

TUMWATER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

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CONVENE: 8:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Chair Leatta Dahlhoff and Councilmembers Peter Agabi and Angela Jefferson.

Staff: City Administrator John Doan, Police Chief Jon Weiks, Fire Chief Brian Hurley, Police Commander Jay Mason, Assistant Fire Chief Shawn Crimmins, Police Lieutenant Carlos Quiles Jr., Management Analyst Oliver Bowers, and Police Administrative Services Manager Laura Wohl.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: There were no changes to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
PUBLIC HEALTH &
SAFETY COMMITTEE,
APRIL 12, 2022:**

MOTION: **Councilmember Jefferson moved, seconded by Councilmember Agabi, to approve the minutes of April 12, 2022 as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

BLS TRANSPORT AND FD CARES: Fire Chief Hurley introduced Olympia Fire Department (OFD) Deputy Chief Todd Carson and Assistant Fire Chief Mike Buchanan to provide information on the status of OFD's proposed Basic Life Support (BLS) Transport and FD CARES programs. Over the last several years, the region has struggled to provide BLS transport because of the lack of available ambulances creating a need to examine how BLS transport is delivered in Thurston County. Additionally, the country is experiencing more requests to provide alternative ways to respond to 911 emergencies in response to frequent callers or incidents involving mental health or behavioral health issues that could be handled more efficiently than by an emergency response with a fire engine.

Deputy Chief Carson described recent efforts to develop the proposal. Through discussions by the Regional Fire Authority (RFA) Planning Committee, Tumwater Fire Department could also become a beneficiary of the new innovative programs moving forward.

Assistant Fire Chief Buchanan described the components of the BLS Transport Program, CARES Program, and the financial analysis prepared by a consultant documenting program costs and the ability to fund the programs utilizing GEMT (Ground

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Emergency Medical Transport) and private medical insurance funding.

Assistant Fire Chief Buchanan explained how 911 medical calls are categorized as either (BLS) or advanced life support (ALS) calls. Typically, transports for ALS calls are handled by the Thurston County Medic One system with private ambulances handling BLS calls. The region has experienced a decreased level of response from private ambulance services creating issues in providing a timely response.

Data from April 2021 to April 2022 from Olympia's private ambulance provider, AMR, documents information on the percentage of calls, call delay, or lack of response. Of the average monthly BLS transports per month, nearly one-third were delayed or AMR was unavailable to provide service. The Olympia Fire Department has met with AMR to review concerns. AMR acknowledged the issues and implemented some steps for improving the level of response. However, success has been limited. Over the last year, the company was unable to reverse results resulting in an ongoing problem. The problem is not specific to the City of Olympia and has been encountered by the other cities as well.

In response to questions regarding weather affecting response levels, Assistant Fire Chief Buchanan acknowledged environmental factors can influence response; however the data period reflects no severe weather conditions experienced in the region.

Assistant Fire Chief Buchanan reviewed information on the impacts caused by the delay in response. In 2017, the fire department responded to 90% of all calls in 9.25 minutes or less. Each year, response time has increased to today's response time of 10.37 minutes. The national standard for response is 6 minutes or less.

In 2000, the City of Olympia experienced a volume of 6,400 calls a year. In 2019, prior to the pandemic, the City experienced a call volume of 14,000 calls. In 2021, call volume decreased to 13,000 with 2022 calls continuing to increase based on demand for emergency services through 911.

The proposed response model includes two BLS units based at Station 1 in downtown Olympia and at Station 2 in west Olympia. The units would serve as the primary response for BLS calls providing more capacity in the system, relieving runs from the

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engine company to increase capacity for fire calls and second level medical calls, strengthen the overall system, increase capacity, and reduce response times. Additionally, the units would provide mutual aid to all mutual aid partners.

Assistant Fire Chief Buchanan explained that CARES is the acronym for Citizen Advocate for Referral and Education Services. CARES is an alternative to 911 for low-acuity calls and focuses on the vulnerable population who repeatedly use 911 for either social or daily life services. Following identification of a patient with needs for additional support and resources, a referral is prepared and the individual becomes a client for completion of an assessment to determine needs for connecting to existing social services and programs. Currently, the OFD has one .25 FTE CARES specialist working 10 hours a week. Once contact occurs with a client, the impact reduces calls to the 911 system by approximately 76% by that client. The CARES coordinator is able to work with 300 clients each year.

