

**CITY OF GLOUCESTER
Joint Meeting
City Council &
Board of Health
Minutes of the Meeting
May 2, 2015
City Hall
Kyrouz Auditorium
9 Dale Avenue
Gloucester, MA 01930**

City Council members present: Chair, Councilor Paul McGeary; Vice Chair, Councilor Robert Whynott; Councilor Joseph Ciolino; Councilor Melissa Cox; Councilor Steve LeBlanc, Jr.; Councilor Greg Verga; Councilor Paul Lundberg; Councilor William Fonvielle; Councilor Robert Stewart Absent: None.

Board of Health members present: Chairperson: Dr. Richard Sagall, Frederick Cowan Claudia Schweitzer, and Joe Rosa. Present from the Health Department: Public Health Director, Noreen Burke. Absent: Vice-Chairperson: Robert Harris.

Others present: Morgan Bell, District Representative; Seth Moulton, Congressman; Bruce Tarr, Senator; Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Representative; Melissa Teixeira, School Committee.

The meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m. Councilor Whynott arrived at 10:30 a.m.

Council President McGeary announced that this meeting is recorded by video and audio in accordance with state Open Meeting Law. He stated that this is a full joint meeting of both the City Council and the Board of Health.

Flag Salute & Moment of Silence- *Council President McGeary* dedicated the Moment of Silence for those who have lost their lives to substance abuse or who have been touched by the problem of substance abuse.

Presentation to Council and Board of Health on the Subject of Opiate Abuse and Resources for Change and Treatment-

Mayor Sefatia Romeo-Theken thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She stated that people have looked at today's event and said Gloucester is finally doing something about substance abuse. She stated that that is false; this is a continuance of what Gloucester has been doing to prevent substance abuse. She stated that when they moved closer to people began to listen, it was a stigma, it was always the same people, the same round tables, so seeing a full room today means that everyone cares and there are no more stigmas. She stated that one in five people knows someone with some kind of addiction. She stated that in 2008, there was a presentation at City Hall that other communities have seen and have asked them what they are doing and those communities want to learn what Gloucester is doing. She stated that this is going forward. She stated that in 2008 Gloucester started round tables with the physicians. She stated that is not beginning awareness around substance abuse, this city is in continuance of helping every resident to have a clean, rich life who wants to. She stated that if anyone would like to see the presentation from 2008 they should contact her office and they will send the presentation to them. She thanked everyone again for coming, welcomed all to the City of Gloucester, and said she is very proud of the city and the people of this community.

Police Chief Campenello stated that Gloucester has an excellent network of collaboration and it has been that way for a number of years. He stated that he spent a number of years working in a plain clothes drug enforcement capacity and Gloucester is exceeded by no one, no one on the North Shore or the Northeast as far as he is concerned, as far as prevention of substance abuse. He stated that today is the day, Saturday, May 2, 2015, where they take the next step and recognize substance abuse as a disease and

not a criminal problem and they treat it as such. He stated that they have an advantage in Gloucester, they are at the end of the world, they only have to push in one direction and if that means they have to push their Representatives here and or in Washington, or insurance companies, or big businesses then they will do it. He stated that there are new initiatives in Gloucester that they will hear about after the close of the public hearing and he believes that Gloucester is poised in making the next step in canceling out this disease.

