

City of Cambridge
Human Services Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2024
5:30-7:00 PM
online only



https://cambridgema.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qyKDGEbETTuboMNIamQ-6Q

Commissioners present: Julie Asher, Duane Brown, Fred Cabral, Collin Fedor, Khari Milner, Rev. Lorraine Thornhill

Regrets: Christopher Fischer, Kathleen Kelly, Bran Shim

Presenter(s): Evelyn Lueders-Booth, CARE Team; Dimitri Virgile, CARE Team

Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP) staff present: Janice Alger, Mike Payack (recorder), Ellen Semonoff

Guest(s): Denise Brown

- 1) Welcome Members and Introduction
 - a) Ellen Semonoff welcomed Commissioners and guests
 - b) Ellen mentioned we will be transitioning to hybrid meetings in the near future
 - c) Ellen discussed potential upcoming meeting topics
 - i) Overarching look at different grants and funding sources the City utilizes
 - ii) Cambridge Community Foundation—how they think about funding for the community
 - d) Ellen started a round of introductions
- 2) Discussion of the work of the City's Community Safety Department, including the Community Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE) team
 - a) Presenters:
 - i) Evelyn Lueders-Booth, CARE Clinician, CARE Team, Social Worker, worked in DHSP for many years previously;
 - ii) Dimitri Virgile, CARE Team, previously worked in EMS;
 - iii) Marie Mathieu, Assistant Director of Clinical Services
 - b) History
 - i) June 2020: City Council created steering committee for an alternative response for mental health and quality of life issues
 - ii) 2020: Community Safety Department was created
 - iii) September 2023: CARE Team's first cohort started training
 - iv) July 2024: Started responding to 911 calls
 - c) Responsibilities

- i) Respond to 911 calls that involve mental health, quality of life, and wellbeing
 - ii) Community outreach
 - iii) Respond to referrals from City organizations and departments
 - iv) Needle pick-ups
 - d) Mission:
 - i) Provide additional services to enhance the community's health and wellbeing. We value compassion in our prevention and intervention efforts.
 - e) Values:
 - i) Continuously learning, evolving, and reimagining approach in order to best meet the needs of the community. Embrace a growth mindset and value curiosity, humility, and shared humanity
 - ii) Commit to living restorative justice practices such as building empathy, compassion, trust, and mutual respect
 - iii) Center relationships, partnerships, authentic collaboration and joy in work. Be guided by wisdom, insights, and experiences of those who came before us and those who are doing the work today to build solutions community-wide. We are intentionally laying groundwork for the future we envision.
 - iv) Consciously not reproducing systems of oppression. Aim to create equitable, anti-racist, and non-discriminatory ways of serving the community.
 - v) Acknowledge the historical implications of the criminal legal system and the harm it has done to our communities. With this understanding, we value the dignity and humanity of all people.
 - f) Timeline
 - i) Phase 1: Education and Training
 - ii) Phase 2: Community and Partnership Engagement
 - iii) Phase 3: Response and Community Support
 - g) Contacts
 - i) In an emergency, call 911
 - ii) Non-emergency business line: 617-349-7200
 - iii) info@cambridgesafety.org
 - iv) www.cambridgesafety.org
 - v) Hours of service: 911 response Wednesday through Friday 10 am – 6 pm
- 3) Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Payack, DHSP/Planning & Development