Benefits of the CARES program include reduced 911 calls, reduction in EMS encounters, reduced transports to hospitals, and fewer hospital admissions.

Assistant Fire Chief Buchanan reviewed the financial analysis presented to the Olympia City Council documenting the financial feasibility and the benefits of a two-unit program. The financial analysis identifies revenue sources and anticipated service requirements during the first five years of the program. By 2033, revenue sources would be sufficient to cover the annual program and contribute to the payment of the initial investment of approximately \$4 million to launch the program.

Chair Dahlhoff asked whether the financial information for future service would be included within the RFA Plan. Deputy Fire Chief Carson affirmed the information would be included in the RFA's financial model.

Fire Chief Hurley added that Tumwater has contracted with the same consultant to collect data for the department to determine program costs for Transport and FD CARES programs as a stand-alone program and as part of the RFA. Tumwater's primary ambulance provider is Olympic Ambulance. The fire department's circumstances are different than Olympia's; however, the intent is to complete a similar analysis to examine potential future service in Tumwater.

Assistant Fire Chief Buchanan reported the Thurston County

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Medic One Operations Group conveyed support for moving forward with the proposal recognizing the value of the programs to the overall EMS system.

Fire Chief Hurley noted the proposal is included on the Thurston County EMS Council's agenda as well.

THURSTON COUNTY YOUTH MARIJUANA PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAM UPDATE:

Janine Koffel, Tumwater HOPES Coalition Coordinator, Thurston County Public Health & Social Services, updated members on the status of efforts on the *Secure Your Cannabis* promotion launched with Tumwater HOPES, the Thurston County Youth Marijuana Prevention Education Program, and Tumwater cannabis retailers to reduce access to marijuana by children and teens. Following recent conversations with a local cannabis retailer that recently experienced a robbery, it points to the importance of a community with a lower crime rate during a time when the state is experiencing an increase in armed robberies of cannabis retailers and the death of an employee. She cited recent efforts by the City of Seattle and King County to form a team to begin examining measures law enforcement and cannabis retailers could pursue to increase safety for both customers and employees.

Chair Dahlhoff inquired as to the connection between security of cannabis retailers with educational efforts to prevent the use of marijuana by children and teens. Ms. Koffel explained that the security of cannabis retailers is an important part of youth prevention of substance use. When an area experiences a higher rate of criminal activity, there tends to be other kinds of criminal activity, i.e., vandalism, shoplifting, drug use, and drug sales, etc. The goal is to prevent criminal activities as quickly as possible while supporting legal and legitimate businesses that are stakeholders in the community's health and well-being. Cannabis retailers support the promotion of the *Secure Your Cannabis* campaign to protect youth, as well learning about potential solutions for securing the safety of adults who work at their retail locations and for customers who might be present during a robbery. She expressed interest in learning whether the City's increase in law enforcement presence by patrolling would contribute to some of the solutions.

Police Commander Mason offered to pursue a conversation offline as it speaks to other businesses in the City facing similar risks. Ms. Koffel accepted the offer.

Ms. Koffel reported Tumwater HOPES Coalition is scheduled to review and discuss results of the Healthy Youth Survey. Of

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interest to the committee are the results of data from students who have never participated in the survey. Typically, the survey is conducted every even year. Survey results reflect a significant decrease in reported substance use for all grade levels. Unfortunately, in Thurston County, survey results reflect an increase in declining mental health underscoring the importance of creating post-social opportunities for families and youth to reconnect with the community. Efforts moving forward include seeking opportunities in a variety of partnerships to draw the community together and reestablish relational bonds and reinforce expectations on how a vibrant community is an active and engaged community. She invited the committee to consider City events that might not represent an obvious opportunity for participation by the coalition and consider the coalition as a resource for marketing and engaging youth and families.

