



BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL HEALTH COMMITTEE

Mission Statement

On behalf of the Citizens of Baltimore City, the mission of the Health Committee is to study, examine and propose regulations concerning health and environmental issues; and to make recommendations and propose legislation for improving the overall health and welfare of all residents of Baltimore City.

**The Honorable Kristerfer Burnett
Chairman**

PUBLIC HEARING

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2020
10:00 AM**

VIRTUAL WEBEX MEETING

Council Resolution#20-0189R
Informational Hearing – Overdose Prevention Sites

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES

BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS

Eric Costello – Chair
Leon Pinkett – Vice Chair
Bill Henry
Sharon Green Middleton
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer
Shannon Sneed
Danielle McCray
Staff: Marguerite Currin

CYBERSECURITY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Eric Costello – Co-chair
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer – Co-chair
Sharon Green Middleton
Staff: Samuel Johnson

EDUCATION AND YOUTH

Zeke Cohen – Chair
Mary Pat Clarke – Vice Chair
John Bullock
Kristofer Burnett
Leon Pinkett
Staff: Jennifer Coates

EQUITY AND STRUCTURE

Bill Henry – Chair
Kristofer Burnett – Vice Chair
Danielle McCray
Staff: Samuel Johnson

EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS

Robert Stokes – Chair
Kristofer Burnett – Vice Chair
Mary Pat Clarke
Zeke Cohen
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer
Staff: Marguerite Currin

HEALTH

Kristofer Burnett – Chair
Bill Henry - Vice Chair
Mary Pat Clarke
Edward Reisinger
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer
Staff: Marguerite Currin

HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS

John Bullock – Chair
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer – Vice Chair
Kristofer Burnett
Zeke Cohen
Ryan Dorsey
Bill Henry
Shannon Sneed
Staff: Richard Krummerich

JUDICIARY

Eric Costello – Chair
Mary Pat Clarke – Vice Chair
John Bullock
Leon Pinkett
Edward Reisinger
Shannon Sneed
Robert Stokes
Staff: Matthew Peters

LABOR

Shannon Sneed – Chair
Robert Stokes – Vice Chair
Mary Pat Clarke
Bill Henry
Danielle McCray
Staff: Samuel Johnson

LEGISLATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Kristofer Burnett – Chair
Danielle McCray – Vice Chair
Ryan Dorsey
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer
Shannon Sneed
Staff: Jennifer Coates

LAND USE

Edward Reisinger - Chair
Shannon Sneed – Vice Chair
Mary Pat Clarke
Eric Costello
Ryan Dorsey
Sharon Green Middleton
Leon Pinkett
Robert Stokes
Staff: Matthew Peters

PUBLIC SAFETY

Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer – Chair
Kristofer Burnett – Vice Chair
Zeke Cohen
Danielle McCray
Leon Pinkett
Shannon Sneed
Staff: Richard Krummerich

TAXATION, FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sharon Green Middleton – Chair
Danielle McCray – Vice Chair
Eric Costello
Edward Reisinger
Robert Stokes
Staff: Samuel Johnson
- Larry Greene (*pension only*)

TRANSPORTATION

Ryan Dorsey – Chair
Leon Pinkett – Vice Chair
John Bullock
Staff: Jennifer Coates



BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Health

Council Resolution: 20-0189R

Informational Hearing – Overdose Prevention Sites

Sponsor: *President Scott, et al*

Introduced: *January 13, 2020*

Purpose:

For the purpose of inviting representatives from the Health Department, the Baltimore Police Department, the Fire Department, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, and the Law Department to provide information about overdose prevention sites and how they could be established in Baltimore City.

Effective: Upon enactment

Agency Reports

Law Department
Health Department
Police Department
Fire Department
Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

Unfavorable

Analysis

Current Law

The Health Code of Baltimore City, outlines the rules, regulations and mandates for health related issues.

Background

Council Resolution **20-0189R** – Informational Hearing – **Overdose Prevention Sites** is companion to and/or related to Council Resolution **20-0188R** – Informational Hearing – **Syringe Service Expansion**. A hearing was held for **Council Resolution 20-0188R** on September 20, 2020. **Copies of the notes taken during the hearing are attached.**

Per the primary sponsor of both Resolutions,” The drug epidemic has been going on for too long. We must examine the status of the City’s syringe service programs and seek information about overdose prevention sites and how they could be established in order to understand where the city needs to go; starting conversations about how we can save lives in Baltimore City and around the world.”¹

On Tuesday, November 24, 2020, the Committee will hold a hearing for Council Resolution 20-0189R.

The Fire Department submitted an unfavorable report. (See attached report)

Additional Information

Fiscal Note: None

Information Source(s): Health Code, Council Resolution 20-0189R, Council Resolution 20-0188R, see footnote, and all agency reports received as of this writing.

Analysis by: *Marguerite M. Currin*
Marguerite M. Currin
Direct Inquiries to: 443-984-3485

Analysis Date: November 19, 2020

¹ The Honorable Brandon Scott, City Council President



HEARING NOTES

Council Resolution: 20-0188R

Informational Hearing – Syringe Service Expansion

Committee: Health
Chaired by: Kristerfer Burnett
Hearing Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020
Time (Beginning): 10:05 AM
Time (Ending): 12:40 PM
Location: Virtual “WebEx” Meeting
Total Attendance: Approximately 65

Bill Synopsis in the file?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Attendance sheet in the file?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Agency reports read?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Video or audio-digitally recorded?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Evidence of notification to property owners?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Final vote taken at this hearing?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Motioned by:	Councilmember Clarke		
Seconded by:.....	Councilmember Henry		
Final Vote:.....	Favorable		

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- D’Paul Nibber, Health Department
- Derrick Hunt, Health Department
- Victoria Cargill, Health Department
- Natanya Robinowitz, Charm City Care Connection
- Harriet Smith, Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition (BHRC)
- Dr. Susan Sherman, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- Michelle Wirzberger, Police Department
- Monique Brown, Police Department
- James Matz, Fire Department
- Tamika Gauvin, Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice
- Hilary Ruley, Law Department
- Rajani Gudlavalleti, Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition

- Reverend Jim Muratone, St. Luke’s Church
 - Alex Wilson, SPARC Center for Women
 - Dr. Adrienne Trustman, HealthCare for the Homeless
 - Owen O’Keefe, Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition
 - Tricia Christensen, Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition
 - Sam Kerr, Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition
 - Cheryl Conrad, City Resident
-

Major Issues Discussed

1. President Scott, primary sponsor of the Resolution gave opening remarks. Some highlights of his conversation were:
 - The city is experiencing an overdose epidemic but it has not been addressed as a public health issue
 - Today we are listening to how work is done and/or transformed to address this issue
 - This hearing is about starting a conversation to address the issue
 - People who are struggling with addiction are human too!
2. Testimony was received from several representatives from city agencies and other organizations. Some highlights of their conversations and/or discussion were:
 - Several representatives from the **Health Department** testified; two PowerPoint Presentations were shown and discussed. **Copies are on file.**
 - The representative from **Charm City Care Connection** testified:
 - Talked about why syringe care matters
 - Comment made: How did we build such a great health system that excludes the people with drug addiction?
 - Several representatives from the **Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition** testified:
 - Talked about what their organization does and what services are provided
 - Talked about his/her duties
 - Shared several “short videos”
 - Comments from people in the community
 - Comments from drug users, etc.
 - Talked about the importance of not re-using syringe supplies; if so, can lead to infection and/or diseases
 - Talked about outreach efforts
 - One representative shared information about how syringe exchanges are given to people who do not need the syringes for drug use; such as for hormonal reasons
 - Types of people other than drug users who use the program
 - Talked about how transgender people are being bullied and/or traumatized
 - Talked about policy management efforts
 - Talked about the importance of passing needed laws to address issue
 - Comments:
 - Highly values collaboration
 - Can do more with less through partnerships

- The representative from the **Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health** testified:
 - Talked about her background and experience
 - Concerns:
 - Lack of access to service for those who use drugs; particularly for women
 - The impact of not having access to services
 - A multiple epidemic and now with COVID-19 is concerning
 - The syringe services program is vital and needed:
 - ❖ Many people are homeless
 - ❖ 20% of drug users experience hunger weekly!
- The representative from **St. Luke's Church** testified:
 - Talked about the coming together of stakeholders and what they as a community do to help
 - Operates as a community based church; including other churches (thru partnerships)
 - None of the services provided would be possible without the syringe services program; there are numerous partnerships and all surrounds the syringe services program
 - People continues to show up because the services are needed
 - It is because of the syringe services program that neighborhoods have seen a reduction of disposed syringes in communities
 - We have created spaces where they can:
 - Use a bathroom
 - Get a hot meal, etc.
 - These services have helped tremendously
 - Drug users should look within their own community to get services needed
 - Per Chairman Burnett, "Outreach in communities is important."
- The representative from **SPARC Center for Women** testified:
 - The organization is a harm reduction organization
 - Talked about what the organization does and/or about some of the duties of employees
 - We are here to today in agreement with President Scott, to come up with solutions to address this issue
 - Serves people who are marginalized! Stigma is disgusting and harms people!
 - Goal: To create safe spaces for people
- The representative from the **Health Care for the Homeless** testified:
 - Currently not providing syringe services but have applied to become a syringe services program provider
 - Have received an uptick for providing services to drug users
 - Organization currently provides services to approximately 10,000 people per year
- A **city resident** testified:
 - She talked about a conversation she had with a drug user who quoted, "I'm no different than anyone else, I just made bad decisions!"

