



POLICE REVIEW & ADVISORY BOARD

A Department of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Minutes from the Meeting of October 25, 2023

Board Members present: Chair Alexandra Fallon, Maria Arlotto, Brendan Koscher, Beverly Sealey

City Staff present: Executive Director Brian Corr; CPD Director of Professional Standards, Training and Certification James Mulcahy; CSD Director Liz Speakman, CSD Assistant Director of Clinical Services Marie Mathieu; ECD Director Christina Giacobbe, ECD Project Assistant Nicole Metivier

Chair Fallon called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Public Comment

There were no comments from members of the public.

Review and Approval of Minutes

The Board voted by roll call vote to approve the minutes of September 27, 2023, on a motion from Board Member Koscher, seconded by Chair Fallon, with Board members Arlotto and Koscher and Chair Fallon voting in favor and Board Member Sealey abstaining.

Presentation from the Emergency Communications Department

- Emergency Communications Department (ECD) Director Christina Giacobbe introduced herself and her department. Using a PowerPoint slide deck, she made a presentation about the field of emergency communications and the scope, work, and staffing of the department. The presentation included discussion of the standardized protocols ECD uses, the training and support call takers and dispatchers receive, and how they work with other City departments and EMS services.
- After the PowerPoint presentation, she noted that Cambridge has adopted the new Protocol 25 on “Psychiatric/Mental Health Conditions/Suicide Attempt/Abnormal Behavior” that was released nationally in 2022. She noted that there has been an increase in those types of calls, and that this updated protocol also ties into the work they will do with the new Community Safety Department (CSD). She explained that developing the CSD was recommended at the end of 2021 by the City Manager’s Task Force Examining the Future of Public Safety: that the City should develop this department to create additional non-police responses to certain 9-1-1 calls.
- In response to a question about the impact on ECD of the number of changes in protocols, referrals, and staffing as it relates to non-police responses to 9-1-1 calls, Director Giacobbe explained that generally when people call 9-1-1 they expect the police or fire departments, so even when the ECD staff offer other services, callers usually still want someone to respond immediately in person, and in Cambridge if the caller wants to see somebody they will send somebody, and they don't deny people services. ECD staff have been trained to ask callers if they are aware of mental health and behavioral health resources including Cambridge Health Alliance. She noted that they have seen a small shift, with people becoming more willing to be referred to services and she is hopeful that with CSD coming on line and the City publicizing it,

the hope is that more people will be more comfortable with an alternate response.

- In response to questions about the increase in the number of calls ECD has been receiving, Dir. Giacobbe posited that the broad impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as loss of family members, loss of work, mental health, etc. have been a factor. She noted that there is more conversation about these issues in society and more people talk about needing to get help. For example, since 2005 CPD has been diverting young people away from the criminal justice system through the City's SafetyNet program and approximately 75% of the youth or their families have a mental health issue.
- In response to a question about how ECD staff decide whether to send an individual from CPD, the Cambridge Fire Department or ProEMS, Dir. Giacobbe explained that it is based on the standard protocols and that the dispatchers are trained in asking specific and often detailed questions so that they can determine who should be sent in response. She stated that 9-1-1 callers sometimes get frustrated because ECD staff ask so many questions, but that is to ensure that they send the right people based on what the caller says, and sometimes they receive multiple calls for an incident that provide different parts of the story.
- In response to a follow-up question about whether the call takers and dispatchers must take whatever the 9-1-1 caller says at face value, assume it's the truth and act on that, Dir. Giacobbe explained that it was more complicated and nuanced than that. She explained that ECD staff are also listening to the background, looking at the history of interactions with that person, reviewing any notes on the caller's locations such as warrants or a license to carry a firearm. She stated that even on a 9-1-1 callback (after someone dials 9-1-1 but then hangs up), they will often send someone even when the person says "sorry, it was a mistake, etc." because of the potential for someone to have disconnected the call because they are in danger. She also explained that they receive calls regarding neighbor disputes all the time, and they will ask if they know about the Community Dispute and Settlement Center or other options, and offer alternatives. She noted that in many communities when you call 9-1-1 it's answered by the Fire or Police Department, so many people do not realize there is a separate, specially trained department that does this in Cambridge. She noted that They do about 32 hours/year of continuing education, which is more than the state mandate.

Presentation from the Community Safety Department

- Community Safety Department (CSD) Director Liz Speakman introduced herself and CSD Assistant Director of Clinical Services Marie Mathieu. She noted that Dir. Giacobbe led the effort to create this new department, and late last year Dir. Speakman started helping out and is now the director. She explained that CSD's goal is to have an alternative response for 9-1-1 call that do not have any safety or medical concerns, and that they have been working closely with ECD on call codes, and with ECD's new clinician.
- Using a PowerPoint slide deck, Dir. Speakman made a presentation about department:
 - They have a Mission Statement, developed in collaboration with their Steering Committee, and they have determined their values, but they are growing and learning as they grow, and so the values may shift a bit. They know many other City departments and community groups align with their mission and values and they are glad to work with them.
 - The CSD staff is composed of six community responders and two clinicians that make up the CARE Team, as well as a program coordinator and an assistant director of operations. They started working on September 11, 2023.
 - She explained that CSD is not responding to any calls yet. They are currently involved in lots of training and lots of walk and ride alongs with community partners to build relationships and awareness of the CSD. She noted that they have about two more weeks of community training.
 - She reported that CSD's plan is to spend the winter getting out in the community and building relationships, while the administrative staff is working on the infrastructure needed for the work.

