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Public Safety Board
March 21, 2024 (3:00 PM) – City Council Chambers

APPROVED

In Attendance:

Andrew Biemer, Stefanie Breton (Guest), Mayor Byron Champlin (Guest), Serina Chase (Minutes), Fire Chief John Chisholm, Steve Edwards, Councilor Nathan Fennessy, Deputy Fire Chief Elisa Folsom, Councilor Jeff Foote, Councilor and Chair Amanda Grady Sexton, Deputy Fire Chief Mark Hebert, Councilor Fred Keach, Councilor Jennifer Kretovic, Ana McKenna, Deputy Police Chief Barret Moulton, Police Chief Bradley Osgood, Nicole Petrin, Councilor Jim Schlosser, Deputy Police Chief Steven Smagula, Deputy Police Chief John Thomas

Welcome from the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by Councilor & Chair Amanda Grady Sexton.

Introductions

Introductions were made by attending councilors, members, and guests.

Social Media Policy Update – Stefanie Breton, City of Concord Public Information Officer

Stefanie Breton reviewed Concord's social media use policy with the Safety Board, and highlighted the changes that were made as a result of the Public Safety Board's suggestions at the last meeting. The changes reflect the City's ability to disable public comments in certain circumstances.

Councilor Amanda Grady Sexton provided an example that was also brought up at the previous Safety Board meeting, in which disabling social media comments could be a beneficial, especially in cases where people have people created a public safety concern for a victim of a crime by posting sensitive or identifying information about them.

Approval of February 8, 2024 meeting minutes

Motion made by Councilor Keach to approve the February 8, 2024 meeting minutes with the following correction to page 2:

*Chief Osgood mentioned that he would like to add a Police K9 and **an additional social worker** in the future.*

Jennifer Kretovic Seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Update from the Subcommittee on Homelessness

Councilor Kretovic provided the following updates:

- SOAR:



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The Subcommittee is looking at a program called SOAR, which is run by Merrimack County Corrections Facility.

Members from Merrimack County Corrections Facility will be providing a more in-depth presentation to the Subcommittee regarding SOAR. Councilor Kretovic expects that the Subcommittee will report back to the full Safety Board with their findings.

It may also be an option for the members from Merrimack County Corrections Facility to provide the SOAR presentation to the entire Public Safety Board.

- **STATISTICAL DATA PROVIDED BY THE STATE HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM:**

The Subcommittee has been trying to measure the number of homeless persons in Concord. It was noted that Councilor Schlosser has been primarily spearheading this effort to obtain data.

Currently, the Subcommittee has information for Merrimack County, but not for Concord specifically. This information is also very fluid and constantly fluctuating which means that it does not provide a clear picture for Concord, itself.

Additionally, Councilor Kretovic stated that the Subcommittee would like to have the Friends Program come speak to the Subcommittee. This will help to build community partnerships and help to measure the number of homeless persons in Concord.

- **FUNCTIONAL ZERO**

Councilor Kretovic noted that Drew Biemer is currently conducting the research for functional zero and is in the beginning stages of this work.

She also mentioned that Councilor Schlosser is hoping to invite Roseanne Haggerty to speak to the Subcommittee to provide more insight on this topic.

- **THE SAFETY OF CONCORD**

Councilor Kretovic informed the Safety Board about a letter that Councilor Foote received from a Concord citizen who is concerned for safety of Concord due to the homeless crisis. She emphasized the importance of navigating through real and imagined fear, to get to a place where fearfulness is eliminated.

Councilor Amanda Grady Sexton stated that she is hearing from numerous businesses about concerns related to criminal activity and suggested that we invite the Chamber of Commerce to the next meeting to discuss what they are experiencing.

- **AGENDA ITEMS FOR SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING ON APRIL 12th, 2024**

- Continue conversations regarding SOAR
- Functional Zero update
- Coalition to End Homelessness update
- Emergency response data points



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Councilor Grady Sexton asked if there was a timeline for having recommendations that will come back to the entire Public Safety Board. Councilor Kretovic said that it was a work in progress and alluded that there are some data collection issues that may create delays.

Councilor Schlosser asked what will happen when all of the data has been collected. How will the data be used and how will it be helpful for the Public Safety Board?

Councilor Grady Sexton said that it will also be helpful from a public safety standpoint, to know the population of individuals within the homeless community who are committing crimes that generate fear within the community. Additionally, it will be helpful to understand the Fire and Police responses to these individuals.

Drew Biemer mentioned that it would be important to know what constitutes a homeless related call. Chief Chisholm expanded that it is important to define criteria for tracking these calls.

Councilor Keach noted that it would be helpful to identify the different types of homeless individuals. Each subset of people requires a different approach. He also informed the Safety Board that, in his experience while working at the Friendly Kitchen, the homeless individuals causing fear within the public is a small percentage of the homeless population.

