

Mayor's Opioid Task Force Meeting
September 21, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.
City Hall | 111 N Main Street | Bristol, CT 06010
Rm 310
MINUTES (DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED)

In Attendance:

Ellen Zoppo-Sassu	Mayor
Steven Seymour	City Council District 3
Teran Chapis	Mayor's Aide
Lucas Amoroso-Whittles	The Bristol Edition
Jade Bray	Bristol Hospital Behavioral Health Services
Jessica Mastropiero	Bristol Burlington Health District (zoom)
Phyllis Delmastro	(Zoom)
Lt. Eric Hanson	Bristol Police
Officer Monica Finkle	Bristol PD Community Resource Officer
Stephen Bynum	Bristol Youth & Community Services
Sandy Kamens	
Christy Knowles	
Donna Friday	
Maria Theam	Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order and Member Introduction:

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m. followed by Introductions.

2. Approval of May 11, 2026 Minutes:

Motion to Approve Minutes – by Steven Seymour

2nd Motion – Lt. Eric Hansen

All in favor – I – Motion Carries – Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu

3. Update Items

a. Bristol Police Wellness Officers:

Officer Finkle discussed the Police Department's efforts to offer treatment resources to individuals they encounter and suggested that the Police Department participate in future Warming Center meetings to help ensure coordination among the involved agencies.

It was reported that Brian's Angels will be closing its current location at the end of the month because its lease was not renewed. The individuals previously served at that location have been dispersed to other agencies throughout the City, and Brian's Angels has not yet secured a new location.

Discussion followed regarding ongoing issues within City parks. Federal Hill is currently under control; however, Brackett Park continues to present concerns. The Mayor discussed signage intended to discourage panhandling and encourage individuals to donate through appropriate organizations rather than directly to panhandlers. The signs have been remade and will be reinstalled in various plazas throughout the City.

Lt. Hanson reported that the Police Department has increased enforcement efforts in response to these concerns.

b. B.E.S.T: Stephen Bynum reported that they will be participating in the Mum Festival this weekend. He also noted that an employee recently resigned and they are currently working to address the vacancy.

Mr. Bynum stated that the current grant ends on September 29 and that they are not eligible to reapply. Discussion followed regarding the Youth Coalition and Adult Coalition, including where those initiatives may fit moving forward and whether they could be incorporated into the Opioid Task Force. It was noted that funding remains available through the opioid settlement funds.

c. Mayor's Update: Discussion was held regarding the Task Force's past efforts and initiatives aimed at reducing the stigma associated with substance use.

4. New Business: Jessica Mastropietro reported that there have been 14 overdose deaths from January 1, 2026 to date, compared with 35 deaths in the past. She also discussed the transfer of the grant to Bristol Health and plans to contract with EMS to provide recovery coaches who will respond to active overdose incidents. She stated that more concrete information regarding the program is expected to be available within the next month.

5. Old business:

a. reprinting of brochure – The Mayor reviewed the proposed brochure that will be left by the Police Department following calls involving an overdose. Discussion was held regarding the availability of testing strips. Jessica Mastropietro reported that hundreds of testing strips are currently available through the Department of Public Health (DPH) and that there is no need to purchase additional strips at this time. Should the current supply be depleted, opioid settlement funds could potentially be used to purchase additional strips.

The Mayor continued reviewing the proposed brochure and stated that it will be distributed to Task Force participants for review. Suggested additions included the tips line, information regarding Live LOUD, and an interactive resource map.

6. Announcements: Lt. Hanson reported that Drug Take Back Day and Vape Take Back Day will be held on October 24, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., rain or shine. Both events will take place on the same day, with efforts also being coordinated with the schools. ReWorld will handle the recycling of collected vaping devices. It was also reported that the vape detection alarms in the schools are now operational. A permanent drug take-back container is available in the Police Department lobby.

It was noted that the Zoning Commission will meet tonight at 6:00 p.m. to review, discuss, and consider adoption of a moratorium concerning the establishment or expansion of vape shops in the City.

Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu discussed the 10th Annual Nationwide Empty Chair Campaign, which will take place from September 25 through October 2 in the green area between the Police Department and the Post Office. Community members may display a chair in memory of a loved one lost to an overdose.

7. Adjournment:

Motion to Adjourn at 5:53pm – Steven Seymour

2nd Motion – Lt. Eric Hansen

All in favor – I – Motion Carries – Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria Theam
Recording Secretary