

Wood County Criminal Justice Task Force Minutes
May 3, 2016

Judge Gregory Potter reviewed why, originally, the task force was formed in Wood County and he provided an overview. Discussed how attendance over the years has been declining (for various reasons) and we are hoping to have this increase in the future.

Because of the heroin issue that is going on with the State and our county, the three Judges felt that this committee may be a great venue to bring ideas and share information as to how we can best help individuals while protecting the community.

Wisconsin Rapids Police Chief Kurt Heuer discussed how the newly formed Wood County Drug Task Force came together and what approach they are doing. Discussed briefly how the group got started, what goals they have, and how they are using a pillar approach with various sub-committees to address this issue. He invited anyone that was interested to please join or call him (Chief Heuer) directly if they have questions.

Chief Rick Gramza from Marshfield PD also indicated that they have a Task Force and will be able to work with the other task force to share information.

Judge Potter indicated he would like this group to really look and see what efforts are currently in place or could be in place to best assist our individuals that we work with. The team in attendance took turns discussing concerns we see and what may be done to assist with the Heroin issue in our county.

Below are statements that were made from the group in attendance:

- A Central Drug Task Force grant is possibly available to assist with the cost/budget of overtime that is needed for Law Enforcement agencies to combat this issue.
- Obtaining possible AODA treatment or AODA education when offenders are in the jail. Human Service and Wood County jail are in discussion about this topic. Lack of resources (employees) for Human Service is the main issue to overcome.
- Lack of outside AODA resource for individuals to enroll in when they do not have any form of income. Also how do we effectively communicate these resources to individuals so they know how and who to contact.
- Jail is not the answer for people who are sick and are addicted. Treatment resources are scarce within the community.
- What does the evidence tell us we can do to best assist our community? Perhaps researching or learning more about the evidence based practice approach (similar to our drug court).
- Need to really investigate and gather good Intel so we can stop the main source of tracking the drug to our community.
- Smaller Police Departments just do not have the resource to really be able to effectively stop this issue in their community. Smaller forces are doing the best they can and have seen an increase in property crimes which therefore ties up officer's time.

- Larger police forces are also over worked with drug cases. Cannot keep up with all the information they are given. So many leads on various dealers that it is hard to keep up with them.
- Really need to look at holding the dealer more accountable for selling within the community but yet understand that they may also be dealing to simply support their own habit.
- Treatment in the area is a main concern. It is simply not enough for the community of this size. We really need to look at how can we go about getting good quality treatment for the community and continue that treatment for an extended period of time.
- Research has shown that issues start at a very young age and we need to do our best to starting working with kids at a young age and also continue the message through high school.
- County Board understands the seriousness of the issue but needs to prioritize it. Money and drug court is a priority.
- Need to also educate the community about the issue and how they can assist each other.

Judge Potter ended the conversation by stating all of the reasons/issues/suggestions that have been said are reasons why we need to continue to meet and discuss how this group can best assist with this. He strongly encourages department heads to continue to come to the meeting because they are the people that are able to approve change or make decisions. It is great to have others come as well but we are at a stage that we really need to discuss how changes/decisions can be made to best help the community.

The group discussed the next step would be to look at how we can best educate the community about the issue and how we can assist with obtaining more quality treatment to the area that individuals can go to.