Missoula City Council Public Safety and Health Committee Minutes

September 11, 2019
9:45 AM
City Council Chambers
140 W. Pine Street, Missoula, MT

Members present: Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, John DiBari, Heather Harp, Gwen Jones, Julie Merritt, Bryan von Lossberg, Heidi West
Members absent: Julie Armstrong, Michelle Cares, Jordan Hess, Jesse Ramos

1. **ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**
   
   1.1 **Roll Call**
   
   1.2 **Approval of the Minutes**

   The minutes were approved as submitted.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

3. **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

   3.1 **Suicide Prevention Informational Presentation**

   Nancy de Pastino, suicide prevention coordinator of the Missoula Public City-County Health Department gave a presentation on what they are and what they are doing about it.  
   Nancy stated Montana has the highest rate of suicide in the nation, but steadily the numbers are going down. She presented a chart of age-adjusted suicide rates by Counties in Montana. Missoula rates are reducing because we have service and are constantly working to approve those services.

   Nancy stated more people are reaching out to the National Suicide Prevention lifeline. 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or if you wish to text, if you can put the letters "MT", it allows us to be able to track the amount of text received from our area.

   She stated there are two call centers in Montana. They are located in Great Falls and Bozeman. She would like to see one in Missoula, more local, someone in crisis actually being able to speak to someone from the area who actually knows the services available. Gwen Jones asked how the call center was funded. Nancy thought state and federal grants. She stated it is not available 24/7, about 80% of Montana calls go into Lifeline, 20% of calls are answered outside of the state.

   Mirtha asked about outreach being one outside if Missoula city limits, county limits and how much is being done in native communities. Nancy stated she shouldn’t be sitting at this presentation alone, she is mostly a part of Project Tomorrow, but there is a coalition of people working together. She stated they do work with the Missoula Indian Urban Center.
Nancy discussed the means of how suicide is attempted matters. She showed a chart about the time between suicide decision and attempt and the percentage based on the means (overdoes, firearm, etc.)

Objective 1 - they have trained over 800 Missoula residents to be Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) certified. This allows them to ask the difficult question, find hope and persuade to get help, follow them through to get help.

Objective 2 – develop a model school policy for suicide prevention for Missoula County Schools. Nancy stated MCPS does a fantastic job training students, staff and parents in suicide intervention and prevention. Schools that feed into them can be a different story. She stated they have a committee on project tomorrow that works on advocacy and policy, they are working on the model school policy. She stated they are here to support you in whatever training you need.

Objective 3 – educate and advocate elected officials on effective suicide prevention legislation. Nancy wants to give honest data and feedback.

Objective 4 – improve data collected from coroner to better understand communities at high risk of suicide in Missoula. Nancy said the coroner only gives them age, gender, means and location, there is so much more information that tells the story. She is working the Missoula County Sheriff’s Office.

Heather Harp discussed how they use ‘X’ in a text - if you face a moment where you need an out (social circumstance, sex, drugs, alcohol, suicidal) you can text this to your person and they know you need help now. Hardest things with dealing with depression, is that you anticipate people can read you. When a person is depressed, it’s often the hardest to ask for help, send text to support circle. Small but very critical motive of communication.

Nancy stated there is an app called MY3, and it has three people’s contact information who are your lifeline, you can click a button and let them know you are in trouble or in need of help. All teens should have this.

No Motion.

4. ADJOURNMENT