

MINUTES – SPECIAL SESSION

PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Saturday April 30, 2022
8:30 a.m.

The City Council of the City of Portsmouth, Ohio met in regular session on Saturday April 30, 2022 at 8:30 a.m., at the Portsmouth Little Theater at 1115 Lawson Street – Portsmouth, Ohio.

Mayor Dunne called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone and gave a brief overview of what the meeting entail. A moment of silent prayer was observed followed by The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call showed the following members to be present:

Sean Dunne	1 st Ward
Charlotte Gordon	2 nd Ward
Andy Cole	3 rd Ward
Lyvette Mosley	4 th Ward
Joey Sandlin	5 th Ward
Dennis Packard	6 th Ward

Also, present was, City Manager Sam Sutherland and City Clerk Diana Ratliff. Solicitor John Haas and Auditor M. Trent Williams were absent.

City Clerk’s Report – City Clerk Ratliff reported the following:

1. In accordance with Section 4 of the City’s Charter, Mayor Dunne requested a special meeting of Council to discuss the standard of care and licensure for rehabilitation facilities.
2. Notices were sent to each Council Member, City Manager, Solicitor and Auditor.
3. Acknowledgements were received from all of the above.

The City Clerk’s report was received, filed and made part of the record, on a motion by Vice President Gordon. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nays.**

STATEMENTS OR REMARKS FROM CITIZENS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Travis Broughton – He felt that treatment facilities should get together and build a retreat type camp for kids who were affected by the addiction of their parents.

Susan Shultz - 1639 Jackson Street Portsmouth, OH – She lives in the 2nd Ward and is the Executive Director of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board (ADAMHS) of Adams, Lawrence and Scioto Counties. She thanked Council for arranging a special session and offering space for the community to provide feedback. The ADAMHS Board was a voice for many citizens of the community and statutorily empowered through the Ohio Revised Code 340 to ensure through local partnerships and contracts with Behavioral Health Providers that consumer and family voices were heard and considered on issues surrounding mental illness and substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery supports. The ADAMHS Board originated in August of 1968 as a Mental Health Board and in 1988 they additionally added addition to the board’s array of services through the revision of ORC 340. They are the planning authority for addiction services in three counties and were required under the ORC and Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) to uphold standards of care and ensure a full continuum of care was available to all of the citizens.

They believe that there needed to be more quality standards of care and safe housing, just as Council does. They also understood that there had been an overabundance of treatment providers and recovery housing that had opened in the area. Unfortunately, the ADAMHS Board does not have the authority to certify the providers, that fall under the jurisdiction of the State Office Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services. However, OhioMHAS worked in conjunction with Representative Baldrige in producing new Recovery Housing Standards that follow Ohio Recovery Housing, NARRS and CARF standards that will be implemented July 1, 2022 and fully mandated for all Recovery Housing Providers by July 1, 2023. The local planning authority for Behavioral Health services were incredibly surprised to find that they had not been included in the planning and development of the proposed Standard of Care ordinance. It was deeply troubling that no other members of the treatment community, public health, or individuals in recovery were consulted. The community was very fortunate to have members in these fields that were considered subject matter experts. Consulting these individuals would have allowed for standards to be data driven and evidence based which was central to meaningful and effective Behavioral Healthcare.

Governor DeWine supported increasing treatment and recovery to all Ohioans which was why he started the Recovery Ohio section of his office. They work directly with OhioMHAS who was responsible for certifying substance use treatment providers for the provision of services and Level 3 recovery housing and this document was potentially prohibitive in the mandated standard of care that they uphold as a board. They operate under both the Fair Housing Act and Ohio State Fair Housing law which recognized individuals

recovering from substance and alcohol abuse as a protected class with housing discrimination being a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act which was reinforced by the Olmstead Act. The Olmstead Act ensured that individuals with disabilities have options for housing and were accommodated in the most integrated setting. In addition to the previous concerns, there were also statements made lacking clarifications or guidelines to implementation. In reviewing the document, it shows that other providers have been omitted such as: faith-based treatment, hospital settings providing medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD), medical withdrawal management programs, long term elder care facilities that house individuals in recovery, Adult Care facilities group home settings, primary care providers prescribing MOUD, or any other form of medical care.

If this ordinance passes as is; this could be very detrimental to the people they serve. This document does not distinguish between providers who do amazing work and follow quality standards and providers who provide substandard and unsafe housing. This ordinance easily limits treatment and housing services in our area by the fact that many of the providers would not be able to afford the exorbitant fees that was proposed. This would create more homelessness, more crime, and many more overdoses and deaths. This would put more of a burden on the city services such as, law enforcement, fire and rescue, which were currently already at their limit.

There were many sections under this Standard of Care that they questioned, but due to the length of time of this meeting, she has submitted them to Council as documents such as, The Ohio Revised Code 340, US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division-ADA and the Opioid Crisis Combatting Discrimination Against People in Treatment or Recovery and the OhioMHAS Recovery Housing Development guidebook.

She suggested that this ordinance be tabled until a meeting or committee could be convened of stakeholders to come up with a solution to this issue by looking at date, enforcement of codes already in place, and bringing in experts to help with the needs assessment.

Toni Thacker - 3507 Orchard Drive Portsmouth, OH – She stated that Mayor Dunne’s proposed legislation was very informative, but she had a few questions. She asked for the number of sober living residents within the City of Portsmouth, Mayor Dunne informed Ms. Thacker that this wasn’t a question-and-answer meeting. She asked that Council get back with her on that number. She would also like to know within the residential treatment, how many were Tier I, Tier II, Tier III? She asked if any Councilmember owned one of these sober living homes or had a financial interest? She attended the Commissioners meeting a couple of weeks ago and was very disturbed by one of the comments from one of the County Commissioners, he said that when he goes to represent our County at the State meetings, people come up to him, pat him on the back and say “thank you for taking our problem and bringing it to your County”. The Commissioner said that it physically made him sick to his stomach. She felt that our responsibility was for people within Scioto County. The City of Portsmouth was absorbing a population of people who have little or no means of support or productivity if they’re unsuccessful in their recovery process. In saying that, she spoke to the audience and told them she supported their recovery process. Next question, under Part III – Registration, does this apply to individual sober living houses and if not, why? She said that we’re allowing people to operate with no protective structure for people in recovery, she believed that if permits were in place, caps per bed, this would be a reciprocal affect and not only help give people in recovery accountability and make people who own these properties, step up and do this for the right reasons which was to help people in their successful journey to recovery. She read an excerpt from someone in the northwestern part of Ohio about his experience coming out of a sober living home. The excerpt says, the fact is rock bottom came inside a place where he went for help, underscore the troubling cycle inside the addiction epidemic, while many sober houses with addicts in recovery, other facilities do little more than provide profits for landlord, it’s about the money. The fact is: anyone in Ohio could open a sober living house, renting rooms for hundreds of dollars a month and inside there was often no counseling, programming, but plenty of temptations. Heroin, Meth, smoke a joint, you could probably sneak one out back and he was a former resident. He said it was easier to go find a drug dealer, than it was to see a counselor. She’s asking if this applied to all of the sober living facilities and would like the number. She said that number needed to be reported and a permit fee be attached as it would not only protect people in their recovery process, but also protect homeowners.

Greg Edwards – 4th Ward – He said our city was filled with voters, these voters who had given their voices today not only care about their neighbors, but all of the neighborhoods. Mr. Edwards spoke of things that he and his neighbors knew to be the facts. This had become a very ugly situation on the city streets. He said that not more than a year ago, the residents of the 4th Ward submitted a list of questions to the Council, a list of questions to the Board of Directors and the 501C3 companies that were to be discussed today. He said that none of these questions have been answered by Council. He said that he wasn’t there to make-up things or to create scandal for the residents of the local rehabilitation satellite houses, they’ve done enough of that on their own. He said they were looking for answers that could’ve prevented a meeting like this a long time ago. He will not address those questions that he had already submitted, but it would be nice to receive a response in writing. He said that he holds empathy for all of those that have needed assistance with substance abuse and respects their confidentiality and anonymity. He discussed what they had personally had the displeasure of dealing with since the satellite houses opened on their streets. He believed that the city should consider using the term halfway house or the home on 18th Street or whatever it was called, they should note that many of its residents were court ordered. They’ve encountered three types of individuals since the home had opened its doors, for the purpose of this meeting, he will call them Mr. A, Mr. B and Mr. C and could not speak of the success and sobriety of these individuals, because as of this day, none of them had completed the program and were living sober lives. He was unaware if Mr. A had stayed sobered after his brief stint in the home, but was 100% sure that Mr. B & Mr. C had not. When counting them out everyone received a second, third,

fourth and a fifth chance and some people only find it in the end. He introduced the first group that moved into the neighborhood, Mr. A. was an individual who was what many in rehab call the “head of the household or jokingly the house mother” he wasn’t very well liked by the individuals in the home, but the neighbors did like him. He would greet you each day with a smile and would ask how your day was going and was considered what they had hoped would be a good neighbor when those rehab houses first came into the neighborhood and Mr. A. helped out around the neighborhood and would help carry in groceries and other things around the neighborhood and his job was to follow the rules the owner had laid out and to make sure they were followed by the new residents and that their needs were also met. Mr. B was an ex-military type (time ran out and he wasn’t able to finish). He said that he would submit it to Council so they could read the rest of it and that there was a list of questions that were sent that were posted online that the neighbors had asked that he would like answered.

Susan Adams - 21 Colony Drive Wheelersburg, OH – She’s lived there one and a half years because in October 2020, during the moratorium on evictions, she was residing at 1040 21st Street in the apartment house which were now owned by a prominent business man in Portsmouth and was very upset about it! They were given a notice to leave the premises which has six buildings and five of buildings were given notices to leave the premises because they were turning the whole apartment complex minus one building, because there were a couple of families that refused to leave and they allowed them to stay. She was forced out of the place that she had lived in for 15-years, paid rent, paid taxes to the City of Portsmouth. She continues to pay taxes in the City of Portsmouth even though she now lives in Wheelersburg because she works for the city. They were asked to vacate the premises to turn all of those apartments into sober living. She sees all the shirts that say “We Vote Too” and she said she now no longer gets to vote in the city because she was forced out of where she lived and now, she has a 25-minute commute to work and now gas prices have increased, the rent increased, the electric increased and does she get help “no”. She gets no free housing, no food card, no free medical care because she’s a working citizen and had also worked since she was 6-years old in their family business. She’s always paid taxes and now she doesn’t get to vote for the city because of sober living and the money that goes into drug rehab was way more important than the tax and rent paying citizens of Portsmouth. They were looking to buy a house in Portsmouth, but every time they find one on the market, she looks it up on the GIS system and finds that they have something drug related around it and now she doesn’t believe they will ever move back to Portsmouth.

Tyler Clifford – 5th Ward – He grew up in Portsmouth and attended college in Cincinnati, Ohio, but came back to Portsmouth because he loves our city. He said after college he became a Probation Officer for the City of Portsmouth and had dealt with numerous drug addicts and probationers on a daily basis. He gave a couple of examples of what they deal with: A guy on house arrest, 42 days he was in a treatment facility and he got clean and was fine; he took him off and the very next week he got arrested for theft and when he asked him why, he said that he had relapse and he needed money for drugs. These are the people that were coming to our community from out of town and it needed to stop. These rehab facilities want to come into the residential neighborhood where working class people, who pay taxes, who work and don’t commit crimes and plopped these drug rehab houses in our city’s residential neighborhoods and around our kids. They support the treatment stuff, they want them to get clean, but we don’t want them in our neighborhood. Another example: At the corner of Kinneys and Grandview, there was a rehab house which was an absolute disaster, cops there all the time, cigarette butts and mountain dew cans in the yard, hollering, cussing, traffic in and out. He had to change their walking route with their little girl because they don’t want her exposed to that stuff. Keep it away from our neighborhoods. He said to ask the Police and Fire what they think, because this week alone, there were three over-doses in local rehab. houses; they know who they are and knew what was going on. He works at the court house and there were eight buildings in a block and a half radius that were owned by the counseling centers and other rehabs. What is Portsmouth going to be in 10-years and what are we doing for our city? This has become the rehab capital of Ohio and there are roughly 19,000 people in Portsmouth and there are lots of rehabs. TCC had 4,000 people, of which 511 had completed the program, so where were the other 3,500 people going when they relapse or flunk out. There were out of town people coming in from other courts, they’re busing them in from Franklin County, Cuyahoga County, Hamilton County. He wants Council to have some backbone to stand up to these Counseling Centers and have common sense to stop the rehabs going into the neighborhoods and get a solution. These Counseling Centers are buying up all of the properties and putting in rehabs. One rehab facility receives \$213.00 per day, per person and with four individuals in a home, you’re looking at over \$25,000 a month.

Mark Riddlebarger – Citizen of Scioto County – He’s lived in Portsmouth for 35-years and we’re now becoming what we’re going to be and had told his kids that every morning when he dropped them off at school because it’s the truest words ever spoken. He said that single family dwellings were an important factor and we need to have neighborhoods that we can raise our children in and not have to worry about them riding their bikes in these rehab yards. He believed that single-family dwellings were the biggest issue that the citizens of Portsmouth had. He’s hired people that were patients through the Counseling Center in the past and was very compassionate to their problems. It is something that can’t be helped, that snuck up on you and before you know it, you have a severe problem that needed to be fixed. He felt it could be fixed through the education of the little ones, so that they don’t do it for the first time. He said that a lot of wisdom had been spoken this morning and a lot of it, he doesn’t know to be facts, but a lot of it is and we need to use common sense to try to raise a society of young people that we could be proud of and look to the future of our city and how we conduct ourselves.

Benny Blevins – Native of Portsmouth, OH – He recently became a chemical dependency counselor after leaving higher education. He personally had never had a chemical dependency (addiction) but he was in a relationship with someone who was an alcoholic and an abusive person. He used to be part of the idea that

he didn't want people who had a history of addiction in his neighborhood and didn't want to be around them. He said part of that was because of what he had been through in a previous relationship. Today, his attitude had changed and he said there was a stigma attached to addiction; he understood addiction because he was also a gay man and he grew up in this area and remembers wanting to be a teacher at Shawnee State University and being told "Benny you can't be a teacher because you're gay, nobody would want you teaching their kid especially their boys". In Portsmouth the stigma was that gay men were pedophiles and that stigma still exists today. He became a teacher at Shawnee State University and Ohio University after he received his master's degree and he was also a pastor. He's currently in the seminary and is a disciple of Jesus Christ as well as a gay man which also had a stigma attached, because people think that he cannot be both. He's learned in the past couple of months that his life had changed dramatically since February with working at the treatment center, his life had been blessed by working at that facility, his life has been blessed by his co-workers and most importantly by people who were in recovery because they were some of the bravest people that he had ever met in his life. Their life was difficult and they were constantly telling him that they go to the hospital with the flu and when the nurses and doctors find out that they have a history with addiction, their attitudes change immediately. All of the sudden they become some creature instead of a human being. He understood people's fears especially people with children, because he recalls being outside one time walking his dog late at night and an addict came running at him, but luckily, he was able to get away; that was not every addict and not every addict was a thief or a bad person. He asked the public to quit putting stereo-types and assumptions on human beings because every person in this room is a human being and a child of God, there needs to be more education, compassion and empathy.

Shane Rhea – 2848 Ridgeway Road – He is a 49-year citizen of Portsmouth, a property owner, taxpayer, father, husband and a school administrator. He's disappointed with the direction that our city is headed and our approach to an urgent situation that was debilitating our city. He remembers the days when people felt safe to walk around Coles Boulevard and allowed their kids to play in parks, shop on Chillicothe Street and not have to worry about looking over their shoulders. Unfortunately, the current and past leaderships haven't shown the citizens that their strong enough to put into place legislation or an ordinance to control the demise of our city. He said it was a shame when you serve the population of Portsmouth which was now under 20,000, that Portsmouth was also known now for drugs and labeled by some as the pill mill of America. Portsmouth is now the 10th most dangerous city in the State of Ohio to live in. This has only been increased by our corrupt and ineffective addiction rehabilitation centers all over the city. One of the Counseling Centers had over 4,000 people who were placed from Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland and Scioto County last year. Only 500 of those people completed the program which was only a 12% success rate and in his line of work, if only 12% of students passed a state test, it would be put all over the newspaper how ineffective our school district was. Of those 500 people, many relapse in the city streets, but where were the other 3,500 that didn't complete the program? No one knows because there's no tracking or regulations in place, these people are recruited out of court systems in Columbus, Cincinnati and the Cleveland areas, unscreened and were possibly previous felons and were now living in our residential neighborhoods. Unfortunately, the administrators and board members of these drug rehab facilities have lost their morals and integrity when it comes to our city. They have seen people be asked to move from their apartments so that they could be remodeled for rehab residents. Homes bought in residential neighborhoods and then occupied by unscreened addicts and buildings being remodeled for millions using recovering addicts as cheap labor. Some of the people involved in making these decisions don't even live in the city limits and don't care how it affects our neighborhoods. The negative impact on our city far outweighed the positive outcome, the rising crime, overdoses affecting our Police and Fire Departments, Schools dealing with increased social and emotional problems because of drug addicted parents. Children's Services having to place kids in foster care and increased case-loads, caseloads that were already overwhelmed, there were almost 400 cases in our area. The homeless population continues to increase, the enrollment at Shawnee State University continues to decline. "Can you imagine dropping your child off at the college to see a large pack of addicts walking down the city sidewalks"? Obviously, people are leaving our town, parents of children who are involved in some of these dealings don't want their own kids to come back to Portsmouth, but selfishly were okay with ruining the neighborhood that my child is growing up in! They've done a lot in the city in his lifetime to keep new business out and take away from our younger generation, surely, we can stand up to the infiltration of rehab facilities and keep recruited addicts out of our neighborhood.

Jacqueline Frowline King – lifetime resident Scioto County – She grew up on the east end of Portsmouth and her grandparents had a house where Burger King sits today. She graduated from Portsmouth High School; however, she does not currently reside in Portsmouth, but does live in Scioto County. She said that she seen the economy going downhill before the opioid crisis and watch Portsmouth's downtown shutdown, jobs and people were leaving Portsmouth. She doesn't believe it's an addiction problem, but more of an economy problem. She comes before Council as a resident of Scioto County, but also as a recovering alcoholic who has been sober for 21-years and received treatment in the City of Portsmouth. She believes in the treatment and in recovery and there were a lot of complex issues that need to be resolved and understood the feeling in Portsmouth. She said when she was a kid in the 1980's they had Dreamland Pool and lots to do now and wondered what the kids had to do or where they could go. Her recovery has allowed her to attend Shawnee State University and received her Nursing Degree and has been a Nurse since 2006 and is currently pursuing her Bachelor's Degree and plans on getting her Master's Degree to be a mental health Nurse Practitioner to work and serve our community. She believed that as a community, we can come together to resolve the problems.

Steven Spriggs – 3rd Ward – He is empathetic towards these people who have these issues and very thankful to have the counseling people who were present to lead us and believes none of us are perfect. He won't waste his time or anyone else's time because we could all see what these issues are, everyone has preferences

and makes choices. He is in awe of several of these speakers from today and has had family who have been through rehab and the lady that just spoke was probably of that 12% that went through that program properly. He has a relative that lost custody of two children 7 & 3 years old due to the fact that there were a couple of gentlemen who were living in who knows whose house and he doesn't quite understand everything that was involved in the housing, but thought some organizations were policing these people throughout the day, but he got the feeling that there were some that showed up Sunday evening at 10:00 p.m. and leave each morning Monday through Friday and gone on the weekend. He had a family member who had a couple of these gentlemen staying with her, she lost custody of her two children to Children's Services because once one of the gentlemen had to leave to answer a Fentanyl charge in another county in Ohio and he lived here and had no driver's license, he was what he would call a "lifer" in the rehab housing, he's 40 years old and never had a job, had 3-4 cars but no driver's license. His family member just had a child by this guy and it hurts to see her family go through these things. He didn't know if there could be anything legislated to stop any of that, but certainly 41% of our Medicare money paid in Scioto County came from out-of-town charges in Cuyahoga and Franklin counties which was a huge amount of money when looking at our population and demographics and back in the 1990's the average age was 49 years old. He said he didn't want to waste any more time, but if there was anything any of us could do to come together to solve this problem and there's probably a number of people that we could adequately handle in some of these houses, but there needed to be more policing. We need a better solution.

Teresa Copas – West Portsmouth – She worked the election polls and was a recovering addict and is 21 ½ months clean from fentanyl and heroine. She does have family members who own businesses in Portsmouth and she went to The Counseling Center for 90 days, she goes to Port 45 and now Sunrise and it does work for people that stay in recovery. She said if you do away with this, a lot of people will die from fentanyl and they need help to get it under control. Her son is in college and wants to be an attorney as well as in the real estate business. She said the program does work, she said that the EMT's have worked on her twelve times and her last overdose was in a business called Happy Pot. She wasn't always an addict, she was in a bad car wreck and got on pain medication and became addicted and made bad choices, but has gone into treatment and received help.

P.J. – He's an alcoholic and addict and has been in recovery for 34 years. He works for Mahajan Therapy and he knew that some of the statistics that he's heard weren't true for his agency. They charge \$25.00 a week for a bed in their sober living and when you do the math, that doesn't even equal rent, but does pay the utility, cable and WIFI bills. They do not require their clients to go numerous groups or individual meetings, they do two individuals and two groups a week and they want them to go to four AA meetings. At their Christmas party, the statistics were quite a bit higher than 12%. He said that ever since he's been employed in recovery, he's seen treatment centers move into different areas and also seen the residents being upset. He said as an addict, he wanted to always give back to his neighbors and that he makes a difference. His organization supports local businesses, they put a large addition onto their business and they used Mullins Construction Company, they support many of the civic minded things and were proud of it. He seen a lot of good points in the National Alliance for Recovery Residence as well as a lot of reasons to have legitimate treatment. NARR mentions CARF accreditation which at his agency, CARF accreditation was one of the most important things to have and when judging a treatment center, CARF accreditation should be looked at. They add sober people to the workforce and it was easy for their people to find jobs and just a year ago, it was tough, but their people want to join the workforce and make a living. They participate in drug court, juvenile drug court, the family reunification court, common pleas and Municipal and there is a standard of care.

Cody Leichtenheimer – lives in the East End – He's been in the recovery field for 9 years, but more importantly he's not a person from recovery and there's a bigger problem that wasn't being addressed and that's SSU. He said there's a house next to him with four young dudes and they throw ragers. He said at times liquor bottles end up in his pool and trash in his front yard and it's crazy, but luckily across the street there was another house with five or seven dudes that live in that house which is a recovery house. He has a six-year-old daughter and one day she asked him why the one guy (from the recovery house) was yelling and it was because he had just completed a seven-mile run. The guys in that house come and go, they succeed, they fail, but they run a race and do things that some people in this room think are unlikely for them and he doesn't want to see that go away. He doesn't want his daughter to see that we push people away because of their difficulties and struggles because it is happening world-wide. In Portsmouth, we had a part in creating all of this and he believed that we had a really important and inspiring part in helping to fix it and it won't be easy and would require complex solutions, but it's happening here. He's worked in this field for nine-years, he was a vocational placement specialist for five-years and there were a few people who would say "yes, I'll give that person a shot", but most people were like "we'll call you back" and never would call back. Today they have direct lines of communication with businesses and creating businesses. The community is growing if you look at it at that perspective which was something that they teach in treatment and the power of perspective and if we choose to go along with the world and all of this energy and negativity and look at people and say, this is what you're probably going to offer versus what they could offer and if some people in this area who were long term addicts who are now well-turned recovering people, there not only creating businesses and changing people's minds and doing amazing things because of their potential in that housing and environment. They're being examples to his six-year-old daughter and he wants them on his street. He said if you want to do away with something, do away with the people that are renting to SSU students who are throwing ragers and getting away with it.

Brandon Elkins – Hutchins Street – 3rd Ward – He was credited in this policy for being invaluable to this process and critical to the completion of the policy and the wording of this acknowledgement has led many

to believe that he not only supports the policy but that he had a hand in writing it. He's here to publicly state his opposition as he was researching an assignment for his senior thesis so that he could graduate and his role in this has been misrepresented because he did not play that heavy of a roll in the policy. He said for four-years he had been researching and writing about the nature of addiction, recovery and stigma, but he had no real knowledge and understanding of legislation and economics. He stayed in his lane unlike this policy, but his paper aimed to advocate to his people while still seeking to help others who may be frustrated or indifferent towards us, if nothing else, he'd hoped that he could provide useful information for those that don't understand or the industry that seeks to help us instill a more compassionate and accepting attitude. He believed this policy was made with good intentions and there were bad players in the treatment industry, but like it or not Portsmouth has become known as the recovery town. At one time, anyone seeking a solution to their problem could come to this city, find refuge and a new way of life in one of these treatment centers that introduced them to the budding recovery community outside of treatment. He is one of these outsiders, these weak links, he keeps hearing complaints about being imported into the city; he arrived in Portsmouth in August 2016 and had he been told to go home and not to come back until after unsuccessfully completing treatment, he would not have been standing before this audience with five-years clean and a Bachelor's Degree from SSU and a solid employment history. My research advocated for my people, for the recovery community and while he stands by the NARR standard and agreed with most of Part I of this policy, especially the good neighbor policy in section four, there was no reason the city should be playing any role in the accreditation for medical providers. He said as far as he knew, there were no medical or mental health professionals on City Council and if this were to be attempted with SOMC or other medical providers in the city, the community would be outraged. However, they are a stigmatized population and he cannot sleep at night knowing that his people were being discriminated against with this policy. City Council can say that it's about the agency providing the treatment and not about the addicted population, but he's seen the social media comments, read the news articles and heard whispers throughout the community. This policy was about an unwanted recovering population and his research paper which wasn't read until Thursday was driven by a greater concern to advocate for the addicted population who need our help and not a city who wishes to exile them. He does not support this policy and is now embarrassed that he was ever associated with it, please remove his name from future versions of this policy.

Aaron Bradley - 4230 Dever Street – He grew up in Scioto County and his family has lived here their whole life. His Grandpa used to be the Chief of Police in Portsmouth in the 1980's. He said his family was on both sides of things and he has been on both side of things and at the age of 14 he was forced to watch his mother be stabbed 39 times and the Police took 2 ½ hours to get there. His mother lives in the 21st Street Apartments and will be kicked out, but understood both sides. He's been in recovery for the past 10-years and knew people on all sides of it. He's been rejected more times than normal people and was asked to leave the hospital because he told them he was a recovering addict and they wouldn't see him. He said he believed that conflict was a major issue, but also knew that it only took a few normal people to give him a chance to help him change his life around and he recently graduated from SSU with a Bachelor's Degree and he's worked in multiple treatment facilities and there was no simple solution, but kicking us out was not it. He's watched on a daily basis, addicts in recovery that come in for treatment, who have bigger hearts than most people and would help anyone. His suggestion was to find a better solution.

Billie Taylor – Portsmouth – She is exhibit A that the man was talking about earlier and she is from Portsmouth. She's 51 years old and was born and raised here and she's somebody that the cops have put in jail previously, she's had several felonies and been through treatment twice, but due to the fact that when she needed treatment, she sought out treatment, she went to the Counseling Center and they helped save her life. The fact that it cost a lot of money for her to go to that treatment center, she's repaid that back in taxes and time ten-fold over. Her children were raised in this community because she got sober, she is the mother that they always wanted and needed for 14 ½ years. She's given time and effort into this community because she is Exhibit A and she understood that some of the treatment centers and people in recovery don't last in recovery, unfortunately that's the stigma of their disease, however, they're not being bused in, she's worked for several agencies in the area and nobody busses people in. She's worked since 2009 and the people who come to the facility for treatment, return to their home area because it's easier for them to get drugs there and they're already associated in that area. She said that with her job, she was privileged to be able to work alongside the First Responders and with the firefighters and the Portsmouth Police Department when they go to the scene of an overdose. Statistically last month they went on 33 calls and 18 of those people went to treatment and stayed in treatment. She able to speak with a person that may have overdosed for the twelfth time and she was able to tell them that there was hope and there's hope and could be helped to start changing their life.

Amber Riddle – Portsmouth – She's one of these recovering addicts, she's got 14-days clean because of a relapse back in March and a stupid mistake she made and if it wasn't for the rehab that she's in now, she wouldn't be standing here. She said that there are other solutions other than turning away people that need help.

Aaron Lanier – 1882 St. Rt. 139 – He's been clean for 4-years from Meth and Oxycodone, he's served two prison terms and the last time he got out, he took a job at a call center making \$9.00 an hour, then he was able to go to a local treatment facility making almost double what he was making at the call center. These treatment centers bring a lot of jobs to the community, and he struggled to find a job when he was released from prison and now, he owns his own home because he was able to go out and get a job that paid well. He grew up in Rosemount and the city's problems came long before the treatment facilities opened up. There was no good exit plan when they decided to shut down all of these pill-mills and so we've ended up with a bunch of drug houses and no solutions. He was a case manager at a treatment facility and when they discharge

people from out of town, 9 times out of 10, he does what is called a hospital discharge, he called Caresource, their insurance and explained that they were being discharge and they were then shipped back to Franklin County or wherever they're from, they do not get thrown out into the street.

Michael Arthur – New Boston – She grew up between Portsmouth and New Boston her whole life. She's been clean from all substances for almost 3-years and has been to treatment 14 times and the last treatment facility that she went to had a program called clean hires where you volunteer work and if you do good, you get a job with them. Today, she's a counselor who helps women be reunited with their children, but her husband is also a recovering addict and is not from Scioto County, he came here from another county and it took him a few times to get clean. Today, he owns his own business and they now have a child that never has to see addiction; they have older children that have been pulled through addiction, but today they do have a relationship with those children. There's people in here that maybe don't understand their side of it and that's okay and she's open to suggestions, but her life is ten times better than what it used to be, because she used to be the addict in that pack that walked down the street and she used to terrorize the neighborhoods, but now the people she's surrounded by, don't do that, today they give back to the community and that's her goal because she wants to help women learn from their addiction and learn how to cope because this is a mental illness just like any other illness and now she's looking to buy her own home and enrolling back in school. Her husband is currently in college and owns his own business. She's lost many family members and friends to this disease and being closed minded was more detrimental to everyone in the community.

Stephanie Miller fka Stephanie Thompson – She's an addict and her diagnosis were severe opioid disorder, major depressive disorder, generalize anxiety disorder and PTSD. She has a criminal history and a CPS history and ended turning into someone she never thought she'd turn into which was her mother. She lives in Lucasville now and when she got clean in March of 2008, it was because of Stepping Stone and the Counseling Center that allowed her to bring her child into services. She's not that mother today, she believed that she had 15 felonies on her record which was public record and because of the Counseling Center she is an employee today which is very hard when you have a rap sheet like hers. There are 400 children in the care of CPS and foster care but her daughter wasn't in foster care because of these agencies in this community. She overdosed when she had her child and thank God this legislation wasn't in place. Today she is a LCDC-3, a BFW and was accepted into UK for her masters in social work so that she can continue to help save a wrench like her, so she can continue to help mothers learn how to parent and love their children, because she did not love her daughter when she went into Stepping Stone, she thought her daughter was a nuisance and got in her way of getting high. Today she's the Director of that program that saved her life, there are multiple treatment facilities and multiple community members that she sincerely apologizes to for the damage that she caused the community when she was high, it was all she ever knew, it was what she was taught, it was what her mother taught her and her mother abandoned me that's how she learned how to parent, but she didn't know how to parent until the Counseling Center saved her life. All of the recovery facilities representing today, they have the same mission, she was taught in AA to be part of the solution and not part of the problem and because of these agencies, she can be part of the solution, but if this legislation passes, Council will be a part of the problem.

Lindsay Riddlebarger – Chillicothe Street Portsmouth – She bought a home last year on Noel Drive and she's been to Council meeting and had spoken a couple of times, but today she wanted to use her 5-minutes to make something clear. The residents of Portsmouth were not against the recovery community, they feel that their community meeting was highjacked politically with T-Shirts being given out. She's been a part of this community her entire life and we've come together when people's families were sick, they provide money for people in times of need and she had watched this community build each other up her entire life and they will find a solution to this problem without discriminating against each other. She believed that everybody here was aware of the problem; she's not part of the recovery community and never had the need to be in recovery, but we've all been affected by addiction in one way or another. She felt that everyone in the recovery community could figure out what's going on in our city with the stress on our budget and we don't know what to do if there wasn't a response from Police because they're shorthanded and emergency rooms were full with two or three hour waits to get regular emergency services. They don't know what to do about this and they don't want to discriminate against the recovery community, but we're a tiny town with a small budget. The people that provided those T-Shirts were probably getting monetary gain from this meeting, it is a community and they're trying to find a solution to the issues. It's our job as a community to figure out how to co-exist, there have been people that testified today about how they were when they were afflicted with addiction and we don't want to raise our children in those types of neighborhoods. She's a mother and there were a lot of mothers in the recovery community who knew both sides to this, and the owners of these houses moving the recovering community into our neighborhoods were making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. She doesn't care to get booed because she's here to find a solution to co-exist. This is not a war, it's our city's job to get the problem under control and she felt that she needed to make it clear that they're not in a war with the recovery community and want to come up with solutions. She asked what was happening to the other 50% of the people in recovery and if it's only our community that they're running through the program, why is the Counseling Center a \$30,000,000 company.

Holly Gail – 4th Ward – She said that this was really cool that everyone had shown up and thanks for having this at the theater, it was a cool opportunity for the theater as well. She said that we're here to talk about this legislation and she was curious as to whether everyone had read the legislation and felt that it was easy to say "yes" but if they have not, she encouraged everyone to go to the city's website at: portsmouthohio.org and it is also on their facebook page. She said that we all know Portsmouth has had its ups and downs and there's been an opioid epidemic that they've fallen victim to in several different ways, however the ramifications of all this aren't going anywhere, it's here and we have to deal with it. Housing – this isn't a

forum on whether we should have housing or not, we will have housing one way or another. She asked everyone to print out this legislation and go through it with a marker, find out what you specifically don't like and that you do like and she made it clear that it had not been finalized. This is the time when you actually have a voice, if you work for a recovery agency, make it a workshop, print it out, hand it out, you guys are the people that have firsthand knowledge of what a legit transitional house should look like, if you live in a neighborhood that has one of these houses tell them what you don't like about it and what you do like about it. Get that information to City Council. She would like to know was the ratio between staff to resident was and that would be really beneficial to have that high, if possible, like maybe have more than one staff member at all times. Also, when it comes to regulating all of this she was curious to know if there was a center that had repeated offenses, regularly breaking the rules, she felt there was a lot of wiggle room and a lot of time to appeal and how long can the appeal process continue, because she felt that could get drug out if there wasn't a set date and if a recovery doesn't pay the \$10,000 licensure fee can they get all of their houses shut down, because she felt a lot of the complaints were coming from the houses that weren't up to code because there's litter everywhere, street rats and it would be really cool if they created a board of some sort to help this legislation, because she doesn't believe any of Council was a mental health professional (Councilman Packard raised his hand that he was) she said that possibly someone from the ADAMHS Board, the Counseling Center, Dr. Michael Martin because he really knew his stuff. Having a group of people come together would be helpful in having an open dialogue and would be extremely beneficial.

Kyle Howard – 13th Street – He's not a political individual by any means, he's had a chance to read through the proposal and he's been a resident of Scioto County since birth and he's been part of the spectrum of the kid that was in foster care system because of drug addiction. He works for one of these agencies that were under attack for supposedly bussing people in and making the crime rate increase and wasn't necessarily true, but this stigma that's attached to substances or alcohol was unreal. He has a 15-year-old son and he walks through Wal-Mart grocery shopping and when his son sees someone come up to him that has tattoos from his neck to the top of his knees because of the background this individual has come through and they're human beings just like we are and whether you're familiar with recovery, treatment or whatever it may be, his son has a stigma because that stigma was passed down to him from other people and he looked at him and said "Dad, how do you know him, he looks scary?" and when he asked him what was scary, his son replied, all of those tattoos. He told his son, that he was a human being who was loving and caring just as well as he was standing right there or anyone in this room that doesn't have any knowledge about recovery. He said that SOMC killed their Mental Health Program so where were their residents supposed to go for mental health services, but you have these agencies that provide mental health services. Not only do they attend to drug and alcohol needs, they also help them with their mental health problems. Everybody in this room has a mental health issue whether they want to speak on it or not, nor has anyone passed judgement upon you for that, but because you're addicted to drugs and alcohol, you're a criminal and that wasn't the truth, he's seen multiple people speak today about how long they've been clean and how successful they are in their lives and what a chance that these treatment centers have given them for employment and to be productive members of society. He said that it sounded like the numbers in the proposed legislation make it sound like the treatment centers will be bringing the city out of fiscal watch. \$10,000 per year, \$250.00 per bed, he said that his agency pays for clients to come in and get treatment. He said "yes, they do make a lot of money", but it is put back into the community. He said they give money to the 14th Street Community Center to get those kids some help, as well as the school system to put people into the schools to combat this so that the kids will get help. He felt that this legislation was being put into play to help Scioto County come out of a fiscal economic standard that they're in. He asks that the city stop attacking treatment centers.

Tom Rodriguez – 3231 Old Post Road Portsmouth, OH – He was a member of the United States Marine Corp and spent 8-years serving our country and got out in 1996. He said that when he came home, he seen the devastation to our community and it didn't dawn on him until things started getting personal with a rash of car break-ins, cars being smashed and everything was going downhill extremely rapidly. He recalled standing in front of Council in the early 2000's asking them to draft some kind of legislation to make it extremely hard for the pill mills to operate and was in defense of everything that was bringing the city down and the city did pass legislation and put things in place that made it difficult to open a pill mill which then challenged them to find a solution for those that needed the help and the addiction treatment facilities were developed. He's a global supply chain manager and manages global contract with suppliers all over the world, China, Vietnam, India, Eastern Europe and all over. He sees this legislation as an effort of good faith because they being a part of the community as well want to see it prosper and do well. He felt there was some short-sidedness because this is a contract with the community and there were all kinds of organizations within the community that are impacted and all parties need to come together in order to put a contract with the community in place that supports the recovery effort. He believed in CARF certifications as something that was extremely critical and CARF reminds him of a quality system. The more adherence to a standard brings up the level of quality for the product that being output. The product being the recovery community and CARF was part of that process and was much needed. He commented regarding the fees and said that not all treatment facilities were created equal, some were large and some were small. Some have 10 active clients and some have 1,000 active clients and what is that fee or penalty that should be acquired, should it be 1/10th or 1/1,000th or should the larger one pay even more and the recovery community should come together to say this is what is sustainable in order to continue treatment of the individuals that need it. He noted that the penalties would be applied to the General Fund and Council should not have to pay for sins of the past, this is a newer Council and after decades of mismanagement prior to this Council where the monies may not have been applied correctly.

Council held a brief recess and reconvened with all still present. Mayor Dunne thanked everyone that had spoken during the first half of the meeting and reminded them to reach out to their Councilmember and share their thoughts.

7. **Regulatory Agencies** – There were some that had already spoken earlier and no one else spoke during this section.

8. **Community Responses**

Tom Rodriguez – He was asked by 5th Ward Councilman Sandlin to speak. He said the CARF accreditation was similar to quality systems and when you have a broken problem and were looking for solutions. In manufacturing they ask five whys if something happens or goes wrong. Why did it go wrong and what was the root cause and it was something similar that could be done in order of the CARF system or in putting this proposal together in the sense that you would find what the actual problem is and why are we all here today and you go through the 5 whys until you get to the root of the problem? It's hard to put a solution together before you actually know what the root cause is and a lot of times, we get ahead of ourselves and we may implement something that's very good and productive but we tend to find out that it causes other problems down the line. He again said that not every facility was created equally and he knew that the CARF certification could most certainly help improve the standards across the boards for all of the organizations out there trying to help everyone within the community. He said that before throwing a number out there, determine whether a number that's right for Facility A, may not be right for Facility C. etc. He said that this Council shouldn't have to pay for the sins of past Councils and he doesn't want that to be at the forefront of your minds when you're thinking about future use for monies that Council can't guarantee what a future Council may do with the revenues generated by the fees and fines. He reviewed the proposal and he felt that it was a contract with the community and he doesn't believe that this Council wants to make things hard enough to not allow for recovery and everyone's main goal was to ensure that the recovery of the community, both the clients as well as the citizens who were property owners. He also looked at the denial and suspension sections and he hoped that Council recognized that as a company might be going through a CARF certification in order to get in line and that they take into consideration that it would be an in-process step because it is a process that takes anywhere between 18-24 months to finally get the approvals in place to become CARF certified and also a years' time frame to be re-certified.

Paul Bennet – He said that he was hesitant to speak because he doesn't have a long family lineage in Portsmouth. He's been in Portsmouth about 2-years and in that time, he has served as the Priest of All Saints Episcopal Church on 4th & Court Streets. He actually gets a little nervous when public speaking (laughter) and he also has a reputation for being a short preacher. He's served with Abby and the Health Department and All Saints Church is also a project on-site and they hand out Narcan at the church. In his two years in Portsmouth and in being the Priest at the church which is also a home to the recovery community, he's gotten to know the folks that we're talking about pretty well and maybe even better than some of the folks that have lived here a while. He's heard a lot of nostalgia about how Portsmouth used to be and how the playground used to be wonderful, safe and full of kids and he has two children that are seven and four years old and they are in every playground in this town every single day. They ride their bikes up and down every street and he runs on every street and he knows the town fairly well. The stories that he's heard from folks he works with: 1. They're really tired of the stigma, the stigma that continues and just the word addict and even from loving people that say "I've had an addict come up to me", he said these are people who were made in God's image and they have the ability to change the world at any point and time. They may be going through hard times in their lives, but still the opportunity is there to change. 2. He hears them say that they're tired of being the blame because we don't have nice roads or our parks are a wreck or they don't have clean water or for some reason the water in my faucet is brown once a month, "it's all because we have all these addicts" or because of the pill mills, there's potholes in our roads, "it's because of the addicts and if we just didn't have all of these addicts". His concern being someone new to Portsmouth, he's not convinced that Council had the ability to regulate this business. He's heard how this business was overrunning our town, it's so huge and he's just not sure that our City Council can develop the regulatory authority to do this and he says that because in his prior job, he was an EPA inspector for 13 years as a regulatory officer and has two Inspection of the Year awards and knows his way around Government regulations and wasn't convinced that the City of Portsmouth has the ability to regulate this industry.

9. City Services – Mayor Dunne stated that they had received emails from the Health Department, Code Enforcement, Police & Fire Departments.

Andy Gedeon – Code Enforcement Director – He's read the legislation six or seven times and was on the phone emailing people, this legislation is much needed, but there's a lot of work that needs to happen first on the code enforcement side. He works with the Police & Fire Departments and sees on a daily basis a huge issue on property maintenance for these sober living house and treatment centers. His personal opinion was that they needed to be regulated because there's a lot of pop-up facilities that were in it just for the profit and there were a lot of good legitimate treatment centers in Portsmouth that were doing a lot of good for this community. He said that he celebrated his dad's 80th birthday yesterday and because of one of these treatment centers, he's been sobered for 30+ years. They do not want to run these facilities out of town, but they do need to have some kind of common ground with these facilities to ensure that they were putting people in proper housing and following the rules. He said that this legislation wasn't set in stone and wouldn't be passed tomorrow. The city needed input from everyone

involved and he would love to see a committee put together with city employees, Councilmembers and people involved in the treatment facilities. The community to come together and have something that is good for all those involved. He sees both sides where we have these For-Profit places popping up in residential neighborhoods and they're ruining the property value, it's not because of the addict, it's because the owners of these facilities are in it for a profit. He assured the audience that Council would listen to what everyone says and taking it into consideration and they want to pass something that's fair to everybody. He works out of the Engineering Department and invited anyone that wanted to come in at any time to speak with him or email him with their input and work together to come up with a regulation that was fair for everybody.

10. **Advocate Groups and Members of the Recovery Community**

Abby Spears – She is a decade only resident of the City of Portsmouth and lifelong resident of Scioto County. She came of age during the height of the pill mill epidemic in Scioto County, it has touched her family and people that she loves, some have made it to recovery and others have not been as fortunate, today she comes to represent Scioto Connect which was a large diverse multi-sector collaborative and comprised of individuals that work in public health, criminal justice, law enforcement and that work within many of these emergency service agencies, treatment providers and concerned citizens that want to help be a part of the development of a solution. She said they have meetings every quarter and have for the past four years, she sends out email invitations to every member of Council and Councilman Cole had made it to one of the meetings and she had not seen any other individual from Council in attendance and former Councilman Martell had attended some of the meetings. As part of their organization, they address multiple issues within the community because they understood that substance use much like many of the other things that face our community, who a complex issue and wasn't something that was solely the responsibility of one group of people but was something that has happened to them as a community and something that our community had played a role in and was something that as an entire community had to be part of changing and of healing. Their subcommittee addressed things like prevention and wellness, they address things like education and awareness linkage to care, the faith-based community. They also explore things like anti-human trafficking, as well as Economic Development & Community Revitalization because it's the intersection of these issues, things like the industrialization, addict poverty, lack of opportunity, lack of stable employment, lack of housing, systemic inequalities that member of our community face.

Now, there is potential legislation that could further reduce the number of resources that were available. One of the first projects that Scioto Connect helped develop was a bed availability list, it was done because two-years ago there were not enough beds in the community to be available for the residents that needed services. It has only been within the past two-years that they've seen enough providers be available to make sure that any person wanting treatment, could actually access it as soon as they decided they wanted it. For folks that have decided that they want to pursue treatment, the quicker you can provide someone the ability to get into care and the more opportunity there is to succeed and the more support they receive and the less opportunity there was for them to potentially change their minds. In addition to that, they've partner with multiple University's for research study. The Ohio State University, The University of Cincinnati and The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. They have been part of the Ohio opioid project as well as the community study. They have done work that had brought over \$900,000 in study funds to the community over the past several years, they developed expand access to MOUD treatment and created programs that had helped to address transportation barriers that people could access during treatment to help arrive for court appointments and ensuring that they're able to access basic medical care and mental health services. They've helped to purchase a mobile unit for the community to help address health inequities and access to care because as Ms. Shultz mentioned, transportation and accessibility were huge issues for all of the community, not those just seeking treatment but all those who need mental health care and those that were seeking medical care. She said that this was even more so for the marginalized communities and when they look at folks that were experiencing poverty, homelessness in already marginalized communities such as those of color.

These issues were something that this legislation could be counter-productive with the potential fees proposed, this had the opportunity to be catastrophic financially for many of these institutions and why would they want to potentially implement something that could reduce the number of facilities that we have, which would disproportionately impact folks living in poverty, folks in marginalized communities, reduce the level of care that they've been able to provide and folks experiencing health care issues. She's had many conversations with folks throughout the community because she talks a lot about drugs; she loves people who use drugs, she loves people who used to use drugs and not always do people understand that. She said that some of the best people she has ever met were folks that walk through the doors of harm reduction services and recovery centers. She's watched people who have nothing give everything to help assist someone else who is suffering because they recognize them and they know what that's like.

As a community, they've been living this way for decades and inevitably Scioto County has a community organization, ADAMHS Board were members, most of the treatment providers and Counselors sitting in this room will come to meetings and she invited everyone to attend on May 18, 2022 at the Welcome Center from 12:30 until 3:30. There were many folks in this room who were subcommittee members and she knew they would be happy to talk to anyone about the work that they do, just show up. She's been fortunate enough to lead this group of people and be a part and see the innovative solutions that they have been able to come up with. The way that they have been able to take very little and make it

something that could have profound change and that's what is required, this was not something that was done alone, there is not a one size fits all, magic bullet solution. Every person seeking treatment, there treatment will be a unique as their fingerprint and was the reality of medical care in general and she felt that it had been greatly overlooked in this discussion. Treatment is medical care; it is medical care for a medical condition. The do not legislate other forms of medical care. She understood that there was a lot of grief and hurt that is associated with this and we're a community that is experiencing community level trauma and they see it in generational poverty, generational substance abuse and have seen an entire generation almost lost to substance abuse and the overdose crisis.

She's listened patiently as folks have spoken with profound bias and stigmatizing language and throughout this meeting and previous Council meetings, she witnessed dehumanization that was killing members of our community. One of the other parts of work that Scioto Connect does was to run a quarterly overdose fatality review as such they go through every quarter and look at every overdose fatality that occurred in the Scioto County area, they look at the names of the people they have known their entire lives and look at people that had been in long term recovery, folks that had fought to try and better their lives and live the self-directed life that they have chosen and watched as reoccurrence does happen.

11. **Treatment Facilities**

Andy Albrecht – He's the CEO of The Counseling Center, he's served in multiple roles and capacities over his 20-year career and it was his pleasure to present one of the most comprehensive, long standing, non-profit behavioral health agencies in the State of Ohio and he's excited to share the agency's perspective on some pertinent data. In the 42-year history as a counseling center, they've navigated a lot of challenges over the years, lots of different circumstances, from regional alcoholism, to the opioid epidemic, to behavior health redesign and every growing need for wrap around treatment, the overdose crisis as well as the aftermath impacting families and youth. He said until now, they've had no issues with the behavioral health market place, treatment standards and the government legislation or involvement. TCC is a proud non-profit who are governed by a board of your neighbors and operated by locally invested natives included himself. Individuals who live in Portsmouth and have a great interest in our communities and the people that also live here. TCC was one of the largest employers in the area, they employee over 500 individuals, many of who were in long term recovery and also graduates of the Counseling Center including himself. TCC created a \$22,000,000 payroll and more than \$40,000,000 in annual revenue was brought into their region. All of these dollars were spent locally.

TCC operates as a regional multi-county agency with a very unique and rare continuum of care, the continuum of care that they have worked on continuously over the years was to develop and make sure that their clients voices were heard and getting the services they need. They place a significant focus on aftercare services, services that include financial literacy, credit restoration, transportation, safe housing, vocational development and job development. Critical services that weren't currently supported by any TCC funding source, these were things they pay themselves. In addition to their clinical services, they were also aggressive supporter of the community and regularly champion area events with both financial donations and in labor. They donate \$50,000 annually to Friends of Portsmouth as a corporate sponsor so that there could be fun things in the city like Winterfest and an additional \$25,000 annually to other agencies in functions including children's programming, neighborhood cleanup events, senior games, race track events, local sporting venues, local fitness competitions and the new Children's Museum.

He said that while the proposed legislation was unprecedented, TCC shared many of the areas concerns and felt that the direction could ultimately be productive. They felt that their area of disagreements center on misunderstanding and misinformation in an attempt to regulate care at the local level rather than leveraging already existing state resources. In considering this information, one narrative that the local overdose crisis was significantly worsen by clients coming from other areas, who drop out of treatment and stay in Portsmouth was blatantly false. Factional first responder data dispels this perspective, in fact, from May 2021 until March 2022, TCC responded in conjunction with the Portsmouth Fire Department to 334 overdose calls. Of those 334 overdoses, 320 of those individuals were residents of Scioto County, non-residents only represented 4% of those overdoses and interestingly of those 4% were also residing in neighboring counties.

Another narrative indicates that crime had increased by people leaving treatment and remaining in the area, that was also false. Recent studies suggest that less than 10% of crimes in our community involve individuals residing elsewhere and in many of those instances, the perpetrators were trafficking, bringing drugs to or through the region. There also exists considerable about individuals being purposefully imported into the area for treatment, TCC believes that this was important to understand that the Medicaid dollars, insurance and private pay funds generally cover in-state care, their clients at the Counseling Center are Ohio residents. With specific reference to TCC, their client population was compromised predominantly of individuals within a 40 miles radius of Portsmouth which serves a metro center for the region and approximately 20% of the clients originate from an area between 1-2 hours away that were predominately served by our Stepping Stones program, mothers with children which was a very unique program and there were only a few of these programs that exists in the State of Ohio. With such a limited resource in the state, it helps a highly vulnerable and underserved population and the remainder of that 20% figure involves individuals stepping

down from our region's community-based correction facility house in Athens, Franklin Furnace and Southwest Ohio. It was important to note as well that when a TCC client desires to leave early, they are returned to their home or location at that time and they were not left to find their way home or walk around the streets. If they are a justice referral, law enforcement is engaged immediately and another sidenote narrative was that he heard a lot of things about people coming from Cuyahoga County or getting bused in and so he went to his admission center yesterday and he asked the Director how many people have been served through the front door of the Counseling Center from Cuyahoga County? They went through the entire process and there were only two and one of those had family in Cleveland and they had been relocated to Cuyahoga County to try to get better, but ended up back in Portsmouth for treatment and the second one was a Judge's referral who had a personal relationship with a Judge in Portsmouth. In addition, their withdrawal management program was also a regional program and was designed and funded to be a regional program, they work close with the ADAMHS Board and in conjunction with dollars set aside for legislature to create four big regional withdrawal management centers in Ohio and were the Southern Ohio Counseling Center and were able to secure one of those and they were super proud of that and worked very hard to get it to Portsmouth.

It's unfortunate that the City of Portsmouth had been put in a position to attempt to regulate healthcare to this point, while access for treatment has continued to grow in our area and the Ohio Mental Health & Addiction Services Board had continued to certify providers across the state. There had been no local market studies, no needs assessment, no clear plan for continued oversight past initial certification. In addition to the OMHAS shortfall, Medicaid had continued to fund the services with very little oversight. For example, since 1995 there had only been 12 full Medicaid audits in Scioto County, the Counseling Center was the only behavioral health provider to ever be fully audited in this area. OMHAS and Medicaid had been authorized at the state level to allocate funds for treatment but there had been little expansion to regulate the use of those dollars, hence the underlying concern today, a concern that was arguably statewide and likely nationwide.

It was TCC belief that the city has available and underutilized resources to address concerns without any new legislation as a business consideration the city can't issue a mandate requiring treatment providers to register as a business within the city which included houses and outpatient posts. For safety and security of those in housing, landlord laws and life security codes could be enforced with 21 Medicaid funded treatment centers in our county a readily available approach would be to enforce these codes that already exists, similar to the Health Department process with local restaurants, pools and other school operations. He said with respect to quality care, it was their stance that all providers should additionally inform the local ADAMHS Board of their operation. Agencies should pursue CARF accreditation and other appropriate credentials and they would not encourage the city to openly engage providers with future considerations and modify and restrict providers ability to render services. Lastly, to the Mayor and the City Council, and citizens and all the agencies that were present, if they suspect an individual or entity of being negligent or not fulfilling their agency mission, then there were human lives being damaged as a result of that operation, file a complaint with OMHAS or Department of Medicaid and they would be more than happy to assist in that process.

Jay Hash – Director of Hopesource – He's honored to be here and appreciated the time that was being spent on these issues. He's been listening to Council and people who have problems, whether it's the proliferation of treatment or substandard treatment or a house that is an eyesore or whether its behaviors that occur around those houses or whether places are located in Business Zones or not depending on what they're supposed to be doing. His commitment to the City of Portsmouth and the Recovering Community and other Treatment Centers was to always be above board, transparent and have a high standard of treatment, but also the highest standard of being a good neighbor and citizen. He's also advocating for people who aren't always in the best position to advocate for themselves.

He complimented Mayor Dunne on the proposal, not the content, but the proposal that led to us having productive conversations about solving problems in the City of Portsmouth. He said that everyone's comments today have some validity on all sides. There are people being impacted and we shouldn't be saying things are going well, but having a negative impact on someone else along the way and he was all about being part of the solution. He's in long-term recovery also and thanks be to God and to the community for helping him, but that's not enough, just to be in recovery and be a good treatment provider, we need to be able to listen to what is valid and he's the last person that wants to have some sort of blackeye contributed to him or anyone that works with him because they're doing something inappropriate or going to a place where they're causing problems in a neighborhood. They cannot just go anywhere or do anything they want because that's old behavior and recovery talk, to not care about our fellow citizens. We're supposed to be a good neighbor and be respected. We shouldn't get pats on the back for being a good citizen and being in recovery, we should always do what is right and call out people who aren't doing things right.

He is 100% against this legislation; even the CARF and NARR accreditations in principle he wasn't opposed to, but opposed to Mayor Dunne saying that they had to do it, he doesn't agree with it and he felt it was government overreach. He understood that there were standards within CARF and NARR that were good standards. CARF comes every three years and you're usually a good agency if you have CARF and you want to brag about that because it is important and he doesn't want to

diminish the importance of CARF or what it means, but on the other hand, they come every three years, they collect a fee. He's known some providers that had CARF accreditation and who aren't in business any longer because of problems that they had. The other thing about CARF too, that keeps the State of Ohio off of their backs which means that the State of Ohio doesn't come to see his agency any longer, so he's not CARF and maybe will become CARF, but he doesn't like being told that he had to do it by the government because it's voluntary. If he's CARF accredited the State of Ohio doesn't come to see him to look at all of his records, to see what he's doing with clients or see if he charged someone for something. He said there's good side to CARF and there's another side where these out-of-town people (CARF) were teams that weren't from Portsmouth, he said they come in and he might be able to whip something together for a day or few weeks for CARF accreditation but when they're gone and he has his accreditation, the State of Ohio is hands off because of something called deemed status or advanced standing. If you've got CARF, they don't come and look at you, so be careful what you ask for when you're asking for CARF accreditation. The same thing with NARR they have some very arbitrary things and some of it was very good, some of it was actually contradictory to ethical guidelines such as the hiring of your own clients, paying your resident's, which is a double relationship and a conflict of interest. There were things inside of each of those that were not in the best interest of a treatment center because they would be in compliance with one governing body and in non-compliance with city government.

He's been transparent with City Council and the community, they've been in town for 6-years and they are a for-profit agency which is a business structure and they operate very much like a non-profit in that they lost money last year and they hoped to make money next year, but to have a margin to where they could follow their mission and help people in recovery. For-profit or non-profit, they don't ask any other healthcare provider that question. Example: If his heart needed operated on, he doesn't ask his doctor if he's profit or non-profit. Doctors are asked a different set of questions. He felt that this legislation shouldn't be created because the city government thinks that there's bad treatment. He asked what is the bad treatment, bad housing, bad protocol when someone doesn't complete treatment and doesn't do well, what are those protocols in place and do these places have a certificate of occupancy. His facilities have certificates of occupancy and the City of Portsmouth had already said that he could be in every location that he owned, yet they want to layer on another requirement now because the first one wasn't enough.

He's in disagreement on that and on everything. The fees are exorbitant, inappropriate, abusive and discriminatory and he doesn't believe that was intended, but it is all of these things whether it's intentional or unintentional. His promise to Council and the community was that we will be focusing on Portsmouth, Ohio with the best Professionals you could ever find in treatment and in recovery working with him and he's honored to work with them every day and that's his commitment in that he will leave a bed open or beds open where he could fill it from Franklin County, he's not against the person in Franklin County, but he's for the people of Scioto County and Portsmouth, Ohio and this legislation doesn't solve any problem. It puts accreditation and check boxes, but doesn't get to the core of what we're really trying to solve. He would like to be part of the solution and would sit on a task force or work group and do a lot of listening and would like to be at the table.

Joanna Donini – Owner of Serenity Now – Wheelersburg, Ohio – She said that she is OMHAS certified and they are also a prevention facility. They're certified through the State of Ohio to offer prevention services to their young people. Besides the program and the facility that they operate in Wheelersburg, they have two houses in the City of Portsmouth. She's operated these for about a year and was happy the first time she was able to get a house to offer recovering people a safe environment to stay in and it meant so much to her and all she had ever been able to do before was to bring them into outpatient treatment and sometimes they wouldn't have a way to get there and she was proud the moment she was able to open a house. (Audience ask why she didn't get a house in Wheelersburg) She said we're not going to deal with that are we and asked to just speak.

She thanked Sue from the ADAMHS Board and Tom and everyone here because everyone has an opinion and a side. She said as far as being someone that swooped in to do nothing but gain money from the plight of this community, that's not who she is!

She started working in treatment about 12-years-ago after her 18-year-old son died from a drug-related death and at that point she felt it was her mission and what God wanted her to do which was to reach out and try to help as many people as she could and she believed that to be the goal of just about everybody present.

She has a youth program which involves any youth from any community to be able to learn about prevention behavior health, addiction, they're taught values, how to respect other people and she also has an equine program and she worked with the 14th Street Community Center and Wings of Hope to bring youth to her farm and let them ride and participate interacting with horses. She loves everything that she does and will continue to do it to the best of her ability.

Mayor Dunne said that they will continue to talk about the topic in City Council meetings and he strongly encouraged the public to attend. He felt that it was good to hear from all sides of the topic and this legislation is in the very early stages. He thanked everyone for attending and Portsmouth Little Theater for hosting the event and it was a great venue and our City Clerk was recently one of the stars. He asked that everyone stay involved.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:35 a.m. on a motion by Vice President Gordon.

City Clerk

Mayor