- Some other comments she made:
 - We must help people who made bad decisions so they can get back to their families and community
 - Some of the steps needed are so small to be affective that will give strength needed!
 - We are all the same!
 - Being with people through hard times to help them take the next steps needed!
 - Several representatives from city agencies testified. Some highlights were:
 - Police Department
 - The Police Department does not have a big role in syringe services
 - The Department does not want to criminalize those with drug abuse problems; want them to get the right resources needed
 - The Department’s employees are being trained on administering supplies when needed
 - The Department works closely with the Health Department
 - Fire Department
 - Talked about the steps the Department takes to form partnerships
 - The Department distributes kits to applicable people
 - The Department continues to use “outside the box” thinking to help
 - Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice
 - Currently does not have a role in syringe services program but sounds like they should build some partnerships and is looking forward to doing so!
 - Would love to be a part of the conversation!
3. The chairman made comment, “Feedback from the public always help us as policymakers.”
Hearing concluded. Vote taken.

Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes No

If yes, describe.

Committee Vote:

K. Burnett..... Yea
 B. Henry Yea
 M. Clarke Yea
 E. Reisinger..... Yea
 I. Schleifer:..... **Out of Chambers**


Marguerite M. Currin

Marguerite M. Currin, Committee Staff

Date: October 5, 2020

cc: Bill File
 OCS Chrono File

Council Resolution 20-0189R
AGENCY REPORTS

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Niles R. Ford, PhD, Chief of Fire Department <i>NRF</i>	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Baltimore City Fire Department 401 East Fayette St. _21202		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill #20-0189R Informational Hearing – Overdose Prevention Sites		

TO

The Honorable Brandon M. Scott, President
And All Members of the Baltimore City Council
City Hall, Room 408

DATE: February 4, 2020

FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from the Health Department, the Baltimore Police Department, the Fire Department, the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, and the Law Department to provide information about overdose prevention sites and how they could be established in Baltimore City.

BCFD reviewed Council Bill 20-0189R (Overdose Prevention Sites), and has the following comments:

Pros:

- Potential for reduction of HIV and Hepatitis C spread in drug-using communities
- Increased education in disease-spreading behavior such as sharing needles
- Potential for reducing overall disease and death and therefore medical costs
- Reducing public injection and therefore public danger

Cons:

- Such proposals are still very new in the United States, and thus not a lot of data
- Such a proposal has the potential to result in an increased EMS call volume in concentrated areas
- Based on a potential perceived “acceptance” of illegal IV drug use may lead to an increased utilization of illegal substances, and potentially higher rates of overdose
- Potentially may violate federal law which makes it a felony to “maintain any place” for using controlled substances

BCFD’s Position:

At this point in time, BCFD would not support proceeding with overdose prevention sites in Baltimore.

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 20-0189R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: President Scott, Councilmembers Henry, Costello, Burnett, Pinkett, Cohen,
Dorsey, Clarke, Middleton, Bullock, Reisinger, Stokes, Sneed

Introduced and read first time: January 13, 2020

Assigned to: Health Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Health Department, Police Department,
Fire Department, Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – Overdose Prevention Sites**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from the Health Department, the Baltimore Police
4 Department, the Fire Department, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, and the Law
5 Department to provide information about overdose prevention sites and how they could be
6 established in Baltimore City.

7 **Recitals**

8 **WHEREAS**, The Baltimore City Council wants to learn what overdose prevention sites are;

9 **WHEREAS**, The Baltimore City Council wants to learn what services overdose prevention
10 sites provide;

11 **WHEREAS**, The Baltimore City Council wants to know where overdose prevention sites have
12 been tried before and what the outcomes of such attempts have been;

13 **WHEREAS**, The Baltimore City Council wants to know how overdose prevention sites can fit
14 into an evidence-based, harm reduction approach to addressing Baltimore's overdose epidemic;
15 and

16 **WHEREAS**, The Baltimore City Council wants to know what legal and economic challenges
17 the City might encounter if it seeks to establish overdose prevention sites.

18 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, That the
19 Baltimore City Council invites representatives from the Health Department, the Baltimore Police
20 Department, the Fire Department, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, and the Law
21 Department to explain overdose prevention sites and how they could be established in Baltimore
22 City.

23 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
24 Director of the Health Department, the Police Commissioner, the Fire Chief, the Director of the
25 Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, the City Solicitor, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the
26 City Council.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.