Chair Dahlhoff asked whether the coalition would be represented at an upcoming Tumwater Principals' Emergency Fund event. Councilmember Swarthout is one of the organizers of the event.

City Administrator Doan shared information on the event hosted by the Tumwater Education Foundation. The event, *Tumwater Supports Students Spring Reception* is scheduled on Wednesday, June 15, 2022 at Heritage Distilling Co. in Tumwater from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Ms. Koffel advised that she would follow-up with Councilmember Swarthout as they are scheduled to meet for coffee.

Chair Dahlhoff asked about the status of recruitment efforts to expand representation within the coalition. Ms. Koffel explained that a membership event was sponsored in May attracting three teen members who are actively engaged and who attended the Youth Retreat on June 1, 2022. Fourteen youths participated in the retreat at Camp Solomon Schechter in Tumwater. Expanding adult membership has been more difficult. The coalition is currently in the process of reorganizing and reworking its strategic action plan with a review of all data resources available for 2021 and 2022 to help identify needs and opportunities. The coalition currently lacks representation by businesses, faith organizations, media, parents, and youth.

The committee encouraged Ms. Koffel to contact other community organizations following the completion of the coalition's strategic planning process. Ms. Koffel thanked members for their feedback and shared that the current reorganizing efforts provide an opportunity for the community to reshape the organization to meet future needs as the existing

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action plan was developed for a community that does not currently exist because it was based on a pre-pandemic environment.

2021 POLICE USE OF FORCE:

Councilmember Agabi requested scheduling a briefing on the Police Department's response and planning efforts to prevent school shootings.

Police Chief Weiks reported the briefing is a follow-up on a request to review the department's annual use of force incidents.

Police Commander Mason reported in 2016, the Tumwater Police Department embarked on efforts to examine and understand data surrounding use of force incidents. Each instance of use of force is documented and reviewed by the Police Commander. Use of force is considered for Level 1 incidents (hands on – moving or guiding) to deadly force. The department also captures information on any deployment of firearms. Level 1 incidents and firearms deployed at low ready are administratively reviewed by him with appropriate action as necessary. Level 2 incidents involving strikes, hits, kicks, and less lethal tools are referred to the Use of Force Board. He chairs the Board comprised of other members. The Board reviews incidents and policy procedures and renders a determination that is forwarded to the Police Chief. Each incident is individually reviewed.

In 2016, the department contracted with Police Strategies. The department currently has eight years of data. This year, the department hired Dr. Oliver Bowers, the department's Management Analyst. Dr. Bowers graduated last year from Washington State University with a PhD in criminal justice and criminology.

Dr. Bowers reported he is an empirical researcher specializing in data collection with a focus on mixed methodological research and advanced methodologies. He serves as the Management Analyst for the Police Department and has been researching existing data to identify emerging trends and patterns. His specialty is the intersection of police and technology, as well as criminology theory. The current data system documenting use of force incidents balances the force used with existing legal standards of objective reasonableness to enable analysis. The data realistically documents whether force was necessary or excessive based on reasonable standards. There are many complexities and intricacies in the massive data system enabling analysis of eight years of data to document short- and long-term trends and changes. The system enables exploration, such as the

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nature of events, suspects, locations, types of force used, level of resistance, and other elements of an incident documented within police reports. Data are drawn from use of force police reports and incident reports containing officer narratives, which is considered qualitative data. Data are quantified through the system through the application of up to 150 data points identifying individual factors to enable the quantification of data to review objectively. The extraction of information is an enormous process but enables the creation of interactive dashboards with information on all details associated with an incident to enable further analysis of the data to identify trends and consider necessary training and to explore commonalities, etc.

Police Commander Mason displayed the dashboard with individual datasets. He invited members to visit him individually to review specific details of information contained within the dashboard. He described the major components of data comprising the dashboard. Over the years, the number of use of force incidents were consistent with 2021 incidents dropping significantly reflecting only 13 incidents involving use of force.

Police Commander Mason shared and described several 2021 use of force incidents. In early 2021, the Blake decision decriminalized the possession of narcotics, which affected the department. The July 2021 police legislation on procedures and police actions affected responses by officers.