- The goal is for CSD staff to be responding to 9-1-1 calls in March 2024.
- In response to a question about the background of the CSD staff, Dir. Speakman noted that they have a variety of backgrounds: three are EMTs, one has lot of experience with unhoused community, one was a 9-1-1 dispatcher, one is in school, and two are social workers.
- In response to questions about measures of success, initial goals, and collaboration, Dir. Speakman explained that:
 - CSD was accepted into a Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab cohort of similar departments and will get weekly support around data points and measures of success.
 - Regarding goals, CSD is prospectively looking to answer call codes that they can respond to working collaboratively with many departments. They are figuring out what codes they will take; but also thinking that sometimes after CPD clears a scene they will send the CARE team to help with the issues between neighbors, etc. first assessing for safety for themselves and assessing the need. She echoed Dir. Giacobbe's comment that the 9-1-1 caller's perception isn't always the reality of a situation, and part if the CSD role could be de-escalating and handling "big feelings," then helping to do intervention. Compared to police officers, CSD staff have more time after the initial assessment to do handholding, etc. They have two team members who will be able to check in a couple of days after to provide a warm handoff and follow up.
 - Regarding collaboration with CPD, she reported that she meets regularly with various members of the CPD command staff and the Clinical Support Unit, and that CARE team members have gone out regularly with the CPD Outreach Team and have been shadowing the four police officers on that team.
 - In response to a question about her background and role, Asst. Dir. Mathieu explained that started working with CSD full-time on October 10, after working as the first licensed clinical social worker (LICSW) at the Cambridge Public Library. She stated that it has been exciting: over the previous months she was working with CSD as a consultant, and a lot her background has been starting programs from scratch. Most of her work has involved people in crisis in hospitals or other settings, and before working at the City, she started as a social worker in Cambridge District Court and started the Mental Health Court there. She described that this work is her passion and the opportunity to start this new department is a tremendous opportunity. She noted that when she worked in the Library, it was always the collaborations among City employees and City departments that allowed her to do that work.

Executive Director's Report

Due to the length of the presentations, Exec. Dir. Corr briefly reported that the next step for the proposed online complaint form is to provide feedback on the first draft that the Information Technology Dept. created.

Report from Board Chair Fallon

- Chair Fallon noted that the inquest report from the fatal police shooting of Arif Sayed Faisal in January 2023 was issued by the Middlesex District Attorney. She proposed that the Board have a dedicated meeting to discuss that report after there is a meeting of the City Council's Public Safety Committee on the report, and also after the report from the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) assessing the incident has been released.
- She updated the Board on the status of reviewing certain CPD policies, explaining that she and Board Member Arlotto are reviewing the policy on internal affairs investigations and that Board members Koscher and LaRoche are reviewing the Code of Conduct policy.
- She noted that it would be helpful to schedule a training with Dr. James Barrett, director of CPD's Clinical Services Unit (CSU), to provide the Board with more information and context regarding calls for service regarding mental health issues. CPD PSU Director Mulcahy noted

that Dr. Barrett is a psychologist who came to CPD from the Cambridge Health Alliance and that he has now worked at CPD for several years.

- In response to a question about revisiting adoption of the NACOLE Code of Ethics, Chair Fallon stated that the Board could revisit it at any time, recalling that Board members were considering suggesting edits and that it could be reconsidered in 2024.

CPD Professional Standards, Training and Certification Unit Report

- Dir. Mulcahy reported that the Unit has been very busy with the hiring process for the January 2024 session of the joint CPD/Northeastern University Police Academy. As part of that, the Unit is: finishing the background checks for the new cadets and conducting interviews with candidates to enter the academy in 2024. He noted that three of the CPD Cadets applicants went through CRLS and have been in the cadet program the last couple of years and their completion of the Academy would be a success for the cadet program: getting people from the City who are interested in the profession. In past years there have been five other cadets. Over the next few weeks, they will do physical testing, as required by the state. They also have additional physical testing required by the Mass. Municipal Police Training Commission (MPTC). He noted that CPD is hoping to bring two new cadets into the program.
- Now that the Unit has completed the department-wide Use of Force training, they have begun the updated eight-hour training class on Integrating Communications, Assessment and Tactics (ICAT), followed by three scenario-based ICAT trainings, as well as the scenario-based firearms training in a specialized portable Middlesex County Sheriff's Office facility.

Consideration of Complaints before the Board

- Board Member Koscher moved that the Board enter executive session pursuant to Section 21(a)(1) of the Mass. Open Meeting Law to discuss complaint PR-2023-006 pending before the board and to discuss a request for the late filing of complaint LF-2023-001. The motion was seconded by Board Member Sealey and approved by a unanimous roll call vote. The Board entered executive session at 7:27 p.m.

Adjournment

At the end of the executive session, the Board voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m., on a motion from Board Member Arlotto, seconded by Chair Fallon.

Documents Used During the Meeting

- Police Review & Advisory Board Meeting Minutes of June 1 and June 28, 2023
- Presentation from the Emergency Communications Department
- Presentation from the Community Safety Department
- Board Goals for 2023