

MONTVILLE TOWNSHIP DRUG AWARENESS COUNCIL/MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of January 11, 2017

Meeting Called to Order: by Chairperson J. Daughtry at 7:32pm

Members in Attendance: L. Accardi, M. Campbell, L. Connelly, M. Cooney, J. Daughtry, N. D'Oench, D. Gawley, M. Johnson, S. Marcus, J. Matias, J. Salamone, J. Scialla, K. Spitz

Members Absent: Carol S. Beyer

Liaisons in Attendance: D. Nielson – Twp. Committee (regular), J. Sandham – Twp. Committee (alternate), D. Danzi – M.T.P.D., M. Palma – Montville BOE

Guests in Attendance: T. Swords, D. Gaillan (Montville Twp. Social Services Assistant)

The meeting was opened with a quick introduction of all in attendance. Returning members and liaisons welcomed new additions to the Council.

Reorganization:

M. Johnson moved to nominate L. Connelly as Temporary Chair during the nomination of officers for the 2017 term, seconded by J. Matias. There being no further nominations, the Council moved to a vote. Nomination of L. Connelly as Temporary Chair approved by a voice vote of all in attendance.

D.A.C. Chair: S. Marcus moved to nominate J. Daughtry as Chairperson for the 2017 term of the Montville Twp. D.A.C., seconded by J. Matias. There being no further nominations, the Council moved to a vote. Nomination of J. Daughtry as Chairperson approved by a voice vote of all in attendance.

L. Connelly ceded power as acting Chairperson to J. Daughtry at this point.

Vice Chair: L. Connelly moved to nominate J. Witty as Vice Chair for the 2017 term of the Montville Twp. D.A.C., seconded by J. Salamone. There being no further nominations, the Council moved to a vote. Nomination of J. Witty as Vice Chair approved by a voice vote of all in attendance.

Recording Secretary: L. Connelly moved to nominate M. Johnson as Recording Secretary for the 2017 term of the Montville Twp. D.A.C., seconded by J. Salamone. There being no further nominations, the Council moved to a vote. Nomination of M. Johnson as Recording Secretary approved by a voice vote of all in attendance.

Corresponding Secretary: K. Spitz moved to nominate L. Accardi as Corresponding Secretary for the 2017 term of the Montville Twp. D.A.C., seconded by J. Matias. There being no further nominations, the Council moved to a vote. Nomination of L. Accardi as Corresponding Secretary approved by a voice vote of all in attendance.

Membership: Chair Daughtry noted that the Township Committee recently voted to expand the D.A.C. by adding two new voting roles this year. The Chair once again welcomed newly appointed members L. Accardi, N. D'Oench, and D. Gawley to the Council.

Montville Twp. Mayor J. Sandham introduced himself to the D.A.C. as the new Township Committee alternate liaison for the 2017 term. Reiterating his commitment to making the current opiate epidemic a priority of the T.C. during this term, as noted in his State of the Township speech at the T.C. reorganization meeting earlier this year, the Mayor expressed his enthusiasm in working with the Council to form a unified approach toward addressing the issue throughout the Township, as well as the county. With respect to current membership, Mayor Sandham asked if a letter had been sent to C. Beyer, due to numerous absences from Council meetings in the 2016 term. D. Nielson added that there are still additional applicants awaiting openings to serve on the D.A.C., and that the Township would like to clarify whether or not C. Beyer intended on continuing her appointed term.

Chair Daughtry noted that he had attempted to contact C. Beyer via Email, but had not yet received a response. As C. Beyer had recently moved out of town, the Council did not have an up-to-date address to send an official letter. Mayor Sandham clarified that the D.A.C. is one of the few Montville Municipal Committees to not have a residency requirement, in order to utilize professional volunteers from outside of the community. Moving out of town did not automatically remove C. Beyer from her position, and a notice of resignation would be required in order to reopen the seat. Chair Daughtry stated that the Council will attempt to get a formal response from C. Beyer by the next D.A.C. meeting.

Approval of the Minutes:

M. Johnson noted that, due to a procedural oversight, the November minutes were never formally approved at the December meeting. Therefore, November's proposed minutes were resubmitted this month, along with the proposed minutes for the December meeting. M. Johnson noted that no changes had been made to the November minutes since they were last presented in December. There being no further comments or revisions, a motion was made by L. Connelly to accept the minutes for November and December of 2016, seconded by J. Matias. Both sets of minutes were approved by a voice vote of all members in attendance.

Chairperson's Report:

Chair Daughtry announced that the next County Alliance meeting would take place on Wednesday, February 15th. Both Chair Daughtry and J. Witty plan on attending, and will report back to the Council on any discussions/updates.

Liaison Reports:

First Aid – J. Sciala reported that there had been 3 drug related calls since the last meeting, but further details could not yet be released. J. Sciala clarified that all three calls involved individuals over the age of 18 years.

Police – Officer Danzi provided the Council with a report on local activities, arrest, and substance abuse-related deaths for 2016. Officer Danzi noted that Montville's total death count from opiate-related incidents rose to No. 1 in Morris County by the end of the year.

Mayor Sandham echoed this statement, noting that this number was also reported in his State of the Township address. The Mayor noted that the ages of the victims ranged from 18 years old to their late 20's. After some discussion on discrepancies as to the exact number of deaths that could be attributed to overdoses, S. Marcus noted that consistency in reporting is still a problem in this field, including at the state and national levels.

SAC – No Report given. Chair Daughtry shared with the Council that an Email had been sent by M. Johnson to try and coordinate a rotating schedule for the year.

Board of Education – M. Palma noted that the BOE had recently held its reorganization meeting for the year. Matthew Kayne and Carmela Novi would be returning as Board President and Vice President, respectively. The District is set to hold its final Strategic Planning Committee meeting the following evening on Thursday, January 12th.

Township Committee – D. Nielson welcomed new members to the Council, and followed up on last month's presentation by the Township's Health Officer. New initiatives will be coming throughout the year, starting with informational campaigns on local services via digital fliers. The Health Offices efforts would not only be targeting opiates, but other forms of drug use. D. Nielson also noted that this month officially kicked off the Town's 150th Anniversary Celebrations, and noted that high school graduation had been moved up to June 20th to accommodate this year's preparations. D. Nielson invited any member, new or returning, with questions and comments to contact her at any time.

Mayor Sandham reiterated that the opiate epidemic is the number one issue confronting Montville at this time. The Township is looking to take serious action on this topic by making it a top priority for the term. Mayor Sandham reported that he had already reached out to the President of the BOE, Superintendent of Schools, and the police, but these groups can only do so much to impact the community. As citizen volunteers, the D.A.C. stands to be one of the most impactful partners in these efforts. Mayor Sandham has also spoken with the newly elected Sheriff to truly make this part of a county-wide effort. The Mayor also noted that he's requested a small, informal meeting with the President of the BOE and Superintendent of Schools to start developing a communal response. He also noted that he appeared at a recent BOE meeting to ask the District to look at other schools in the county to get an idea of what other, successful programs are already being utilized. Recognizing there is no silver bullet, the Mayor summarized the goal of the Township Committee as forming a unified, communal approach to substance abuse that draws on the influence and experiences of many groups to form a shared response.

Youth Services – Chair Daughtry stated that reports for the Youth Center activities were submitted via email by C. Ziolkowski.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Committees to be presented and assigned at a future meeting, no reports were given at this time.

Public/Other Business (Not on Agenda).

During the liaison report period, S. Marcus noted that N.J. state law allows individuals to obtain Naloxone upon request. He asked whether the general public is aware of this, and whether or not the Council should coordinate and informational campaign to help raise awareness. J. Scialla responded that families with known users or family members deemed to be "at-risk" are already notified through established channels. S. Marcus agreed that this was a good first step, but felt that further action could still be taken. He noted that, given the prevalence of opiate addiction, Naloxone should be available in every household, particularly those in which a resident has been prescribed opiates as painkillers.