Noreen Burke, Public Health Director thanked everyone for attending the meeting and said there is such a rich network of resources available today. She recognized the Gloucester School Department and the Veterans Affairs Department who could not be at the meeting due to conflicts with their schedules. She commended Joan Whitney and Stasia Satterfield for all their help in putting the event together. She stated that the Health Department assesses and investigates health problems, they inform and educate individuals and the public at large, they mobilize community partnerships such as the Healthy Gloucester Collaborative, they play a key role (the board members in particular) in developing policies, plans, and public health laws, regulations, and statutes, they support access to care, and the Public Health Nurse offers vaccines and immunizations to those who may not know where else to go, they connect people to primary care, they continually evaluate if what they are doing is meeting the needs of the community, and they implement evidence based practices. She stated that with all they do, it is still not enough; more is always needed, more sharing of information and resources. She encouraged each member in attendance to just go around and learn about the resources that the community has to offer. She stated that people can help by supporting the systems, the policies, and the environmental changes. She stated that there is much written about opiates and there is article in the Boston Globe daily. She stated that she went to hear Attorney General, Maura Healey speak a few weeks ago, Mayor Theken sent her to represent the City of Gloucester, and that was a great honor. She stated that the Attorney General spoke about access to treatment, and how the treatment system is broken, and prescription drug monitoring programs. She stated that Gloucester's physician's started a prescription monitoring program years ago, long before it was discussed at the State level. She stated that they must eliminate bad practices with respect to providing access to opioids to those who legitimately need pain medication. She gave a shout out to those in the mental health field, and stated that she was very impressed with the Attorney General's speech, in that often there is a mental health issue related to substance abuse, and there is not enough screening done. She asked the Board of Health and the City Council to support all mental health parity laws. She stated that on a personal note, having worked and lived in the Somerville community for twelve years, from 2004-2008, where oxycontin and alcohol overdoses among young men ages mostly 19-25, she recognized the deaths of any person in these circumstances. She thanked all for their support and leadership.

Michele Lipinski, Principal of the North Shore Recovery High School of 502 Cabot Street in Beverly stated that she works very closely with Joan Whitney, the Gloucester Health Department, and the Gloucester Public Schools to implement many resources. She stated that they trained all the nurses at the Gloucester High School. She stated that the beautiful thing about Gloucester is that they are willing to talk about it and she has worked with over thirty high schools. She stated that if they get it early the chances of recovery are much greater. She introduced one of her staff members, Jay Tressler, who is a Gloucester native, who has been sober for ten years. She stated that many people can get sober and stay sober if they have access to care and they have great role models and there are great role models out there and that is what they do at the school with their students. She thanked Gloucester for supporting the North Shore Recovery High School and for supporting adolescents.

Council President McGeary commended the Gloucester School Committee and recognized Melissa Teixeira of the Gloucester School Committee in the audience.

Maryann Frangoulis, Founder and Executive Director of the Massachusetts Organization of Addiction and Recovery (MOAR) stated that MOAR is a statewide organization that works with families and friends of

people in recovery and they work to educate people on the value of recovery. She stated that she was very happy to be invited by Gloucester to attend this meeting because the community of Gloucester is really about making positive changes in public health to promote the value of prevention, treatment, and recovery. She stated Gloucester supports the use of Narcan to help reverse overdose deaths. She stated that without Narcan statewide they would not have 32, 600 people trained across the State to prevent, recognize, and respond to opiate overdoses. She stated that the Department of Public Health has documented the reversal of 4,346 potentially fatal overdoses. She stated that we have a prescription monitoring program and we have a continuum of care, which still needs to get better. She stated that they need much more and through their voices they hope to promote the "Good Samaritan" law to increase calls to 911. She stated that they need to ensure they have access to a full continuum of care which does not exist, there have been improvements but they need to have people come in at the right time by the right provider and this includes recovery coaching. She stated recovery coaches will help with the initial moments when people are ready to make a choice to get help. She stated that there is a bill pending before the State House that will allow people twenty eight days of continued stay of treatment. She stated Chapter 258, was passed last year and will take effect on October 28, 2015 which will allow individuals to get 14 days of treatment without insurance coverage getting in the way.

