CITY OF CLYDE
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
February 23, 2016

The regularly scheduled work session of Clyde City Council was held on Tuesday, February 23, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, Clyde City Building, 222 N. Main Street, Clyde, Ohio 43410 for a discussion on drug abuse in the Clyde community, requested by Richie Webber.

Roll Call.

Present: Mayor G. Scott Black
Vice Mayor Kenneth Dick
Council Member Jean Jackson
Council Member Steve Keegan
Council Member Gary Smith
City Manager Paul H. Fiser (Not voting)
Finance Director Craig Davis (Not voting)
Clerk of Council Janet R. Dickman (Not voting)
Deputy Clerk of Council Jackie Hoppe (Not voting)
Deputy Clerk of Council Sharon S. Smith (Not voting)

Absent/ Excused: Solicitor Zachary J. Selvey

Mayor Black thanked everyone who is in attendance tonight. Following Mr. Webber's comments, audience members will have a chance to ask questions.

Richard Webber, 24 years old, grew up and lived all his life in Clyde. He attended Clyde High School, played sports, in 2008 won a state championship in track, played football and got good grades. In 2008 during his junior year of football he broke his arm and was prescribed Percocet, oxycodone and vicodin, which started a slow downward spiral which made him lose everything. He did not know these pills were addictive. He attended high school parties where cheerleaders, soccer players, honor roll students, etc. would use these pills. The pills were somewhat socially acceptable. He can easily think of about thirty people from his class who were or are addicted to opiates, including heroin. Most come from good families. As his addiction continued he still went to college on a partial ride scholarship. He had several opportunities to get a track scholarship, but he messed that up because of drugs. Eventually he dropped out of college because of his drug problem. The pills got really expensive, and the addiction worsened. Without the pills, he would experience the worst flu-like systems of his life for about five days. Although he considers himself a pretty strong person, he could not quit heroin on his own because he could not take the withdrawal. The thing that got him to quit was going to jail, and he is now sixteen months sober. It took multiple tries and multiple trips to jail. There is not a lot of awareness of this problem and these problems are kept hidden. To address it, it needs to be let know and increase the awareness. In the last three years he has lost three friends to overdoes, under the age of 26, including friends who were a state wrestler and another who was in choir. Once when he got out of jail, he wanted to quit but he had no new friends and no support so he went back to using. It took seeing his mom crying when one of his friends died from an overdose to convince him to quit. He had overdosed twice, but narcam saved his life. Going to the gym when he was

anxious and attending twelve steps meetings have helped him by providing a support system. Mr. Webber has now started his own meetings, focused on younger people. His life is now a lot better, as he is going to school and doing mixed martial arts. Drug addicts are not bad people.

Denise Hamrick asked what is a suggestion that can be done at a high school level to help kids who are using (awareness; keep track of narcotic medications that parents are taking, that the kids can take; monitor prescriptions that kids receive from sports injuries and disposing of unused meds).

When are the meetings that Mr. Webber has started (one in city building basement on Tuesdays at 9p and one on Fridays at 6p at Micah House, 407 Main Street).

Chief Gower and law enforcement thanks Mr. Webber for coming forward. He met with him last week for about three hours. To get this message to young people, this is the conduit to have – someone they can relate to. This is a huge problem that must be handled from so many different fronts, but it is a society problem, not a law enforcement problem. The first step is education. His story will resonate to young people. Mr. Webber has another meeting on March 3rd with clergy.

Reverend Sheryl Seitz also thanked Mr. Webber. The clergy has taken a hard look at what is happening in the community, and they want everyone to be successful. She questioned how they can help, and how they can education.

What is the biggest trait that an addict demonstrates that someone could look for (everyone is different, but some main things are a change in behavior, sleeping in longer, missing school, grades slipping, lost of interest in activities, grades slipping).

Roger Hart, director of Micah House Community Action Ministry, goes to the jails every Sunday. He feels the problem is much larger than everyone knows. At a jail service he asks which inmates are drug users and all raise their hands; he asks who uses heroin and only one was not. This is a society problem. The most important component of this problem is the need for a support system. The addict needs to fill the gap with something positive. There must be an alternative, with new friends and a new support group. Attendees at Mr. Webber's support groups are very serious about their recovery. The community/support group must welcome the addict in and want to help them get better.

AA relies on a higher power, including being at the AA meetings and sharing their stories with one another.

Bev Henson questioned if the crime rate goes hand in hand with the drug problem. She also suggests that community members need to be proactive to prevent burglaries and crimes (Mr. Webber stated 90% of the people he hung around with did feed their drug habit through burglaries; most people in jail also have a drug problem, which can cause domestic violence and other crimes).

Jon Brewer stated that parents need to be aware of what their kids are doing; he questioned what a parent should do if they suspect their child is doing drugs. Mr. Brewer has observed many

people in Cherry Street Park dealing drugs. He feels we need a Micah's House in Clyde (the current one is in Fremont) (if drug abuse is suspected, possibly discipline for them or drug abuse treatment; yes, we need more help for addicts who want help because they don't have insurance or large amounts of money for treatment; some jails will leave some cells open for addicts who want to detox, although treatment is always better; Mr. Webber can help them once they are clean, but he can't help them through detox). Possibly this is something that the clergy could help with. Mr. Hart and his associates help with rides for addicts who need help.

Is there AA and NA meetings in Clyde (yes, AA meetings are held Wednesday at 8p at the city building, and Thursday at 8p at St. Paul Church).

Andrea Young shared her ideas for some solutions: need a facility to safety and medically detox, including counseling; Medicaid needs to be provided to addicts who need treatment; employment opportunities need to be created for recovering addicts; need education assemblies in the schools to address specific drugs, with hard facts at the high school level (yes, need somewhere safe for addicts to detox without legal repercussions; yes, need employment opportunities with local businesses offering a job when the addict gets to a certain milestone; most addicts don't have insurance and can't afford treatment; education should be real, the DARE program was not effective, younger and local speakers would be willing to speak at the schools).

Spencer Wright stated that drug addicts' minds are wired different. People don't understand why addicts so the things that they do. If addicts can catch kids before they get to where the addict is at, maybe they can help them. It's all about support and people working together to solve this.

When an addict is using, they don't realize what they are doing. It's like being on auto-pilot, with the addict watching what they are doing, but are unable to stop it. He only remembers the DARE program as being something where he didn't have to attend class for an hour. A new program at the high school needs to be real for the kids to believe it.

Jonathan Waugh feels the support for the addicts must be on a personal level, or we will use more of them. Erie County is developing a multi bed detox facility. He can help with giving addicts rides there, until Sandusky County gets a facility.

Chief Gower reiterated that Mr. Webber and his friends are the ones who can help the kids. Addicts do not want to come to the police because they are afraid of going to jail. But sometimes jail is when an addict hits their lowest point. Drugs and crimes go together; one way to combat crime is to lock your cars and lock your houses. When parents see a change in theirs kids behavior they need to question them and get them help. We cannot arrest or incarcerate our way out of this problem. The community needs to get the needed medical facilities, and we need to get education into the high schools and middle schools.

Bev Henson questioned if there could be a block watch problem (we tried to start a county wide block watch program in recent years but people were not interested).

We need a Micah's House, but that will take money.

What are actual numbers of crimes and overdoses, to make people more aware of the problem (there were three this past weekend, with two in one spot; there was a vehicle accident where the driver still had a needle stuck in his arm; there was one death this past weekend; the number of overdoses is huge compared to five years ago).

Rev. Seitz stated this is everyone's problem, not just Mr. Webber's problem. We need to identify how we can education employers, and everyone, and make this a better place for everyone.

Mr. Young feels there are many government grants that could be available.

Sheriff Overmyer has a meeting tomorrow to discuss the drug vivetrol to use in the jails to help people get off of heroin (vivitrol is a better idea than seboxin). Sheriff Overmyer has discussed this with area business owners and they are willing to fund this program because they want the recovering addicts back to being productive citizens.

Lisa McMurray questioned how Mr. Webber went from the prescribed pills to the heroin (it's everywhere; we could walk a quarter mile from here to get high; it's very common and easy to find).

Mr. Hart noted Mr. Carson from the *News-Messenger* who is writing an article about this problem, and this article should be shared with others to start awareness. Mr. Hart stated that there are many adults with these same addictions, as there are young people. We must be just as supportive of the older people as, we are the younger people.

Jan Brewer believes that everyone needs someone to care about them, who doesn't have to. She and lots of people she worked with are caring people. At the end of each class she would remind the students to make good decisions. (addicts feel like no one cares; all the support in this room, shows that the Clyde community rallies together when there is a need; don't let this meeting be the last time this problem is talked about).

Brenda Dean questioned what a student should do if they think they see a fellow student struggling with addiction (no addict is going to change unless they want to; you can point it out to them, but they have to want to change; maybe talk to a counselor at the school).

Aaron Wilson was one of Mr. Webber's coaches when he broke his arm. Reflecting back, he witnessed what Mr. Webber went through. He remembers hearing that if you are not a part of the solution, then you are part of the problem. He noted there is an element of fear for the school coach, counselor, etc because if they report a possible drug problem, then their name will be a part of the police report that everyone can see (any police report is a public report; not everything needs to be reported to the police unless someone is selling the drugs or if it is a felony; situations to try to help a student get treatment can be handled internally). How can a coach open the lines of communication with an athlete who they think is having a problem (Mr. Webber's personal experience was that he felt everyone was out to get him, with the drug tests and all; he suggests taking the athlete aside and asking how you can help them).

Mr. Hart feels that discipline does not work. The adult needs to invest themselves to spend time with the young person to help them stop using drugs. You need to take the time to get to know them and develop a relationship.

Denise Hamrick stated this problem does not just affect the "jocks". She noted that some people want to support someone in this type of situation but they don't know how; we need someone to tell us what you want us to do. The school needs a coalition of a group of kids who have been through this to talk to the students with true hard facts, to be a graduate of CHS and to connect with young people. As a school Board member Ms. Hamrick will work hard to implement this type of program.

Andrea Young feels that these talks need to occur more than once a year (Mr. Webber feels the schools need to make time to hold these types of programs/talks; he also suggested having a talk at the beginning of sports seasons when the athletes and their parents need to attend).

Ms. Hamrick also asked at what point an addict considers themselves an addict (when they start taking more and more pills; when the person starts going through withdrawal if they don't have pills).

Spencer Wright feels a person is an addict when the addiction controls your life, when every decision is based on getting more drugs and when rash decisions are being made to get the drugs. He also suggests that teachers need to be educated in addiction and need to understand it.

John Brewer feels that the Board of Education and Council need to acknowledge that there is a problem, and to support grant applications if needed. He feels that there needs to be an adoption of a policy that schools can handle some of these types of problems internally to help the student, instead of involving the police. He hopes the newspaper report will start to make people aware.

Mr. Dick thanked Mr. Webber for his willingness to share his story. We need empathy for dealing with this problem. He noted that the Sheriff was the only person here tonight from the county level; there is no one here from the prosecutor's office, the commissioners, state legislators. The dealers who are selling it need harsh punishment, to get this off the street. He disagrees with people who want to legalize marijuana, because that is where some people start drug use before they go on to the heroin.

Mr. Keegan also offered his thanks to Mr. Webber and any audience member who participated. He questioned if the Clyde DARE program is still active (no, there is no longer any funding for it and statistics showed that it was not affective). Mr. Keegan recalls there being a DARE officer and vehicle and programs and grants were received for all of these (there are no longer any grants for this for police departments).

Ms. Jackson cares about this program. She has school age children and they talk about this topic all of the time. She has taken prescription pills before and she doesn't understand why people would want to continue taking them. Ms. Jackson suggested that Mr. Webber attend a School Board meeting and possibly schedule an education session with the teachers during some of their inservice hours. Having a former high school athlete talk to the kids would be very beneficial

because the middle school students idolize them. A statistic from the *Toledo Blade* reported a 366% increase in the number of drug overdose deaths between 2000 and 2012. There were 1,914 unintentional drug overdoses in 2012 and it continues to increase. She is glad to see so many community members come here tonight to discuss this.

Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Webber and is glad to see so many people here tonight.

Mayor Black also offered his thanks. Sometimes there can be a disconnect between older and younger people. When he was in high school kids were getting in trouble for more mild things like drinking and smoking. By 1973, kids were falling out of their chair in school from being on drugs. He worried about his kids getting through school, and now he worries about his grandkids and great-grandkids. There will always be a problem if we don't fix it. Mayor Black has taken vicodin on three occasions when he had surgeries but as soon as he started feeling better, he would stop taking them. He acknowledged that there needs to be opportunities for recovering addicts to get a job, or they may revert back to using drugs. He shared a report from Sweden where they legalized heroin, and it resulted in a 50% reduction of the heroin addiction. Through various programs related to this legalization the addicts decided they wanted to become productive citizens. Hopefully tonight is a start to begin moving in the right direction.

Sylvia Maines feels that smoking and drinking are not mild things because they can lead to more dangerous things.

Christina Wahl feels people need to understand that these are not bad kids, they come from good families and have opportunities but they become heroin addicts. We don't need block watch to report, you can be anonymous. Donate to these programs to help them get started. These kids are broken and bullied; we need more positivity, more support instead of tearing them down.

John Brewer noted that drug trafficking can lead to human trafficking.

ADJOURNMENT:
Mayor Black announced the meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

G. Scott Black, Mayor

Janet R. Dickman, Clerk of Council