Furthermore, S. Marcus noted a particular need for a presentation along the lines of "how to respond to an overdose". There is a misconception about the use of Naloxone, particularly in reviving overdose victims. S. Marcus clarified that Naloxone cannot revive someone who has already stopped breathing, and that CPR can be a crucial first-step in prepping a victim to receive Naloxone. K.

Spitz agreed, and shared that a program along those lines is already in the works. The Community Programs committee of the Council is planning on March 1st as the date for the presentation.

L. Accardi also noted that the nasal spray version of Naloxone costs approximately \$150 per, whereas the injector system can range in the thousands of dollars. She asked if it might be possible to offset this cost through insurance. S. Marcus replied that he was not familiar with the insurance policies, and reiterated that simply having Naloxone on hand is not the answer. There has to be a training component, and people need to generally be aware of what to do if they come across a friend or loved one who has become unresponsive as the result of an overdose. S. Marcus noted that a strong first-step would be to get universal CPR training in the schools.

S. Marcus noted that the Township Health Officer had drafted great, clean informational fliers. Chair Daughtry noted that he will get copies and circulate them to the Council. K. Spitz noted that they were currently available on the Township Website, and had been circulated via the D.A.C. Facebook page.

In responding to the Mayor's report, S. Marcus noted that he had written many letters in support of legislation at the state and local levels mandating the installation of lockable medicine cabinets. Through similar efforts, he was a part of a board that prompted legislation to successfully prohibit smoking in restaurants during the 1980's. S. Marcus stressed the importance of threatening legislation to prompt voluntary action from corporations and other organizations. Furthermore, S. Marcus noted that national surveys reported that many youths who admit to trying medication without a prescription also admit to stealing (as their source). He would also like to see stronger efforts on raising the legal age for purchasing cigarettes to 21 years of age in the state of New Jersey. K. Spitz echoed these latter comments, noting that recent studies have also warned that smoking acts as a behavioral gateway to other forms of substance abuse.

L. Accardi and K. Spitz reported that they have been working on a Narcan training program, to be hosted at the Montville Senior House. The date is still to be determined. The program has limited space, however, and is capped at 20 people. Depending on attendance at this first session, additional nights can be planned. The presenter will not only focus on the immediate steps that should be taken in the event of an overdose, including resuscitation and the administration of Narcan, but also important information about the recovery period and available services. Information on how to obtain Narcan will also be provided to eligible attendees. The program will be co-sponsored and hosted by NJ Cares.

D. Gawley asked K. Spitz how the group will be distributing Narcan to individuals that need it. K. Spitz replied that they are working on an informational flier for the program, and hope to spread the word through social media, including the D.A.C. Facebook page. D. Gawley asked whether or not the D.A.C. had any information on or connections to families in dire need. K. Spitz replied that she had spoken to the Police Chief about specific programs, but has not yet heard back. Mayor Sandham clarified that the Chief has recently been out on medical leave. S. Marcus noted that some towns have printed informational door hangers to help raise awareness. Mayor Sandham also noted that the Montville Messenger goes out two times each year, and encouraged the Council to adopt a broad base marketing approach. L. Accardi asked if it might be possible to send out a notice via the Nixel alert system. Mayor Sandham noted that users have to subscribe to the system, narrowing the target audience. D. Nielson noted that there are additional Township social media accounts that can help share information, in addition to other local media sources such as TAP into Montville. L. Accardi expressed that it can be difficult to pierce the social bubble of the community, especially in reaching those residents without children in the school system. Mayor Sandham likened the Superintendent of Schools to the Township Administrator as the CEO of their respective organizations, and the Board of Education and Township Committees acting as Board of Trustees. He emphasized the importance of bringing concerns to the elected officials so that they can work with their administrators to tailor responses accordingly. L. Accardi noted that it can be particularly difficult to get new information into the curriculum. J. Matias mentioned that the D.A.C. had previously met with the Superintendent of Schools to discuss the prospect of a student survey, and that she was very supportive of the D.A.C.'s goals and focus. He reiterated that she will be an important partner to work with in strengthening our approaches within the schools.

D. Nielson asked the Council to develop a detailed plan of action for the 2017 term, including deadlines, program dates, and descriptions. As the Council continues to grow and seek additional outside help, there are additional meeting places that can be utilized. Mayor Sandham emphasized that the Township will not let a facilities issue stop the D.A.C. from doing what needs to be done, the Township will work with the Council to make it work. The Mayor also asked that the Council please keep the township Committee and Administration in the loop when it comes to developing its plans so they can coordinate their own in unison. D. Nielson also invited the D.A.C. to come and report periodically at Township Committee meetings.

Chair Daughtry asked members to please gather their ideas and goals for a special meeting devoted to developing a plan of action. D. Nielson noted that there's still considerable time before the next D.A.C. meeting, and asked if another, special session might be utilized. Mayor Sandham noted that the Township Committee will be holding its own special meeting on goals setting on January 21st. D. Gawley asked whether or not the D.A.C. should plan on meeting sometime after this 21st session to wait for priorities to trickle down from the Township's goals. Mayor Sandham replied that it was not necessary to wait, as the goal setting process will be a two-way street. The Township Committee will have the priorities that it recognizes, but it is also interested in hearing from the Council and tailoring its own programs according to the needs identified by this body. After a brief discussion on member availability, Wednesday January 25th was selected as a special meeting date dedicate solely to goal setting.

Next, the Council welcomed its community guest, T. Swords, who had heard about the D.A.C. and attended tonight's meeting to learn more about the group and its activities. She stated that, from a community member perspective, she was not aware of this group. She had been researching local drug education programs with a friend and stumbled upon the Council. She hoped to learn more about what local students were being taught in school so she could reinforce these lessons at home. Chair Daughtry said that the Council can certainly look into assembling this information and sharing it with the community. M. Johnson noted that the D.A.C. had recently launched an online survey for members of the community to share their thoughts and ask questions. He encouraged members to share it online via their personal social media accounts to help raise awareness of the D.A.C. as well as collect local wants/needs. D. Gawley echoed the importance of understanding what's being taught in the school curriculum, and stressed the importance of including a mental health focus as well. D. Nielson reiterated that it might be helpful to get a breakdown of what topics are covered at each grade level. L. Accardi also stated that teachers within the District are generally open to guest presentations and helpful information that might supplement course materials. Mayor Sandham noted that, with approximately 4,000 students in the District, it's a very sizeable portion of the local population to reach.

L. Accardi also noted that there is no more D.A.R.E. program within the schools, and that something is needed to fill its place. S. Marcus cited recent studies pointing to age 8 as the typical point at which youth begin experimenting with controlled substances. He reiterated that this is, in part, due to a tendency in our society to overmedicate and develop a pill for every problem. L. Accardi noted that preventative programs targeting students are not enough, need to inform parents on behavioral trends, and what they need to look out for in order to identify whether or not a loved one is at risk. S. Marcus stressed that this is a good time to act, as we have the communal interest and energy behind it. T. Swords stated that she has a friend who is an officer in Essex County associated with their L.E.A.D. (Law Enforcement Against Drugs) program. She offered to invite them to the next meeting of the D.A.C. to speak on the topic, if the Council would be interested.

Chair Daughtry announced that committees for the term will be formed at the February meeting of the Council, and invited the Chairs of last year's committees to give a brief overview of their working groups.

Finally, Marcus asked whether or not new tax laws would allow people to donate directly to Project Graduation from their retirement accounts. Mayor Sandham noted that, as a C.P.A. by profession, he was familiar with these recent changes, but would have to get more details. In particular, these donations are typically made directly to a specific account. Since Project Graduation's funds are held in a Township Account (or reimbursed afterwards), this may have to be explored further. The Council will continue to explore the subject as a potential, additional means of supporting Project Graduation.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to discuss on a motion made by S. Marcus and seconded by L. Connelly, all in favor by voice vote; meeting adjourned at 9:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael D. Johnson
Corresponding/Recording Secretary
February 8, 2017