



Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee Minutes

Tuesday, June 14, 5:30pm, Remote Meeting

Committee Attendance: Tae Chong, Chair (District 3), Anna Trevorow (District 1), & Mark Dion (District 5).

Councilors in Attendance:

City Staff:

Tina Pettingill, Deputy Director of HHS; Adam Harr, Executive Assistant for Social Services. Keith Gautreau, Fire Chief; Bridget Rauscher, Chronic Disease Prevention Program Manager; & Heath Gorham, Interim Police Chief; Aaron Geyer, Social Services Director.

Invited Guest:

Mathew Jarrell Cumberland County HUB Coordinator

Meeting called to order at 5:33 PM.

Announcements

- Councilor Pelletier is unable to attend the meeting.
- Councilor Dion moved to accept the minutes; Councilor Trevorow seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Agenda: HHS Updates

- Councilor Chong asked about the increase in Narcan.
 - The other sanctioned exchange is closed so our numbers are increasing as we serve clients who accessed serviced at that exchange.
 - We are tier 1 distributor serving a wide area; part of the increase is making Narcan available to businesses.

Mathew Jarrel, Cumberland Country Homeless Services Hub Coordinator

- United Way of Southern May hired the coordinator.
- 9 Hub coordinators throughout Maine to inform a new model of homeless services.
- Goal to make homelessness rare, brief, and one time.
- Hub Coordinators are compiling a comprehensive by-name list of everyone experiencing homelessness in Maine.
 - Portland has a head start in this.
- Still have gaps in data.
 - People who are unsheltered or transient/not connected to resources and shelters.
 - Undocumented homelessness.
- Looking to work with anyone involved in this work:

Committee questions and discussion.

- What is the difference between this and ESAC?
 - ESAC is more advocacy and information sharing.
 - It is not by-name lists or client level.
 - The Hub task is to document data and revamp the model targeting recourses.
 - Able to deduplicate people who move between shelter locations.
- Councilor Dion asked about shelter resistance and encampments; Will Mathew be able to meet with department heads such as Parks and Rec, PD, and HHS on encampments?
- Is Huston Texas a tier 1 city in terms of asylum seekers, how do the support asylum seekers in addition to other homeless populations.
 - Not sure on their tier 1 status, but asylum seekers from Huston have sought shelter here.
 - Director Geyer will discuss families and singles with the Hub Coordinator.

Dispatch Update

- Staffing struggles continue.
- Alex Mumford came on as director from the Royal Airforce with experience in IT and communications.
- Current staffing is authorized at 37 with 14 vacancies.
- Training police officers to become dispatchers to be able to take overtime shifts.
- Replaced HVAC system as the temp fluctuated from 60 to 85 degrees.
- Bids close on Fridays for renovations: \$100,000 from CIP.
- Reached a tentative agreement with the communications union heading to a final vote of ratification. This will improve the ability to recruit and retain employees.
- Lessening burden on dispatch by having officers run plates on their mobile terminals.

Committee questions and discussion.

- Can we use ARPA money to help?

- The challenge is the ability to recruit and retain; we aren't getting the number of applicants needed. The union contract will help make us competitive with the rest of the state.
- Councilor Dion said the building opened in the early 70s and its design is unrecognizable in today's footprint. After multiple renovations the space doesn't make sense and we need a new public safety center building.
 - We need to consider more consolidation across the state to maximize our human resources.
 - Councilor Chong said we should do an analysis on a new Public Safety Center.
 - Send a memo to the City Manager requesting a history of the building and how much money has been spent remodeling.
 - A lot of this work may already have been done under City Manager Jennings.
- Due to being down 14 positions, there is money to make changes.
- Alex is proving to be the right choice.
- We are down dispatchers and short staffed across first responders who are taking overtime covering multiple positions.

Active Shooter Policy

- Chief Gorham explained the history of the law enforcement response
 - Procedure was for initial officer on scene to set up a perimeter and wait for tactical units to arrive.
 - Proved ineffective in Columbine.
 - First 4 officer enter.
 - As soon as first responders engage an active shooter they stop shooting people to focus on the officers, turn the gun on themselves, or give up.
- Currently engage the shooter as soon as possible.
- Low frequency, high risk and is trained for:
 - 2018 – Active shooter training with surrounding communities.
 - 2019 - Deering High School Law Enforcement Active Shooter Emergency Response Training (LASER) from FEMA
 - Large training is scheduled in July; PD will train Fire how to navigate the scene.
- Spoke with the School Superintendent Becerra to go over emergency plans.

Committee questions and discussion.

- Councilor Dion asked if we have a fully devolved media policy managing the conversation among fire and police; he would like an addendum on how the media is handled.
 - There seems to be some missteps in recent events on the part of the government that has hurt public trust.

- o He would like mental health support for the collateral victims, such as parents of victims.
 - o Police policy conversations are usually abstract; he would like policy makers on the Council to observe trainings, present on-site.
 - The police citizen review subcommittee has done this but Covid has stymied this with a recent ramping back up.
 - Will broaden scope to the entire Council.
- Chief Gautreau sees similarities with Fire's tri-annual exercise at the Jetport where the area that could be improved is the family center.
 - o Fire will support Police developing the family center where information can be shared.
 - o We work with Communications Director, Jessica Grondin, on sharing information appropriately and not too late.
 - o The drill at Deering went very well and he feels comparable that we would be capable to respond to this type of situation.
- Councilor Chong said we heard about response and rebuilding.
 - o The response SOPs make sense.
 - o We don't have much for rebuilding.
 - Can we create a family center policy?
 - A policy for grieving and counseling from victims' advocates and social workers?
 - o What can the City do on prevention and increase safety?
 - Would like to share the preventive work with the public.
 - Gun violence is the leading cause of death for children and Public Health is working on assessing gaps in what can be done to prevent gun violence.
- Councilor Trevarrow said as city officials, we want to protect our community and it is helpful knowing our plans for response.
 - o The School board did a policy response update with behavioral supports.
 - We should invite the schools in these policy discussions.
- Deputy Director Pettingill said they are looking at gun violence as a leading cause of death and what can be done for prevention.
- Councilor Dion would like Public Health, Police, and Fire discuss family centers.
 - o There are violent crime events in Portland and those families' needs support even at the much smaller scale we see locally.

Action Items

- School policy around prevention response and rebuilding.
 - o Public Health perspective on prevention.
 - o PD to work with the schools on what are we doing and not doing.
 - o HHS&PS Committee to come up with policies to fill any gaps identified.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:35 PM.