Additional concerns were expressed regarding individuals within the homeless population who are creating fear, as well as the handling of garbage and defecation within the homeless community.

Councilor Schlosser recommended that the City provide dumpsters and bathrooms for the homeless. Councilors Grady Sexton and Keach provided some historical background about the City's past efforts to provide trash receptacles and public restrooms. Specifically, that dumpsters were lit on fire and not used for their intended purposes, and that the public restrooms were used for criminal activity and were also pushed over.

Councilor Grady Sexton voiced her concern for duplicating efforts between the Public Safety Board and other organizations and committees within the City that are also focused on managing aspects of the homeless crisis. She suggested that we ask a representative from the Committee for Concord's Plan to End Homelessness come to the next meeting to talk about their work. Councilor Schlosser will reach out to Ms. Haggerty to invite her to a meeting.

Councilor Kretovic communicated her concern for the homeless crisis within the City of Manchester and Manchester's responses to this crisis. She and Councilor Keach noted that Manchester is working hard to reduce criminal activity in their downtown and it's possible that some individuals will move to Concord.

Police Chief Osgood spoke about the fluctuation of the homeless population in Concord, month-to-month. He also touched on the population of homeless individuals that do not want help, as well as the homeless individuals who commit crimes on purpose because they want to be incarcerated.



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The topic of panhandlers was also discussed and how a recent court decision makes the City's ordinance unenforceable.

Nicole Petrin, CPD Social Worker, said that she has had the opportunity to meet with other agencies within the community and do outreach work with them. She will continue to do the same sort of outreach, but will also be doing targeted outreach in encampments and beyond.

Councilor Kretovic asked Nicole Petrin if there was a way to blindly track data on the homeless individuals that Nicole interacts with while doing outreach. Nicole replied that she is tracking data which is specific and pertinent to her role within the Police Department.

Councilor Grady Sexton asked Fire Chief Chisholm and Police Chief Osgood if they have been able to meet with Senator Becky Whitley regarding the homeless crisis in Concord and any state laws that create challenges for municipalities. Chief Osgood mentioned that he met with her once and that they have not had a chance to meet again recently but hopes to meet with her this summer. Councilor Grady Sexton said that Senator Whitley could benefit from hearing about the particular issues that Concord is currently seeing.

There was a question to Mayor Champlin regarding his meeting with other Mayors – Was there any discussion of a regional response to the homeless crisis? Mayor Champlin noted that they have only had two meetings so far and most of the discussion around homelessness has focused on Senate Bill 406.

He continued that they have not spoken specifically about a collective response to the issue of homelessness.

Mayor Champlin mentioned his interest in knowing how the City of Manchester is responding to and handling their own homelessness crisis.

Discussion on planning for Fire Department service level metrics and data collection

Chief Chisholm began by notifying the Public Safety Board that the Fire Department recently switched CAD and Fire Record Management[C1] systems around Halloween 2023. He has spent the last few weeks working with the software's reporting system. He has made decent progress but is not sure that he is at a point where he can say what is possible. Currently, he is working to link the software with ArcGIS's analysis functions as well as heat maps.

He then asked the Safety Board if they could help him define some objective service levels.

Chief Chisholm would also like to confer with the Legal Department regarding the possibility of marking some of these reports as official use only. The sensitive nature of some of these reports has the potential to negatively impact parts of the community if their information is made public.

Councilor Nathan Fennessy suggested he would like to see heat maps with types and volumes of various services provided by the Fire Department.

Chief Chisholm mentioned that he would also like to approach City Administration to create a GIS layer to exhibit planned growth.



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Future Agenda Planning

- The Public Safety Board will begin meeting on the third Thursday of each month in Council Chambers from 3:00pm to 4:30pm.
- The April 18th meeting will include a referral from Council about the safety and location of the North Main Street bus stop.
- Councilor Amanda Grady Sexton will invite Tim Sink from the Chamber of Commerce to speak to the Public Safety Board regarding the public safety concerns of community members at the April Meeting.
- Jim Schlosser will reach out to Roseanne Haggerty about her availability to update the Public Safety Board.
- The Subcommittee on Homelessness will provide a monthly update to the Public Safety Board.
- The Public Safety Board's May agenda will include FPD and CPD annual reports
- The Public Safety Board's June agenda will include an update from the CPD's social worker.

Adjournment

Chief Chisholm sincerely thanked the Public Safety Board for their assistance in securing the PFAS-free gear. He received a call from Bloomberg confirming that the Concord Fire Department appears to be the first fire department in the country to appropriate money to completely outfit their members in PFAS-free gear.

Councilor Fred Keach voiced concern about an ongoing issue centering around hiring a resource officer for the middle school.

Councilor Fred Keach made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Nathan Fennessy seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.