Chair Dahlhoff asked whether the system could enable querying data to determine whether the CARES Program would have resulted in fewer use of force incidents as those incidents would have been referred to a case specialist rather than to the police. Police Commander Mason replied that it likely would be possible but that it would be much more complex. He cited an example of a use of force incident involving the involuntary committal of an individual experiencing a mental health crisis who was at risk. The officers spent considerable time with the individual and notified medics and medical personnel to assist. As a group, police and medical personnel determined the best option was ensuring the individual was transported to the hospital for an involuntary committal. The officers used low-level force to place the individual on the gurney while medical personnel secured the individual. Eliminating the presence of police from that scenario would have entailed a subjective decision. It may have been possible to convince the individual of the need to seek medical assistance at some point, but in that instance, the officers spent considerable time trying to convince the individual to seek help.

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In those situations, it was necessary for police to be on scene to assist in making the transport. Mental health is also a significant component in many contacts with people and in use of force incidents. Any improvements in the mental health system and response would also reduce the number of use of force incidents.

Chair Dahlhoff asked whether the use of force reports enable documentation, such as substance use disorder or mental health issues to correlate the need with police response in order to provide services. Police Commander Mason said it is possible to track information if incidents are specifically related to mental health or if a substance abuse incident is occurring at that moment. Additionally, there could be historical information pertaining to the individual. Police officers include that type of information based on knowledge during the event.

Councilmember Jefferson inquired as to whether police engagement with the community has changed since passage of police reform legislation. Police Commander Mason described the situation as a “yes” and “no” response as officers continue to work within the community with recognition of the pandemic and recent changes in laws. In many jurisdictions, law enforcement refuse to make contact with individuals with outstanding arrest warrants. Unless it is possible to make a physical arrest, many officers elect not to make contact with those individuals. In those situations, there may be less contact with the public.

Police Commander Mason explained how the system quantifies use of force by converting incidents to numbers to enable graphing of data to highlight trends and other pertinent data. He noted that not all law enforcement agencies have historically reported the use of force at the same level. The state recognized those challenges and passed legislation in 2021 mandating all departments to implement use of force reporting levels. The Attorney General’s Office is developing a dashboard of information for communities.

Police Commander Mason reviewed 2021 use of force incidents reflecting no lethal tools deployed or lethal force incidents last year.

Dr. Bowers responded to a question about trends occurring in 2021 explaining that approximately 15% of the subjects were from Tumwater with the other 85% of subjects not from Tumwater. Many of the contacts included a significant component of mental illness. Councilmember Jefferson requested inclusion of that type of information within the police

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report to the community and for the committee.

Police Chief Weiks acknowledged that the department has recognized that the amount of data can be overwhelming. The department is working on improving clarity of data.

Police Commander Mason described the details of four low level use of force incidents.

Chair Dahlhoff encouraged members to forward any comments or questions directly to staff.

FIRST AMENDMENT TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LERMS):

Police Chief Weiks reported the proposal is the first amendment to the Intergovernmental Agreement for Law Enforcement Records Management System (LERMS) to enable the inclusion of the Thurston County Sheriff's Office within LERMS. In 2009, all cities in Thurston County created a consortium to maintain one records management system in the law enforcement community in Thurston County. At that time, the Sheriff's Office was unable to secure funding to participate. The records management system is due for replacement and the Sheriff's Office has secured funding to participate. The proposal amendment is to the current LERMS consortium contract to add Thurston County Sheriff's Office for the new system. By adding Thurston County, all cities benefit as it reduces the cost by nearly 50% reducing the City's cost share from 17.21% to approximately 8.7%. He asked the committee to authorize staff to move the First Amendment to the LERMS Agreement to the City Council for approval.

MOTION:

Councilmember Agabi moved, seconded by Councilmember Jefferson, to move the First Amendment to the LERMS Agreement to the City Council for approval. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled on July 12, 2022 at 8 a.m. Members discussed the request to schedule a briefing on the Police Department's preparedness and planning in the event of a school shooting. Members asked to include the briefing on the July meeting agenda.

ADJOURNMENT:

With there being no further business, Chair Dahlhoff adjourned the meeting at 9:29 a.m.