

Broome County
Police Review Taskforce

Location: Zoom Video Conference Meeting

Date: January 26, 2021

Time: 1:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Meeting Called to Order 1:02 p.m.

Members Present: Kevin McManus, Sammy Davis, Michael Baker, Sandra Felton, Kathleen Newcomb, Amber Jennings, Mike Korchack, Scott Baker, Nancy Williams, Kim Myers, Mario Williams

Members Absent: Colleen Wagner

Others: Mike Hatch, Mike Tanzini, Terry Carey

Previous Meeting Minutes Approved

Guest Speaker: Mike Hatch, Director of Crisis Service, Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier (MHAST)

Presentation and Conversation about Mental Health Assistance in Law Enforcement

(See attached presentation:)



MHAST CHARTS
FOR 0126 TASKFORC

With a crisis intervention team, it would enable us to obtain resources to revert calls from the police to a mental health response team. Our goal is to provide first responders and police with tools on how to communicate and talk to people in crisis. In 2015 we did mapping to look at crisis and in most cases law enforcement was our only resources.

As of right now, we have one clinical social worker and we want to get one more. We now have the money to do that. Every team calls into 911 every a.m. so law enforcement knows when they are working and can be available.

Individuals and families can also call for the services themselves and someone will go see them.

One of the issues we have is finding experienced people for this, which makes workforce an issue.

There is no charge to our partners for any of the training we do. Johnson City is in the process of working with the pledge. We have also partnered with Broome County 911. Broome County is ahead of the game.

This unit could be a source of diversion and keep officers in their zone while sending the mental health car to the problem. It is being done in other places and working out well.

If this is something the county would be interested in, we could come up with a way to try and make it happen as a community.

Question & Answer:

- 1. Scott Baker:** Are there any ways to get other law enforcement agencies to utilize your service? There were some troopers signed up but got pulled and weren't able to attend. Is your service capable of billing Medicaid for their service?

Mike Hatch: Yes, if they are a billable service.

- 2. Sgt. Davis:** After a complaint, how much follow up does a person have to do?

Mike Hatch: It is on a case by case basis. Sometimes the clinician comes back after 6 hours and they have 14 days to follow-up with that person. Keep in mind, we have many great services in Broome County, make sure your officers know of all the services offered to them.

- 3. Kim Myers:** Re: Cost savings, it is clear the cost savings is significant, but it's the right thing to do for the individual. Also, is there a cost calculated out when a law enforcement answers a call, and they have to arraign the person until they find out its a mental health issue?

Mike Hatch: I know there are studies on the national level, but not sure if there is anything locally. Law enforcement has been the ones assigned to having to go to these calls over the years. There are two thousand mental health calls in Broome County a year. A lot of these calls really don't need law enforcement to go to them. Some of the calls for these people can be traumatizing to the individual and that is why it is important to meet the person where they are at, stabilize them and get law enforcement back out there.

- 4. Amber Jennings:** What are the qualifications needed for a social worker to be on the team?

Mike Hatch: There are criteria in order to be qualified for this position. For instance, there is a need for social workers and it's a very unique skill set when you have to deal with trauma or someone with mental health issues. They also have to engage with them in different types of environments and that situation is not always good.

5. **Mike Korchack:** You are talking about cases where there is no crime committed, right? Is there any way to coordinate with the ones that have been arrested and you find out that they have mental health issues?

Mike Hatch: There is bail reform, but often the people go back into the same bad situations. I have not reached out to the senate at this time. There are so many cuts right now and no one has the funding.

Sergeant Davis: Usually the officer is the one to look out for the person that is in crisis and to also keep the clinician safe.

6. **Scott Baker:** For the ratio numbers, was it one officer and one mental health provider, and how many hours is this for?

Mike Hatch: It would be an 8-hour shift for right now to see what is working and what isn't. We are aware there are going to be issues to work out as there are with any new programs. There are many models out there that are active and live. One of the best is in Texas, there are 35 police officers designated, that are trained to do the mental health calls and that is all they do.

Kevin McManus: It gives us a lot of things to think about and discuss.

Kevin McManus: Are there any other objectives or strategies that you would like to discuss?

Amber Jennings: I brought this up in another meeting, to at least look at the role for a liaison with police and wondered if that position could be expanded or maybe create a second position so they could help take on some of the responsibilities.

Kevin McManus: Captain Newcomb and I discussed the uniqueness of our area. Given our geographic location, does the NYC and Canadian border drug trafficking issue affect our policing and our relationships with citizens and police? If so, are there any things we can do to address this situation?

Captain Newcomb: This area does have a high amount of drugs.

Kevin McManus: At any given point in time, any of these people could possibly be bad for our area.

Mike Baker: There was just someone caught with a good amount of meth coming through. We are a major pipeline in our area because of all the highways around us.

Kevin McManus Meeting Closing/Look Ahead to Next Meeting:

On February 10th we will publish the public hearing date. Then we will do the public hearing on February 16th. That will give us until February 23rd to incorporate any recommendations from the final hearing.

1. Review current recommendations for consideration for final draft report
 1. Identify proven strategies to recruit more minority candidates for the law enforcement profession for the BCSO
 2. Identify proven strategies to fund mental health issues in our community to assist law enforcement at the BCSO
 3. Identify and strategize ways to educate the public on the positive things that the BCSO does in the community
 4. Identify strategies to allow for opportunities to assist those arrested to receive treatment for drug and alcohol addiction
 5. Identify and implement program to provide Civil Service Testing Training Opportunities in Broome County
2. Discussion of additional suggestions for recommendations for the draft report
3. Open Discussion not limited to the following questions for the panel:
 - When it comes to the police reform initiative, what can we as Broome County government do better?

Next Meeting: 2/2/21 at 1:00 p.m.

MEETING ADJOURNED 2:05 p.m.