Dr. Kiame Mahaniah, Medical Director of the North Shore Community Health Center of 302 Washington Street stated that the Gloucester Family Health Center is a part of the North Shore Community Health Center which is based in Salem, Peabody, and Gloucester. He stated that they take care of people with Medicaid, people without insurance, the homeless and mentally-ill people who cannot become patients elsewhere. He stated that they specialize in family medicine and provide a whole spectrum of care. He stated that is virtually impossible for someone on Medicaid or Mass Health to find a doctor who is willing to prescribe Suboxone to them. He stated that addiction is a disease and there is a medical process in which to help people. He stated that the best evidence shows that you need mental health counseling, and psychological help as well as pharmacological help such as Methadone, Suboxone, or Vivatrol. He stated that there is an incredible amount of support that a recovering addict needs and it is very difficult because most addicts have burned all of their bridges so by the time they are ready to seek recovery they tend to have lost all of their friends, family, and possibly lost custody of their children. He stated that since most start using in their early teens, many do not graduate from high school which makes it difficult to find a job. He stated that they work with three communities but Gloucester is exceptional in terms of addiction treatment. He stated that the central facet that allows possible treatment is that the leaders, the police, the first responders, the pharmacies, the homeless shelters, the organizations have to accept that recovering addicts are us and not them. He stated that it is very easy to think that addicts are not us but they are our brothers, our wives, our husbands, our sons, our cousins, and our colleagues. He stated that this is not a disease that is somehow only affecting other people or only poor people or only people of color. He stated that people use those labels to hide from the disease that is devastating all of us. He stated that the Gloucester's community is exceptionally involved in the prevention and treatment of opiate abuse and how to help recovering addicts. He stated that recovering addicts need social services; once they get sober the fight has only just started and they need all of us to keep talking and normalizing the concept of addiction to encourage people to seek care.

Cindy Donaldson, Vice-President of Addison Gilbert Hospital stated that she is representing Addison Gilbert Hospital and Lahey Behavioral Health Services. She stated that she is pleased to participate in this strong community coalition with the Health Department, the school system, and all of the agencies in Gloucester. She stated that the hospital has a high risk intervention team that works on the inpatient units to connect those patients who may be at risk of readmission with additional services that they would not particularly be connected to which includes behavioral health services. She stated that they sponsor a school based health center at the Gloucester High School and each student that comes into the center is screened for behavioral health, substance abuse, and for many other issues. She stated that they offer a mental health counselor in collaboration with the State that is partially State funded. She stated that the

Lahey Behavioral Services offers Addison Gilbert Hospital a methadone treatment center, which includes Methadone counseling and the Discover program, which is a unique addictions treatment day-program. She stated that Lahey Behavioral Health Services is working closely with the Health Police Commission to develop an emergency department based on a comprehensive response program to patients who have substance abuse and behavioral health issues and are presenting in the emergency department. She stated that this program will offer treatment options which are not currently available. She stated that they echo the theme of lack of access to substance abuse treatment services in the commonwealth and would encourage everyone's support for services.

Bev White, of Gloucester stated that she is a Gloucester resident with five children, one of which is an addict. She stated that the age of fourteen years old her son started drinking alcohol and smoking pot, and his grades tanked and he was diagnosed with ADD and was prescribed Adderall. She stated that her son wants people to know that mixing the Adderall with pot with his gateway to poly-substance use and he did it for four years and became addicted to Oxycontin. She stated that her son began selling his Adderall so he could buy Oxycontin and she never knew of any of it. She stated that neither her doctor or his doctor knew how to help him and suggested that she try the emergency room and she never felt so helpless in her life but after one overdose and many detoxs and many months later her son has been in recovery for over three and a half years, but it is still one day at a time. She stated that thankfully Learn to Cope arrived in Gloucester about four years ago. She stated that Learn to Cope is a peer lead family support group that offers resources and education for those in need. She stated that the meetings feature guest speakers, which include professionals in the field of addiction or people who have been successful in recovery and are able to offer families hope. She stated that they also train families in overdose prevention and in Narcan. She stated that meetings are held every Wednesday from 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Rose Baker Senior Center. She stated that Learn to Cope has a website at www.Learntocope.org and they offer online help twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. She stated that there are now 13 Learn to Cope centers in Massachusetts and meetings are non-judgmental and confidential. She would like to ask the community to support the Learn to Cope program and to spread the word about the awesome support group.

Ruth George, Nurse Manager at the Addison Gilbert Hospital stated that she has worked in the emergency department for 44 years. She stated that she has seen many changes through the years and they have done so many things because of the community, the Healthy Gloucester Collaborative, and the City of Gloucester. She stated that one of the greatest things that started was when the Healthy Gloucester Collaborative came to them and they had a group discussion about having a health promotion advocate in the emergency department. She stated that they received two grants to fund this position, the first allowed for one eighteen hour position and they now have two eighteen hour positions. The health promotion advocates do screening and a brief intervention with a referral to treatment of adults who are in the department for other reasons. She stated that they have another grant so they can now talk to youths as well. She stated that the prescription drug monitoring program has been wonderful. She stated that one issue they run into is not having enough beds when they are needed. She asked the community what else they could do to for opiate abuse problems.

Alex Doyle of Conley's Pharmacy stated that back in March of 2014 Governor Deval Patrick passed a state of emergency per the opiate problem in the state and this allowed pharmacies standing orders for Narcan, so individuals could walk into a pharmacy to get Narcan kits to assist in overdose reversals. He stated that Conley's Drugstore worked and collaborated with Gloucester Family Health Center to provide any patients that required it to obtain a Narcan kit.

He stated that Narcan saves lives but it is a temporary reversal measure. He stated that CVS in Gloucester has open standing orders of Narcan kits. He stated that it is important for people to be educated about Narcan and the Good Samaritan law. He thanked the community of Gloucester and the Healthy Gloucester Collaborative for discussing the issue.

Mary Susan Karidis of CVS stated that they try to educate and inform patients of all their medications all try to prevent all risk associated with those medications. She stated that the next step in informing your friends, neighbors, and relatives that having Narcan available will save lives and should be included as part of a first aid kit.

Senator Bruce Tarr thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He stated that the turnout today confirms what so many in public service have agreed upon for some time and that is that the issue of opiates and opiate abuse is something that is important to each and every one of us and that each and everyone one of us has a role to play in trying to address the problem. He stated that this forum this morning is so reflective of the strong response that Gloucester has had to this issue on a continuing basis for some time. He stated that him and Representative Ferrante often hold up Gloucester's response as an example for communities throughout the state particularly because they have operations such as the Healthy Gloucester Collaborative that are integrated with the Fire Department, the Police Department, the hospital, and the other providers, to say that they will have a multifaceted response because the only way to address this problem is with a multi-faceted response because it is a multi-conventional problem. He stated that it is important to remember that they all have a role to play and that even though they have made great strides they still have a considerable amount of work to do. He stated on Beacon Hill, because they have heard so many personal stories, they are trying to take action. He stated last year they passed legislation that would address a number of different fronts of this problem such as the use of the prescription monitoring program. He stated that approximately 65% of physicians in the commonwealth are engaged and are actively using the prescription monitoring program, but they need that number to be 100%. He stated that they are trying to address the issue how the prescription monitoring programs interacts with other medical record keeping systems. He stated another issue they are looking at is when an addict acknowledges that they have a problem and they want to seek treatment they need to capitalize on that time with the availability of treatment and a bed and if they don't they have lost an opportunity that rarely comes. He stated that the new legislation says that providers and insurance providers must cover fourteen days of treatment with a review of that treatment occurring seven days in. He stated that they have also eased the rules of prior approval. He stated that they are also trying to increase the ability of someone who voluntarily petitions themselves to get treatment. He stated that there has been some issues relative to some forms of treatment such as residential programs or other programs that do not necessarily have a medical provider but need greater oversight and that is in the bill as well. He stated with all these additions to the legislation it is still not enough. He stated that the bill passed because people were brave enough, courageous enough, and patient enough to stand up and tell their stories. He stated that that is not an easy thing to do and commended those people for doing it. He stated that they need to think about greater steps to see what else can be done. He stated Governor Baker has convened a task force to look at this issue to see what else can be done to advance the cause. He stated that one of the issues the task force is trying to address is the supply of pain killers that at times are prescribed in excess of what a patient may need. He stated that Blue Cross Blue Shield has implemented a program to try to reduce that excess and the task force is looking to replicate the success of that program. He stated that the task force is looking at alternatives to pain killers that are not as addictive as some of the pain killers that are being used today. He stated that there is another task force that was created by Senator Stan Rosenberg. He stated that Senator Rosenberg is attempting to call us together as a legislative body and look at the local bills that have been filed on the subject and define a clear path so they can have legislative action in this session. He stated that this is a process that has gotten attention and positive action because the public has gotten involved, because local officials have gotten involved, because we as a society have said there is no turning back, this effects all of us and we have to move forward and make good and positive choices. He stated that the House of Representatives and the House budget has taken action on the possibility of the bulk purchase of Narcan so it can be more affordable to departments who are dispensing it. He stated that he is proud to come from the community of Gloucester who gets together on a Saturday to take a longer look at the issues around

opiate abuse. He stated that action will only happen for one reason because we all get involved. He thanked everyone for making us proud to be citizens of this proactive community.

Councilor Cox asked if anyone resident could get a Narcan kit and asked if she would be protected under the Good Samaritan law. *Alex Doyle* responded that in 2012 a law was passed that says that any person could administer Narcan to an individual in need and be protected under the law and CVS has a standing order that allows anyone to go in and purchase a kit and be educated on how to administer the drug. He stated that the kit has a shelf life of one year and insurance coverage has been spotty but the kits are approximately \$120.

Councilor Ciolino asked if the City of Gloucester pays \$120 per kit. *Sander Schultz* responded that city has an affiliation agreement with the Addison Gilbert Hospital pharmacy and they pay cost for Narcan which is about \$20-\$30. He stated that they also have an agreement when the drug is about to expire they take it back and it is replaced free of charge. He stated that any person can administer the drug.

Claudia Schweitzer, of the Board of Health stated that she just heard today of the new legislation that will pay for fourteen days of treatment, but in her experience as a mental health professional it is incredibly difficult to get people into in-patient treatment and she asked if there was a plan to have more beds difficult more beds available. *Mayann Frangoulis*, responded that she would guess that they are fighting with the budget currently and in the continue of care there is something called clinical support stimulation service which occur after detox, to get to a rehab stage and to get to a holding stage so there is a provision in the budget to increase those beds. She stated that once they know the law is going to be effective she would be very surprised if you didn't see more places open up because places need guaranteed payment and if they know they are going to get it they will be there.

Councilor Cox asked if anyone could speak about Massachusetts General Law 123, Section 35 law. *Kathy Day*, of Learn to Cope responded that Massachusetts General Law 123, Section 35 law was put into place to help folks get into treatment if they are endangering their selves or others. She stated that all substances are included under the law. She stated that it is a lengthy process involved in documentation and it does not go on someone's record, it is more of a helping effort.

Melissa Texteria, of 467 Western Avenue stated that in addition to the School Committee she is here to talk in her capacity as a member to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Trial Court. She stated that in regards to Massachusetts General Law 123, Section 35 law a person can walk into the Gloucester Court Magistrate's office on a Monday, Tuesday or Friday. She stated that a petitioner has to be an immediate family member, such as a mother, father, sister, brother, or spouse and they can file a petition and that petition goes before a judge and the petitioner speaks to the judge about the person they are trying to help and whether they are a danger to themselves, others, or both, then the judge decides whether or not to issue a warrant of apprehension and if the warrant is issued the Gloucester Police Department will pick up the person and bring them to the court and if they do not come voluntarily the person can be handcuffed and put into custody. Once they are in custody, a court clinician speaks to the person and an attorney is assigned to the person to ensure the person's rights are not violated. The court will then listen to all people involved and make a determination as to whether that person should be committed to 90 days or less.

Tudi Barlett, court clinician stated that the level of risk of the substance abuser must be extremely high because their rights of freedom are being taken away. She stated that some judges have high standards and the court clinician gives expert advice as to whether the standard of the statute has been met. She stated that another limitation is the bed availability; chances are very low that a bed is available. She stated that the Gloucester Police are able to be petitioners for Section 35 and that is very helpful.

Council President McGeary thanked Councilor Lundberg for being the one who started this collaborative

Councilor Lundberg thanked Chief Campenello for getting the ball rolling and pointing out that the real solution is treatment.

Councilor Cox thanked everyone for attending, especially the Fire, Ambulance, and Police Departments and all the professionals. She thanked Melissa Texteria of the School Committee for attending. She stated as with most things it starts with our children but it is necessary to stop the cycle.

Representative Ferrante thanked all the committees that have come together today including the Mayor and all the individuals present. She stated that opiate addiction is considered with some of flu's and illnesses that you hear about people contracting but opiate addiction has risen to that level, where last year one thousand people in Massachusetts were lost opiate addiction. She stated that it is something that is treatable and preventable. She stated that they have to come together as a community. She stated that we have to be better neighbors, better friends, and we have to be better family members and the minute we think that something is not right we have to be there for that person. She pledged to work as closely as she can with the city to make sure they are bringing the prevention and the best treatment available to the community.

Council President McGeary thanked everyone who participated today. He stated that each year in late summer there is a gathering on Stacy Boulevard for people whose lives or loved ones have been touched by substance abuse. He stated that along the sidewalks and curbs candles are lit, the candles are placed in paper bags to shield it from the wind and on each bag there is a name. For the last several summers on bag has simply said "Danny". Danny was a bright boy, precocious and inclined to make his teachers a little crazy, but he was very talented. His drawings to this day draw admiration from established artists. Danny took his first drink when he was 12; by 14 he was using marijuana regularly. By the time he got out of high school, his life had begun a downward spiral. He still drew, and the drawings could be touching or disturbing. But he drew less frequently. The need to feed the need within became much more powerful. Danny wasn't a bad kid, but he did bad things. The need was too strong. Those of us who are lucky enough to be able to resist the temptations, should take no pride in that. We are just that — lucky. This isn't a moral failing. There is in the brains of those who become addicts a powerful chemical reaction that we do not share. The writer John Cheever, who battled alcohol all his life, once said that when he took a drink it was like he was walking in a field of stars. We who do not suffer from the disease of addiction are lucky that we do not find ourselves in that field of stars.

Danny wasn't so lucky. In his journals he wrote of that first drink he took when he was 12, he recalled every tiny detail. The experience was too much, too overwhelming to resist. Even when he recognized the damage he was doing to his himself and those he loved, he became angry with himself could not stop. He became angry at himself and the anger became hopelessness. The hopelessness made the need only more intense.

One day in 1984 Danny's family got a call. He had been found dead in a dirty apartment in the city where he lived. He had been dead for several days. The neighbors had noticed the smell and called the police. Danny's "friends" in the addict community had moved on to score somewhere else. No one had noticed he was missing. I know all this because Danny was my brother. Though he died many years ago, we, his sister and brothers, miss him still. So for Danny and all the "Dannys" out there, I want to thank all of those who came on today for this moment of hope, for all of us.

MOTION by Ms. Schweitzer to adjourn.
Seconded by Mr. Cowan. **CARRIED.**
MEETING ADJOURNED – 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bobbi Orlando

Accepted by:

Paul McGeary, Council President

Richard Sagall, Board of Health Chairperson