

## WORK SESSION—JANUARY 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Minutes of the Huntsville Town Council Work Session, held at the Huntsville Town Hall at 6:00 p.m. January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

**Present:** Mayor James Truett  
Council Member Mike Engstrom  
Council Member Bill Wangsgard  
Council Member Bill White  
Council Member Doug Allen  
Gail Ahlstrom, Clerk/Recorder

**Citizens:** Lt. Jason Talbot (WCSO) Deputy Mike Aschinger (WCSO)

Mayor Truett opened the work session and welcomed Lt. Talbot and Deputy Aschinger. This meeting is to talk about suicide awareness and how to plan a valley wide campaign. Lt. Talbot expressed his appreciation to the Council for being willing to get on board with this program. Lt. Talbot feels that suicide has become an epidemic and people are having a hard time talking about it or recognizing the signs.

Lt. Talbot would like to take this program county wide and help everyone in the community. The goal tonight is to present this program to the Council to make sure you are ok with the content. He would like to plan a town meeting at the library and advertise this and get everyone in the community to turn out for the class. Deputy Aschinger will give a rundown of what the class is about and things that will be addressed.

Deputy Aschinger said this is a passion of his. He has background in mental health and suicide prevention. Deputy Aschinger has been in the Army for 17 years serving with suicide prevention programs, he is a member of the 76 Operation Response Command Suicide Prevention Team. His father committed suicide back in 2011, where he gained a unique approach. His Bachelor is in Social Science, and his Master's Degree is in Human Services. Deputy Aschinger said he has been involved with five different suicide prevention programs over the years. He found QPR in 2012 and it is a simple program, it is the gatekeeper, takes 1 hour including a 15 minute video. Instead of going after suicide from the scientific approach, QPR tries to explain that suicide is normal. If you watch nature shows you see animals either run and fight for their lives, or just sit down when they smell danger. Most suicidal thoughts are temporary and can be overcome. QPR teaches you how to recognize signs, answers what do you do, step two is simply to ask the question.

When Deputy Aschinger is involved in a suicidal situation and he listens to family members they will say "I asked them if they were thinking about doing something crazy." Suicide is a rational decision not emotion. Completed suicides are very rational decisions. A rational decision is when someone decides they are done with life and they want to end it, they aren't crazy, their answer will be no because they have planned this out and have made a rational decision. The simple question that needs to be asked is "are you thinking about killing yourself."

Suicide is a very tough subject matter. Number One is to recognize signs, Number Two is to ask the question, and Number Three is to refer. QPR is not a counseling method; no one trained is authorized to give counseling. They talk about hope in this class.

They will talk about punting; which basically means, keep the person talking. Deputy Aschinger has done 100's of suicide interventions and they will always talk. Find out things they love. Keep the conversation going; that's it. Then take them to help. Then refer, Deputy Aschinger has files full of places to refer people to. Don't let them go home. Call the Sheriff's Office they will help. Mayor Truett said a lot of the police reports state possible suicides. Imminent danger is when someone has stated they are going to kill themselves. Most likely a Deputy will talk to them and find out what's going on. Making safety plans is a great idea, call them every two hours, shake hands and make an agreement.

Trauma is the best anti-suicide prevention our society has. Lack of trauma can put modern minds in a place where they can't see a way out. CM Allen said he has spoken with family and friends about this during the past week and he feels that younger people seem to turn to social media. There's not really anything the town can do except hold a meeting can get the word out. CM Allen wondered if there could be social media programs geared toward this. Social media is part of the QPR training.

Deputy Aschinger keeps a broad base community referral list; he has atheists groups, hippie groups, and even faithless networks. He has public, religious, and scientific groups. The least likely to intervene in a suicide is a teacher, father, mother, or authority figure.

Deputy Aschinger said he stays after the training because people will come up to him after with a case. Mayor Truett stated that this is really important to the Council; the Town lost one of its employees to suicide in the last month. People who are contemplating suicide have made peace with their decision and now they are happy. They give their stuff away. Visit people they haven't visited in a long time. Lt. Talbot said suicide affects the young and old, there is no age limit.

Deputy Aschinger asked if the Town could help with the printing of the post survey papers he passes out at the end of the class. Mayor Truett will make arrangements for the library. CM Engstrom will reach out to LDS Bishops and Stake Leaders. Lt. Talbot will pull together the stats on attempted suicides in the Ogden Valley. Info can be put in the Ogden Valley Newspaper, the Town's Newsletter, and sent out in an email blast. The meeting will be held on February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 pm. at the Ogden Valley Library. Personal invitations work better than posters. Lt. Talbot would like Mayor Truett to invite other Mayor's from Weber County to attend this meeting as well because he would like to continue holding Suicide Preventions meetings all over the county. LT. Talbot thanked the Council for working with him on this.

**Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.**

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Gail Ahlstrom, Clerk/Recorder

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James A. Truett, Mayor