the Make your Move Campaign It is a council that involves four different agencies in Missoula that includes SARC, the Student Advocacy Resource Center at the University, the Missoula City-County Relationship Violence Services, the Missoula Public Health City-County Health Department, and the YWCA. Make your move has been a round since 2012. They created posters in 2012, which was Make Your Move’s first project. This project is used in other campaigns around the world. To this day they still get requests for this marketing campaign. In addition to posters, they do in person tabling and go to community events. Two years ago they did a project where they spent the day at the humane society. That is a way they engage folks on social media to try to make sexual violence education prevention more accessible.

In 2016 They got funding from a national grant to do a similar marketing campaign. This time they focused on consent. It ran in 2017 and 2018 and received overwhelming positive feedback. This was oriented to help remind community members that talking about consent thing is a fun thing and to help destigmatize the feeling of negativity. In 2016 they received money to revamp some of the bar workshops. They started doing work with bar staff on bystander intervention training. She thanked the council for being able to get into various bars.

The night life project came out of a request brought to them. This has been an opportunity to look and work with entertainers to create social norms and standards to create a safe environment. They created a series of workshops; the first in the series was just completed. That focused on what is prevention, what is accountability, how do they want to think about safety and power in the way we think about addressing these issues in the community. The next two will be workshop-oriented. When people think about sexual violence or harassment, it is easy to think about what is happening at the moment and to intervene at that time, but they want to think of prevention as much more expansive and think about the ways we can work before we are at an event where harm can happen to create an society that it would be unimaginable for that to happen. This includes teaching bodily autonomy, comprehensive sex education, and like make protocols for the venue and promoting events that are safe, and safety checklists. Their goal is to make sure community members understand the full breadth of prevention.

The second project is a community needs assessment. They received funding to look at the ways prevention is happening across Missoula. There are ways that preventing one type of harm helps prevent other types of harm. They are looking at all the ways prevention is happening.

Sandra Vesecka asked what are sip chips, and how does someone get in contact with them? Brenna said Sip Chips are a brand name of a litmus test so you can use a liquid and get it tested for drugs. There are some entertainers in Missoula who were able to buy a stock of them, and so they exist in some of the bars in town. You can get in touch with them via social media or on their website. The website is MakeYourMoveMissoula.org and the social media handle is Make Your Move Missoula.

Julie Merritt asked Shantelle to talk about some statistics. Shantelle said in the city of Missoula that translates to 34,500 people. You can fill a griz stadium and the osprey field. That statistic is over a lifetime. They don't know how it shows up. Sometimes it is behavioral and sometime it is physical or mental health related.
Julie asked Shantelle if she could touch on how much it is affecting the teen population. The stats that Kelly shared were for our county. Missoula is right on par for what we see in our teens.

None-discussion only

3.2 Resolution amending Clark Fork River Market boundaries and hours of operation

Kirsten Hands Senior Deputy City Clerk for the city of Missoula is proposing a resolution to expand the boundaries of the Clark Fork Market and update the hours of operation. The Department of Transportation is going to begin construction on the Higgins Bridge. It shouldn't affect them this season. The downtown master plan is suggesting new uses for the riverfront corridor and they do not know how it will affect the market and this proposed resolution will help them have flexibility in the downtown location. They are asking for the boundaries to be expanded to the orange street bridge parking lot so they have flexibility. They are also asking to update the hours of operation to 8:00 am to 1:00 pm May through September and 9:00 am to 1:00 PM during October. They are also asking for flexibility to extend hours for special events.

Heather Harp asked about the impact on the Clark Fork Riverside Manor and is there any impact? Kirsten said there were conversations with them and as far as she knows it is not an issue for them. Because of the flexibility in the area, they will be working with the downtown businesses and anyone around that area to make sure they are cooperating with everyone.

Mirtha Becerra asked if they coordinated with the Missoula Downtown Association for their events at Caras Park on Saturday. Kirsten is not sure about the effects. She knows that they have contacted the MDA and they are aware they have to move. Kirsten will follow up. They will be connecting with the MDA in the future to see what events are going on and will work closely with them.

Sandra Vasecka asked if they coordinated with the Missoula Downtown Association for their events at Caras Park on Saturday. Kirsten is not sure about the effects. She knows that they have contacted the MDA and they are aware they have to move. Kirsten will follow up. They will be connecting with the MDA in the future to see what events are going on and will work closely with them.

Heidi asked about the other market that is held outside the carousel. Kirsten said the other market is on Sunday and as far as she knows it has not met for a few years.

Moved by: Heather Harp

adopt a resolution amending Resolution 8186 and Resolution 6910 expanding the Clark Fork River Market boundaries as shown in Exhibit A and amending the hours of operation for the market.

AYES: (9): Mirtha Becerra, Heather Harp, Jordan Hess, Gwen Jones, Julie Merritt, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, Bryan von Lossberg, and Heidi West

ABSENT: (3): Stacie Anderson, John Contos, and Jesse Ramos
Vote results: Approved (9 to 0)

4. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned.