



MINUTES

City of Kenora

Kenora Community Policing Committee

Date: October 22, 2013
Time: 4:30 pm
Location: City Hall Council Chambers

Present: Chair B. Richards
Councillor C. Gallivan
Wayne Ficek
Ralph Mosher
Cst. R. Grosenick (left meeting at 5:14 p.m.)
Wendy Darling

Regrets: Kendall Trembath
Trudy Cederwall
Diane Pelletier

Staff: Heather Lajeunesse, Deputy Clerk

Guests: Kim Elke, Northwestern Health Unit

1. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest & General Nature Thereof

- i) On today's agenda;
- ii) From a Meeting at which a Member was not in attendance.

There were none declared.

2. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Moved by W. Darling, Seconded by R. Grosenick, and Carried:-

That the Minutes of the last regular meeting of the Kenora Community Policing Committee held Tuesday, September 24, 2013 be confirmed as written and circulated.

3. Deputations

N/A

4. Presentations

Northwestern Health Unit – Kim Elke

Kim Elke, public health nurse for the Northwestern Health Unit, attended the meeting to give a presentation about the Needle Exchange Program, a Harm Reduction Program that is currently offered in the community. Harm Reduction Programs are evidence based policies and practices to reduce health harms associated with drug use and other high risk activity, and have realistic and obtainable goals. The purpose of the Needle Exchange Program is to reduce the adverse health, social, and economic consequences related to drug use. The program is pragmatic, in that it meets people where they are at and not where we think they should be, as abstinence at any given time may not be realistic or desirable.

The Needle Exchange Program ensures that people who inject drugs have access to sterile needles and syringes in order to reduce the spread of infection and blood-borne illnesses through the sharing of equipment. Safe disposal of used needles is also provided, and the NWHU strives to collect the needles back. The program focuses on reducing the overall harms and has never shown to cause harm, increased drug use, increased initiation of drug use or increased infections. Not sharing reduces blood-borne diseases and all items in the kits provided to drug users decreases the chance of blood-borne infections.

Currently the NWHU is bracing for an HIV outbreak in Northern Ontario. Intravenous drug use in Kenora is sharply increasing as are Hepatitis C cases. Other transmitted diseases are in the area as well and the focus is on preventing outbreaks in all areas.

Harm reduction services provided are:

- Needle/syringe distribution
- Provision of drug preparation equipment
- Inhalation kits
- Safe disposal of used needles and equipment (needles are tracked, drug of choice, etc.)
- Information about safer injecting practices and overdose prevention
- Testing and information about sexually transmitted infections including anonymous HIV testing
- Testing and information about Hepatitis C
- Free Hepatitis A and B vaccines (if eligible)
- Free condoms and information about safer sex practices
- Referrals to counselling, methadone and rehabilitation services

The drug use history in Kenora was shared and it was identified that there hasn't been improvement in the area in recent years and that users will ultimately risk their lives to feed their addictions. Addicts are now beyond the enjoyment of using these drugs and are using just to avoid illness at this

point. A history of OxyContin use (a controlled narcotic for extreme pain) was provided. This drug was reformulated in 2012 to avoid abuse and now those addicted to it have changed to other opioids to feed their addictions.

Kim discussed safe needle disposal and indicated that there are sharps containers located in several areas of the City. Staff of various organizations, and others, have been trained by the NWHU on how to pick up needles safely. The NWHU has also been working successfully with the City of Kenora on the program and the City has been very supportive. The NWHU is above the provincial average with needle returns between 75-80%. There are other ways of disposing needles safely but the ultimate goal of the program is to get the needles back. There has also been continuous work with the program users to provide disposal containers that they will use, less conspicuous ones are preferred. Kim added that the NWHU will come and pick needles up anytime when called. They have also run campaigns directed at members of the public (including children) on what to do if they find needles. Information pamphlets are also available.

Kim shared that funding has just been approved for the NWHU to hire a peer for the program, which is someone with lived experience that can be a role model for program users. This person will educate the program users as well as the community on the program and will also provide spring, summer and fall pick up of needles as outside usage is less apparent in the winter due to temperatures. There are also ambassador programs that users can obtain for peer to peer education. It was concluded that the success of a program like this is much dependent on the education piece.

It was clarified by a committee member that the program is not being questioned as much as the residue that is left over, which are the needles. It was inquired as to whether or not safe injection sites could be established. Kim shared that Vancouver is the only place in Canada that has a safe needle injection site and that the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that this is in fact effective but the way things are currently written it doesn't allow for any other needle exchange sites to open in Canada at this point. She added that the NWHU is continuously looking at solutions, such as cleaning up areas of foliage so that people are exposed; blue lights in public washrooms have also been suggested as a solution method as this prevents users from being able to see their veins.

Kim concluded by sharing that the NWHU is continuously looking for further long term solutions, clean needle use is priority at this point. It is believed that whoever is hired as a peer will be beneficial as they will be responsible for educating the users. The World Health Organization states that needle exchange programs are peer driven are more successful. From a public standpoint the NWHU's focus is on the health of people and the prevention an HIV outbreak.

Charito thanked Kim for attending the meeting and she left at 5:20 p.m.

6. Items for Review

6.1. Annual Halloween BBQ

The Community Policing Annual Halloween BBQ will be held on Thursday, October 31, 2013 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The event has been advertised by Councillor Gallivan on the Good Morning Kenora Show. Wayne indicated that he will contact PJP School to have it advertised on their daily announcements. Heather will arrange to have the event posted on the City Portal and Facebook page. It was confirmed that Q104 will attend as well.

7. Other

Committee members agreed that today's presentation was very informative and it was suggested that various presenters be invited attend to present to the group at least twice annually.

Ralph mentioned that homelessness and health care are ongoing concerns discussed at the local Senior's Coalition meetings. It was agreed that homelessness is a contributing factor to the drug use issue in the community.

8. Next Meeting

Tuesday, November 19 at 4:30 p.m. – Council Chambers

9. Close Meeting

The meeting was declared closed at 5:30 p.m.