

## **SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS**

**December 16, 2003**

**7:30 AM**

In the absence of the Chairman, Clerk Fysh called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Alderman Pinard, Marty Boldin, Judy Cooper, Louis Craig,  
Amy Hanulec, Tom Farrell

Absent: Alderman O'Neil, Sgt. Favreau, Detective Fuller, Dr. Frank Bass,  
Laurel Buccino, Ron Caron, Elaine Douville, Joe Harding,  
Tom Jordan, John Rist, LuAnne Oatman, David Scannell,  
Ellie Therrien

Due to the lack of a quorum present, the members present unanimously chose to remain for discussion purposes only.

Minutes of a meeting held on November 18, 2003.

Deferred to next meeting.

Student speakers from Memorial High School, Central High School and West High School.

No action taken.

Review and discussion of objectives submitted by Committee members.

Louis Craig stated the last time we met everyone was supposed to submit three action items and I have a couple of action items that I think we should talk about and I know Tom does as well and Marty I know that you do as well. If we could

just discuss those, then give it some thought and when we come back in February... Does that make sense to everyone?

Alderman Pinard stated there is just a handful of us here. I don't think we're going to accomplish much. We can discuss all we want, but we've got to get the members here to know what you really want to put across. I think we should adjourn and come back in February with a fresh start.

Mr. Craig asked is that the wishes of everybody.

Clerk Fysh stated that is up to the committee members that are present.

Alderman Pinard stated I still think that we should wait or would the other members care to discuss items? It is very important that at the next meeting everyone is here.

Mr. Craig stated if we do that, essentially since we returned in September or October, we really have not accomplished a great deal and that is what disturbs me the most. Here we are, we don't have a quorum and now we're going to meet next February. I guess what you're saying is okay, but I think that we have to make an effort to get everybody here. Because it disturbs me and I'm sure it disturbs other members of this committee that when we come here at an early hour, 7:30 AM, and we don't have people here, and we're talking about a very important problem that is evasive in our community and evasive throughout our society, we have to put it off until February and it is my feeling that we should make every effort to have a quorum the next time we meet and that I think that these action items are very important. So if that's the feeling of the committee, so be it, but...I'll tell you that it is frustrating to come here and accomplish nothing.

Alderman Pinard stated I agree. If it is all right with the few here, Mr. Craig can give us an opening and we'll discuss it for a few minutes.

Mr. Craig stated it is just not what I have in mind. I just think that there are things that other members of this committee would like to present as well and I'll talk about my things that I feel we should be doing. Number one is that I think every effort should be made by this committee to have a medical detox. I've talked about this many times before and an awful lot of other people on this committee have agreed with me. But I think we should be making an effort to get the two hospitals, the Elliot Hospital and the Catholic Medical Center, to see if we can get both of them together and perhaps the members of this committee can meet with them to see what can be done about a medical detox. Because all of us in this field of alcohol and drugs know that there is a need for medical detox. So that's one thing that I feel is important. The second thing that I wanted to bring up and Real

I know that you concur with this and I know that Tom does, is the subject of an Oxford House in the City of Manchester. We currently have two Oxford Houses and an awful lot of people don't even know what an Oxford House is. So that could be explained and we should support the efforts of the people who are trying to get the Oxford House started in the City. That is my second doable action that I think is important. The third thing is, and I wish there was a representative from the School Department, I think that our effort should be that we do an awful lot of prevention work with the schools. So with that in mind, I will have Tom and I'll have other people talk about it as well.

Alderman Pinard stated and you are right I think we should follow up on a lot of these things. I know that I stressed at the last meeting that we should form a publicity type of committee so we can get the message out that we're working hard to put out to the people. Because there is a danger in the community with all the drugs and alcohol and that would be one of the key things in my book to get started. Another thing that there is, and I've been checking into the City, there is some funding a drug and alcohol program. I am just waiting for the Finance people to let us know how we can use this.

Amy Hanulec stated I'd just like to tell you a story of something that happened to me at the end of last week. One of the juveniles that I have come in contact with, a young boy about 15 years old. He has been abusing substances for quite some time. Over the course of my travels in the schools and with probation, I have come in contact with him and sat down to discuss things with him. He brought it to my attention that in at least two generations of his family, extended family included, everybody except two people, including his younger brother, gets high. They all get high. They all abuse substances. So then it comes to me, what am I supposed to do to help this kid stay clean and sober when everybody but two in his family are getting high. I could consider placing this juvenile in residential placement or helping him that way, but ultimately he's going to come back home to the community and what is going to be different. So I'd like to piggyback on what Louis Craig said. I think prevention needs to start in the schools and I think it needs to start way earlier than high schools. I think it needs to start in the elementary schools, I think it needs to continue in the middle schools, because by the time kids get to high school, it's...it's never too late, but you know what it is going to be much more effective if they start earlier. Because kids know what parents are doing and if they don't have the example to follow, they need something.

Judy Cooper stated I would like to offer the information that according to the household survey, 56 percent of Manchester youth start drinking and using drugs before the age of 15 and there is research that shows that the people that begin using drugs earlier than 15, have a much, much, much higher rate of becoming

addicted when they are older. So our community really needs to look at the younger user, both prevention and intervention. It is critically important. We need to look at underage drinking. I speak with parents on a daily basis and there is a sense of resignation with parents, well everybody does it, what can I do. We need to address a lot of things, but we need to not forget about the underage.

Alderman Pinard stated like I said at the beginning communication to the general public should be our key issue. We should be able to find out if there is federal money for what this committee is trying to do in the community. Just this morning alone I heard of an establishment that drugs and alcohol is an open door and who do you go to, and I'm sure somebody knows, that these are some of the things that we're faced with. And I think that Louis brought it out, the grade schools, I think Dr. Bass is our key to get a program started. I'm sure that if we investigate the congressional people that we might be able to get help. There is help out there, but it takes someone like us to get it going.

Marty Boldin stated I'd just like to go back to what Louis said a little a while ago and that is that I think we need to have a plan to make sure that we have a quorum next time and not just next time, but every time we are here. I'm not here to suggest how to use the resources that are available to us because that's not under my purview. But if we could just get somebody who has a list of people who are supposed to attend and basically call up the people to remind them, not just send out an email, but actually call up people to remind them that they are supposed to be here, get a commitment from them to be here for the February meeting. Then just take that straw poll, people who are supposed to be here versus people who can commit to be here, and take a look at that the next time we get together and maybe trim the size of the committee so that we can have a quorum. But frankly, this is a critical issue for the City. This is an issue that not going to get any better as Manchester grows and not just physically gets bigger, but gets to be closer to big city problems like in Boston. And if we can't get a group of concerned citizens together here on a regular basis to discuss, not just what our ideas are but what we're going to do next, really there are better ways for every person at this table to spend their time.

Ms. Cooper stated in the interest of Laurel Buccino, she was out sick yesterday and I'm sure she's sick again today, which is why she probably is not here today. I don't know because I haven't been to the office yet. But I just wanted to let the Board know that Laurel is sick.

Ms. Hanulec stated I wanted to follow up regarding at the last meeting we had spoken about having a couple of youth come to the committee here to speak, and in talking with Judy before we starting this meeting today, both Judy and I have spoken with kids on our caseloads about coming to testify. Several of the kids that

I have worked for are too uncomfortable in this setting. They're not comfortable with groups. There was one youth who was willing but unfortunately she has been detained and was unable to be here.

Tom Farrell stated I only have one other item and that's the executive summary. Joe and I put a lot of time into that. I'd like to see that get to the public officials and be used to possibly attain grants.

Mr. Craig stated I think the School Department and the Police Department could probably use that. The Office of Youth Services, whatever agency writes grants for programs and schools. I think that would be vital information for them.

Alderman Pinard stated I think I'll ask Bob MacKenzie because I think we hired a grant writer for the City.

Mr. Craig stated Dennis Hebert is his name.

Ms. Hanulec stated I would also like to say that I would be very willing to donate my time to help with grant writing. I don't have a lot of experience in that area, but I do have experience with substance and mental health and I'd be happy to help in that area.

Alderman Pinard stated we'll find out what the procedures are and we'll get back to you Amy.

Mr. Craig stated I know with respect to the attendance. We have two member of the Manchester Police Department on this committee and I know that they change shifts all of the time, people get promoted, I think that we have to make sure that we have a member from the Police Department here. I don't know what the statuses of our two officers are, but if they are working the midnight shift, I can tell you they don't want to come to a meeting at 7:30 AM.

Alderman Pinard stated I'll check with Chief Jaskolka today and find out what's going on. I'd like to bring one thing up that I received a phone call from a gentleman that was over here a few months ago. Tom Pappageorge and I was very glad to hear from him. He wants to be on my show and I told him I would set it up for some time in January and I think this is what we need is this form of sending the message out. If any of you would like to be on my show, just let me know and we'll set up a date. Amy I think that maybe, I don't know if it can be done, but maybe with the youth I've noticed lately on Oprah that she's been donating an awful lot of time on drugs and alcohol. I know I'm not going to be close to her show, but I think that we can send a message.

Mr. Craig stated one final thing before we leave. I talked before about an Oxford House. I would like to see for our next meeting maybe someone from an Oxford House come here and make a presentation to this committee. Maybe just for ten minutes and explain to the committee not just what an Oxford House is but what the purpose of an Oxford House is. I can arrange that and I'll put that on the February agenda. In addition to that, I really think that and I know you probably can't do it because we don't have the power to vote on anything, but I think the next time we meet at least that we ought to compose a committee and start thinking about it. Compose a sub-committee to deal with the hospitals, to meet with them, to see specifically what can be done for an emergency detox center in the City of Manchester. I think that is so important.

Alderman Pinard stated I'm with you on that because I think it's a shame that they've closed everything in the community and in the State, so I think that if we work right we can get our State people, our local people, the congressional staff, and I think we're the stepping stone to get this going again. Because again, we have a major problem and maybe it's about time that the people realize it. We've got a problem, I think it's our job to see...we're not going to solve 100 percent, but I'm sure we can make a dent.

Upon consent of the committee members present, discussion ended.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee