

October 7, 2020

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Paula Boggs Muething, Interim City Manager

Subject: Alternatives to Traditional Policing Roles

202001819

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REFERENCE DOCUMENT # 202000777

On June 16, 2020, the Budget and Finance Committee referred the following for a report:

MOTION, dated 06/16/2020, submitted by Councilmember Mann, WE MOVE that the city set aside \$5 million in the budget for fiscal year 2021 to fund new alternatives to traditional policing roles. WE FURTHER MOVE that the administration report to Council monthly on its progress and that it propose initial action steps, including renewed focus on the Collaborative Refresh process, before six months has elapsed. (STATEMENT ATTACHED)

The following report proposes greater utilization of partner agency advocates and social workers, provided by the Hamilton County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board (HCMHRSB), Women Helping Women (WHW) and the Victims Assistance Liaison Unit/Cincinnati Citizens Respect Our Witnesses Program (VALU/CCROW) to work side-by-side with police officers as an alternative to traditional policing.

**MOBILE CRISIS TEAM**

Since 2001, HCMHRSB and the Cincinnati Police Department (CPD) have collaborated in the dispatch and utilization of a Mobile Crisis Team (MCT). This team is comprised of licensed independent social workers who provide emergency psychiatric evaluations and provider consultation to CPD. MCT social workers are currently assigned permanently to Districts One, Three, and Five and primarily work Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Under these current staffing levels, from January 1, 2020, to June 30, 2020, the MCT jointly responded with police on 443 occasions.

The attached 3-year budget proposal by the Hamilton County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board expands the availability of the MCT to all five CPD districts staffed 24 hours a day for seven days a week and suggests partnering a MCT social worker with a trained officer on 2<sup>nd</sup> shift, ensuring the safety of the MCT social worker. Additionally, this proposal includes the cost of adding MCT social workers to the City's 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Center to triage mental health calls, provide phone intervention, de-escalation, information and referral, and/or needed mental health information from medical records at Cincinnati University Hospitals to the MCT social worker and police officer responding in the field.

The attached 3-year budget proposal by HCMHRSB adds 10.6 FTEs to the MCT at \$1,022,851 annually. The HCMHRSB has indicated to the Administration that they are willing to pay the \$29k annual administrative fee associated with the program, provided that they are the assigned fiduciary agent. The HCMHRSB has also indicated to the Administration that they are willing to work with the City on a right-size staffing solution based on available resources. CPD recommends phasing in the program over three years and assessing the effectiveness.

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM**

In 2018, with funds from the Ohio Attorney General's Office, CPD began partnering with Women Helping Women to form a Domestic Violence Emergency Response Team (DVERT). DVERT is comprised of trained advocates who are called to the scene of domestic violence and sexual assault crimes. They provide around-the-clock, on-site support, resources, and options to the victim. Use of DVERT is driven by a screening tool designed to engage this resource when it may be most helpful. CPD initially secures the crime scene then contacts WHW to have an advocate on site within the hour to focus on the needs of the survivor and any dependents.

Historically, WHW has administered the DVERT program at no cost to the City thanks to the contributions of private donors and portions of the State Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant. However, in 2020 WHW received notice that 36% of their VOCA funding would be cut. On September 30, 2020, Cincinnati City Council passed Ordinance No. 0333-2020, authorizing \$250k of the \$1m included in the Approved FY 2021 Budget Update for the Community Safety Response Program to go to WHW for the DVERT program. This allocation enables WHW to both retain current staffing and better respond to any rise in domestic violence and sexual assault calls.

### **CRIME VICTIM SUPPORT**

In 2017, CPD launched the Victims Assistance Liaison Unit/Cincinnati Citizens Respect Our Witnesses Program, (VALU/CCROW). This program initiated out of a Homicide Survivors Youth Group and in 2018 won a Promising Practice Award from the Ohio Attorney General's Office. In 2019, VALU/CCROW created an Emmy Nominated documentary entitled, "Shoot This, Not That." Staff within the CCROW program are independent licensed social workers who respond to the scene of homicides or other violent crimes and provide crisis intervention, victim advocacy, referrals, and case management. If the surviving victims or direct victims are seen at a hospital rather than on site, VALU/CCROW will make initial contact within 24 hours of a crime. The witness assistance program housed within VALU/CCROW ensures witnesses to violent crimes are supported through an array of services. In 2019, the program assisted 256 people through emergency relocation, transportation, telecommunication assistance, panic alarms, crisis intervention, therapy, and case management.

To ensure that all victims to all crimes have this program as a resource, CPD proposes \$250k of the Community Safety Response Program to go VALU/CCROW. These additional dollars will support a second case manager and ensure that program resources, such as emergency relocation or transportation services, are readily available when needed.

### **SUMMARY**

Each of the proposed programs within this report adds value to alternative policing strategies. With Women Helping Women receiving \$250k of the \$1m included in the Approved FY 2021 Budget Update for the Community Safety Response Program, the Administration proposes that the remaining balance be allocated to expand both the VALU/CCROW program and the MCT. With the VALU/CCROW program receiving \$250k, the HCMHRSB would receive \$500k for expansion of the MCT. CPD supports HCMHRSB's proposal of staffing social workers at the 9-1-1 Emergency

Communications Center and would propose utilization of a citywide MCT deployment model on 3<sup>rd</sup> shift versus staffing all five districts 3<sup>rd</sup> shift, to save costs. As indicated, the HCMHRSB is willing to work with the City on a right-size staffing solution, based on available funding, to meet the City's request for 24/7 MCT coverage.

In addition to the Community Safety Response Program, CPD continues to seek grant opportunities to fund new approaches in social intervention strategies. For example, this year CPD successfully received a 3-year budget of \$150k from the Ohio Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, to hire an advocate for individuals with dementia and developmental disabilities. The position, preferably filled by a licensed social worker, will be assigned to work a flexible twenty to thirty-hour workweek and will assist in the response to calls involving missing individuals with dementia or developmental disabilities. The position will also assist in the identification and instruction of specialized training for first responders and act as a liaison to partner organizations as needed.

In summary, CPD has a long history of working with partner agencies, such as the Hamilton County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board and Women Helping Women to have social workers and victim advocates work side-by-side with police officers. Each of the programs described in this report has become a necessary aspect of community policing and expanding these programs only further improves the outcomes in people's lives.

## ATTACHMENT

cc: Chief Elliot Isaac, Cincinnati Police