

Report on OAPSB Zone 2 Meeting of April 26, 2019
Submitted by Councillor J. McLaren

Three Presentations: (1) Planet Youth; (2) Mental Health Nurse / Police Officer Teamwork Strategy; and (3) a motivational leadership speech.

1. David Somppi presented Planet Youth, an Icelandic model for youth drug use diversion.
 - Waterloo, Lanark, and Stratford are seriously looking into implementing this.
 - Very successful: in 20 years Iceland went from the worst to the best statistics on substance abuse in the developed world.
 - Based on a theory of deviancy: substance choice can be predicted based on life experience to a very high degree of accuracy.
 - Based on a Grade 10 detailed life experience survey that informs the community on existing risks and leads to the best interventions based on the real world life experience of kids.
 - Kids can make the best decisions if the community has set up the conditions to facilitate the best decisions.
 - Needs broad support, including police, school boards, and city.
 - It was recommended for inclusion in any CSWB plan.

2. Inspector Derek Needham, Lanark County OPP Detachment, presented on a nurse / police officer teamwork strategy when attending calls for service with a suspected mental health issue. Inspector Needham was extremely pleased with the success of the program!
 - Mental Health is the highest on the situation table.
 - Need to separate criminality from mental illness; two-day training is not enough.
 - Mental Health RN nurses “ride shotgun”; police officer secures the scene for the nurse.
 - RN follow-up saves time: fewer on-site visits and fewer apprehensions.
 - 42% of new contacts with RN not connected to other mental health agency. A fear was expressed that the program may overwhelm existing mental health organizations.
 - RNs are able to provide mental health services to OPP officers without stigma (a conversation could be about the case and/or for the benefit of the officer).
 - There are estimated to be considerable resource savings (still working on those figures).
 - Funding for one RN came initially from a grant from the Proceeds of Crime Grant and then for a second RN from a LHIN. Inspector Needham would like at least five RNs.
 - RNs were seconded from Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Addictions and Mental Health.
 - The program started in August 2018 and seems to have very high levels of officer buy-in.
 - The RNs have been incredible to work with and have gone beyond expectations.

3. Senator Vern White gave an entertaining speech on leadership. It was full of anecdotes. The core message I heard was: have the courage to act on your convictions.