

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

October 19, 2021

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a study session at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Executive Conference Room on the 19th day of October, 2021, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:

Councilmembers Foreman, Hall,
Holman, Lynn, Peacock, Studley,
Mayor Clark

ABSENT:

Councilmembers Schueler and
Tortorello

Item 1, being:

UPDATE FROM THE OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES ON THE 988 CRISIS PROGRAM.

Mr. Jeff Dismukes, Director of Communications with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS), said as far as mobile outreach, staffing is in the process and some positions have been filled. The adult mobile crisis unit's enhanced process has begun and has received approximately 30 to 40 calls per month that include proactive outreach where ODMHSAS Staff goes into the homeless community and different at-risk populations. The children's mobile crisis units receive approximately 30 to 40 calls per month and ODMHSAS expects that number to increase. He said this is typical during the school year because there are more people around an individual who may notice things are not right and ODMHSAS receives a lot of calls from schools utilizing the mobile crisis line. Other calls include working with the at-risk populations on compliance issues, delivering medications, etc., which averages around 200 team responses per month.

Mr. Dismukes said the State is also purchasing iPads for every single law enforcement agency in Oklahoma with a direct link to clinical staff professionals for in-field assessments and consultation. There will also be an expansion of Telehealth services and utilization of technology by the statewide provider system as well as training. The iPads are currently being delivered and are very simple to operate with two buttons, one for a clinician and one for officers (debriefing, advice on situation, officer's stress, etc.).

In July 2022, ODMHSAS is planning to launch a 24/7 operation with licensed and certified mental health crisis specialists with follow-up calls utilizing certified peer recovery support specialists based on a national model, but tailored to Oklahoma. The system will use an easy to remember nationwide number of 988, which will include connection and dispatch to local services and mobile crisis teams, including immediate communication and connection to 911, if needed. One call center will service Oklahoma with the goal of deescalating the caller, getting that caller help as quickly as possible, and diverting from law enforcement or hospitalization.

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Dismukes said the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the 988 Call Center is at the Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services level waiting to be sent out and the goal was to have the RFP out in October so he hopes the State works quickly on putting out that RFP. Once the RFP goes out, the RFP for the 988 Mobile Crisis (statewide) will also go out.

The Crisis Unit will transport the person to the proper facility for treatment or possibly deescalate the situation onsite with no further treatment needed at that time. If the caller needs a higher level of care, free secondary mental health transport will be provided by a third party contractor to the nearest Urgent Recovery or Crisis Center (if facility is more than 30 miles away). He said law enforcement is the only entity at this time that can transport a person more than 30 miles away; however, State Statute changes on November 1st to allow a third party transport service, meeting the goal of diverting that task from law enforcement. Mr. Dismukes said transport service provider contracts should be going out by the end of the month and cities/counties will be given a list of providers and phone numbers.

Mr. Dismukes said prior to 988 Call Center going into effect, people can continue to call the Oklahoma Community Mental Health Center directly. He said 988 will change the way mental health issues are handled and the State will work collaboratively with cities and counties.

Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager, said Ms. Shameika Williams, ODMHSA Director of Children, Youth and Family Services, established the youth crisis program and is working on the adult roll out with Mr. Dismukes. He said Ms. Williams will be hiring the community outreach providers and the City's Communication Officers are now able to reach out to Ms. Williams and the community outreach providers, if needed. The current location of the youth crisis unit is on Gibbs Street, known as the Gibbs House, on Griffin Hospital property and they are moving into a new facility on Griffin Hospital property with the goal (January 2022) of utilizing the Gibbs House for day space available for providing services for the homeless population at large.

Councilmember Lynn asked if patients will be transported back to where they came from once they are released and Mr. Dismukes said yes.

Mr. Dismukes said the Oklahoma County Crisis Intervention Facility has urgent care beds and hospital beds for immediate care for someone in crisis (walk-ins or brought in by family member). He said patients are stabilized, assessed, and transported to the next level of care, if needed.

Mayor Clark thanked Mr. Dismukes for the update.

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Item 2, being:

UPDATE ON POLICE DEPARTMENT REORGANIZATION.

Mr. Kevin Foster, Police Chief, said the Norman Police Department (NPD) is moving the Uniform Support Division within the organizational chart into personnel and training in the Planning and Logistics area, which will be a separate bureau. The Animal Welfare Division will be moved to

Item 2, continued:

the Support Division. He said a Community and Staff Services Bureau is being created to include personnel/training and community outreach. He said School Resource Officers (SROs) are a great asset for youth crisis issues and will be placed under the Community Outreach Division. He said the Community Outreach Division will be going into the community to identify problems and work with the community to address those problems.

Chief Foster said fire calls have also increased due to carelessness in homeless camp fire pits.

Captain Stacey Clement, Uniform Support Division, said the City of Norman has had some challenging times that includes staffing challenges at NPD. She said there has been a significant reduction in proactive policing in 2021 and there has been an 11% increase in crimes against people and felonies, 19% increase in aggravated assaults, 11% increase in larceny, and 50% increase in auto thefts. She said 2020 was the deadliest year in several decades for vehicle accidents resulting in serious injury or death.

Captain Clement said as far as outreach, the Traffic Unit will handle education, social media, and enforcement. The Proactive Unit will be working with the community to identify and solve problems, and there will be intelligence based directing of resources to the few who commit the majority of serial crimes. She said the Proactive Unit will not be responding to calls for service as it is a problem solving unit.

In 2018, NPD had 532 contacts regarding homeless activities; in 2019, there were 868 contacts; in 2020 there were 1,368; and in 2021, there has been 1,638 to date. Chief Foster said the number could be higher because Staff only searched for the word homeless so these numbers are based on that search. He said some officers may not have used the word "homeless" in their report, but did have contact about homeless issues.

Captain Clement said it is not a crime to be homeless or mentally ill, but there is a criminal element victimizing this population and increasing the number of contacts. The Proactive Unit will focus on criminal behavior and work with residents and businesses to address safety and quality of life concerns.

Councilmember Lynn asked what NPD needed from Council to make things happen and make Norman the safest City as possible and Chief Foster said he would like the nine positions cut from the budget in FYE 2020 to be reinstated in the budget. He would like to add more officers to Captain Clement's response unit that would be more proactive in problematic areas of the community and help address the problems more precisely.

Mr. Pyle said Staff obtained some pricing on the "van type" vehicle Councilmember Studley had described in previous meetings to help with homeless issues and it would cost approximately \$160,000 for one Americans with Disabilities (ADA) vehicle. He said a van could be acquired with some of the money Council allocated for a crisis unit and a citizen's committee should be formed to decide who will operate the vehicle, how it would be operated, how it would be dispatched, etc.

Item 2, continued:

Councilmember Holman said he is interested in funding the Community Outreach Division.

Councilmember Studley said Food and Shelter for Friends has a day shelter, but not everyone that is homeless wants to go there for various reasons. She asked if it would help to open the City's warming shelter 24/7 to alleviate some of the homeless problems and Chief Foster said if the homeless is willing to go to a shelter it might help, especially if there were services available for health care or drug/alcohol treatment. Mr. Pyle said the Gibbs House, once open, will provide those types of services and shelter to the homeless, which should alleviate some of the issues with the homeless population.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint entitled, "Norman Police Department RE-organization"

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The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

ATTEST:



City Clerk



Mayor Pro Tem

