

## Notes from Meeting Three

Thursday, December 3, 2020, 5pm–7pm, Online

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### Attendance

#### Working Group Members Present

- Aaron Amede, Resident
- Kathleen Babeu, Social Services Director
- Dana Baldwin, Behavior Health Liaison
- April Caricchio, Councilor
- Craig Freshley, Facilitator
- Greg L'Heureux, Finance Director
- Margarita Salguero-Macklin, Resident
- Timothy Sheehan, Police Chief
- Pedro Vazquez, Resident
- James Wilson, Fire Chief

#### Working Group Members Absent

- None

### Meeting Objectives

- Affirm our process guidelines and support for consensus.
- Understand each other's perspectives on the question of escalation here in South Portland.
- Make a plan for the next three meetings.

### Agenda

5:00

#### **Opening**

- Facilitator Craig Freshley will welcome everyone and explain the meeting agenda.
- Craig will also remind us of the Guidelines that we reviewed last time, including our charge.

5:10

#### **Escalation**

- Beginning with the Chief of Police, the Behavioral Health Liaison, and the Fire Chief, we will hear their perspective on the question of escalated

responses here in South Portland. We want to hear their data and their stories.

- We will then hear from others on the Working Group: their views on the question of escalated responses here in South Portland. We want to hear their data and their stories.
- The point of our conversation will be to understand each other's perspectives to help us begin to find consensus.

6:20

### **Next Steps**

- We will share ideas and make a plan for next steps.
- We will consider information needs and make a rough sketch for the next three meetings.

6:50

### **Closing Comments**

- Each member of the Working Group will be encouraged to make a brief last comment such as a reflection and/or a hope for the future.

7:00

### **Adjourn**

## Opening Remarks

Facilitator Craig Freshley made the following remarks.

- Welcome everyone to the third meeting of the South Portland Police Services Review Working Group, December 3, 2020.
  - My name is Craig Freshley, the Working Group Facilitator
- First some important announcements about how this meeting will work.
  - Please note that this meeting is being recorded and that the recording will be publicly available. Chat comments will also be saved and will be publicly available. However, please don't expect me to pay attention to chat comments during the meeting.
  - If you are using a nickname or an alias we really appreciate it if you can "rename" yourself so everyone can easily see the actual names of everyone who has joined us today.
  - This meeting has closed captioning available
  - I have posted the Agenda in the Chat and have also posted a link where you can find the full version of the Agenda and several other documents related to this effort.
  - Although the general public is invited to watch, this is a meeting of Working Group members and public comments will not be allowed IN this meeting.
  - In the Chat I have posted an email address that anyone can send any comment to.

- Next, some context setting and reminders about where we are in this process
  - We're here because the City Council created this working Group on September 16, 2020, and it's fair to say that the City Council did that in response to the George Floyd killing and many other injustices of police against black people and others with disadvantages, across the country.
  - The City Council established a multi-stakeholder Working Group to see if "escalated responses" happen here in South Portland, if people who call for assistance in South Portland get it, and how things might be improved if there are thought to be problems.
  - There is a lot of energy and activity in this space of "addressing racial and other inequities." Our Working Group is focused on one aspect of all this.
  
- To ground us, let's take a look at our charge and some key guidelines, and where we are in this process.

## Our Purpose

Our purpose is to present the South Portland City Council with recommendations as to whether there should be changes to how certain calls for service are responded to by the City of South Portland.

## Our Duties

As part of its duties, the Working Group shall:

- First answer the following question before embarking on other duties: "There is a perception that some calls for service are escalated into a worse situation due to the response of a uniformed, armed police officer, and that these scenarios could be handled more appropriately by different personnel, such as a social worker. Is there evidence in South Portland that these types of calls result in an escalated response and that the individual(s) in need of assistance do not receive such assistance?" (The Working Group should reach consensus as to what defines an "escalated response".) Statistics and examples should be used to help answer this question. The response to this question, along with other considerations (i.e. cost savings, relief on stress to police officers, and resident health and welfare) shall serve as the basis for undertaking the following duties:
  - Research other models of providing a response to certain calls for service that either may not require the presence of a police officer or involve both a police officer and other professional, such as a social worker.
  - Evaluate whether these other models would be beneficial and/or necessary in South Portland.
    - If so, provide a recommendation to the City Council. This recommendation should include a review of all options studied; the problem identified in South Portland that is intended to be addressed; the

selected option and how it will address the problem identified as existing in South Portland; and an estimate of the associated costs to implement such a program. The recommendation should also provide a measurable outcome(s) for the City to track so that it can evaluate the effectiveness of this new program in addressing the stated problem.

- If not, provide a review of all options studied and explain why the Working Group believes a problem does not exist or is not likely to exist in South Portland that would necessitate the implementation of such a model.

## Guidelines Reminder

### **Open mindedness valued and appreciated**

Withhold judgement – it’s okay to change your mind – no one decides ‘til we all decide.

### **Respect for all, always**

We don’t take or make things personal. This is not about people but positions and policies.

### **Let’s model how to do this**

People are watching how we honor and blend our different views.

