

# City of Morgantown

## WORKSHOP January 10, 2020

The Workshop to discuss the consideration of Milan Puskar Health Right's request to place sharps containers in public places was held in the Council Chambers of City Hall on Tuesday, January 10, 2020, at 1:06 p.m.

**PRESENT:** City Manager Paul Brake, Assistant City Manager Emily Muzzarelli, City Attorney Ryan Simonton, City Clerk Christine Wade, Mayor William A. Kawecki, Deputy Mayor Rachel Fetty, and Council Members: Zackery Cruze, Jenny Selin, and Barry Wendell. Ron Dulaney and Dave Harshbarger were absent.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kawecki.

City Manager Paul Brake explained that Milan Puskar Health Right has offered to provide and monitor the sharps containers for the downtown area. Morgantown Police Chief Ed Preston and Laura Jones, Director of Milan Puskar Health Right will be speaking.

Discussion regarding placing the containers in high frequent areas.

Laura Jones shared that Health Right can provide three (3) small containers. There will be no cost to the city to dispose or maintain the containers. She advised that Health Right has already been doing the syringe program and the contents of the containers would be disposed of by Health Right using the same procedure that is currently being used in their facility. Mon Health is looking into containers which grinds down the syringes and then emptied. The goal is to keep the syringes off the ground to protect the community. She shared that we should not place in monitored locations as she believes that folks may not use them. Perhaps a bathroom would be considered, or the bus station. She shared that this is a proactive approach.

Councilor Selin shared that she believes that council is doing the right thing to do the research before making a decision. Suggests larger containers if this works and perhaps a city policy and training related to picking up syringes. As well training to the Neighborhoods.

Ms. Jones advised that Health Right will handle the training and that the Mon County Health Department would more than likely assist.

Councilor Cruze shared that Health Right already hosts clean-up training. He also shared that when he has participated in clean ups that he uses a trash grabber and places the sharps in a 2-liter bottle, then takes them to Health Right.

Morgantown Police Chief Ed Preston advised that the Morgantown Police Department (MPD) has already placed sharps containers in each of their cruisers. Anything that we can do to reduce the exposure to bloodborne pathogens would be helpful. Chief Preston advised that the containers he uses are probably smaller and cheaper and that the containers that Health Right suggests is about \$350.00 apiece. When the Health Right order theirs they were in back order and took about 3 months to receive.

Councilor Cruze shared that some communities are repurposing old mailboxes and they are about \$1000.00.

Chief Preston advised that they have partnered with CVS pharmacy and they are using the repurposed mailboxes. The mailboxes can receive syringes as well as pills and are averaging pounds a week. One is placed in the lobby of the Public Safety Building.

Deputy Mayor Fetty stated that the contact with the sharps does cause more contact with Health Right. Do we decide to increase police presence in those areas, or do we choose to use police resources elsewhere? Users will move to other places if there is a police presence. Underneath the bridge is a frequent location and the owners of that property are frustrated with the activity.

Councilor Cruze shared that the Peer Advocacy Coach (PAC) would be the one from Health Right picking up the containers. He shared that another potential location would be a ravine on Whitmore Park as this location would not be a public frequent place.

Ms. Jones advised that when providing the syringes that they also provide the individual small boxes to place their used syringes. She shared that these folks from Health Right are already working on relationships to assist with recovery. The person collecting will either be the PAC, a nurse, or a nurse designee which would be a social worker or another PRC.

Councilor Wendell shared that we need to prevent an AIDS epidemic. Right now, Health Right is helping to prevent this. This is an immediate issue. He agrees that some people do not want to use the rail trail.

Chief Preston stated that this issue is not a lack of police presence or enforcement. He shared that they cannot put anyone in jail for trespassing because there is no punishment for that charge. The officers interact with folks every day and some of the ones who may appear homeless are not. Appearances and fact could be two different things. Drug addiction causes

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other problems. Any time we have an opportunity to impact people's poor choices in life which may affect someone's life then we will do that. Let's make a positive impact by doing what we can.

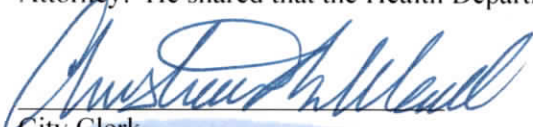
Mayor shared that Council appreciates the work of the police and this issue is not a result of any lack in police presence.

Deputy Mayor Fetty shared that we need a policy and an educational campaign. She suggests we talk about how we are going to make the decision on the locations, what decisions does council need to make?

Councilor Selin would like to see Administration work with HR to decide on the locations. Over time develop policies related to this, and look at purchasing additional containers perhaps for restrooms, etc. This will also service diabetics in their disposal. We need one on one conversations with the neighborhoods.

Mayor advised that City Administration will be the ones to approve the locations, but Council approves that they will be placed.

City Manager Brake shared that this is the information that he has been looking for that was discussed today. City Administration will follow up, perhaps with a resolution. He would like to also continue conversations with the City Attorney. He shared that the Health Department will be presenting at the January 28, 2020, Committee of the Whole.

  
City Clerk

  
Mayor

**\* ALL COUNCIL MEETINGS ARE AVAILABLE ON DVD IN THE CITY CLERKS OFFICE \***