### **We’re trying for consensus**

- Work hard to understand the situation and each other
- Understand and try to accommodate concerns
- Look for agreement and be flexible

## Our Definition of Escalated Response

An “escalated response” is a civil situation that turns unnecessarily contentious for the mere presence of someone or something (such as the showing up of a South Portland armed, uniformed Police officer) that brings some level of trauma, anxiety, or intimidation to a person suffering or in crisis.

## Collecting Data and Stories

Collecting data and stories is our focus right now. Below is a list of what we have looked at so far.

1. Presentations last meeting from the Police Chief and a brief statement from the Behavioral Health Liaison.

2. Recent Call Log Details from the Chief from the past couple months – the 16 page document.
3. Slideshow about the Police Department budget.
4. Call log details from previous months – 60 PDF files provided by Craig.
5. On Police Department Website
  - Most recent call log data
  - Use of force policy
  - Police Department Annual Report
6. Stories collected by November 30
  - Input from four people distributed on December 1
7. Video of June 4 Forum
  - Craig provided link and sketch of resident comments
8. Public comments via email
  - Emily Troll – November 18
  - Sascha Braunig – December 2

## Discussion of Escalated Response

From our Charge: There is a perception that some calls for service are escalated into a worse situation due to the response of a uniformed, armed police officer, and that these scenarios could be handled more appropriately by different personnel, such as a social worker. Is there evidence in South Portland that these types of calls result in an escalated response and that the individual(s) in need of assistance do not receive such assistance?

- Chief Sheehan
  - I am prepared to talk about all data submitted so far and about all specific cases mentioned
  - Recognize that there are probably incidents that go unreported – some people are not comfortable speaking up to the police.
  - Willard Beach incident – there was a complete review
  - We use body cameras and anyone is able to review the footage of a specific incident
  - Four districts are being staffed minimally right now
    - Police officer coverage in these districts cannot be lessened even if there are additional social services staff working in the same district
  - Only police officers, judges, and doctors can involuntarily commit a person to a health institution

- Brief explanation of the work of the Behavioral Health Officer
- Would be great if he had more help with overdose and similar calls
- Dana Baldwin
  - In my experience I have seen nothing but respect from officers to all people
    - I also hear a lot of compliments about how our officers behave
  - Sometimes I wonder, “What do you guys need me here for?” The police officers do a great job.
  - Assistance is always appropriately offered but some people – due to their mental state – are not able to comprehend the assistance and may walk away with the feeling that they were not assisted.
- Chief Wilson
  - Sometimes we bring Police in one of our calls and sometimes Police bring us in on their calls.
  - Sometimes people tell things to the fire/medical personnel that they will not tell the police
  - We do see escalation due to a police officer being on the scene, for a variety of reasons, and it may have nothing to do with the behavior of South Portland police officers.
- Pedro Vazquez
  - How are responders helped after being exposed to a trauma
    - Chief Sheehan explained that several steps are taken and several resources available to such an individual, short term and long term
- April Caricchio
  - Would like to learn about the job that Dana does
  - Right now, the city has two ways to respond to a call: Police Department or Police Department
  - We have to address needs with another skillset (other than the above two)
  - Needs in our community
    - Housing
    - Clothing
    - Food
    - Shelter
  - Incident of moving a man from his house, possibly against his rights
  - June 4 Forum – worth listening to these excerpts
    - 36:57 – Baba Ly – You are the people that can change things
    - 1:05:00 – Michael kebbebe words
- Dana Baldwin
  - We need more services – we need to focus on the causes of these calls
  - Dana’s job
    - Follow ups with people who received service
    - Peer support
    - Connecting with: group home personnel, school staff, hospitals, providers
    - Connect people to services
    - Sometimes meet with people in person but mostly by phone or email

- Most important for a person get the kind of help that works for them
  - Dana has been responding with officers in a plain-clothes roles
- Chief Sheehan
  - We should take time to learn about what Kathleen does, the Director of Social Services
- Pedro Vazquez
  - Reviewed the call log
  - Specific incident - sleeping outside a hotel room and was later found sleeping under a van
  - Specific incident – a middle school student posting on social media got a response from a police officer
- Kathleen Babeu
  - Have never heard any complaints about how people were handled by our officers
  - It's really great when officers coach people on how/where to receive services
- Chief Sheehan
  - People can access emergency services 24/7, even social services?
- Kathleen Babeu
  - Yes
- Aaron Amede
  - Impressed by how responses are handled and how things are coordinated between the Fire Department and Police Department
  - Wondering what it means in the log: "Service was provided."
  - Seems like the police are doing a phenomenal job
- Chief Sheehan
  - Accusations of escalation are taken very seriously
  - Mental health needs are always the top priority
- Aaron Amede
  - More services are needed to help
- Margarita Salguero-Macklin
  - I do see evidence of escalated response, especially in the case of minors
- April Caricchio
  - We don't need to get a phone call in order to do community outreach
- Chief Sheehan
  - The response to kids playing in the street was justified, that we responded with a police officer
- Greg L'Heureux
  - We don't have the resources to do all that we would like to
  - Based on the call, it's very hard to tell how the situation will play out and we need to put safety first
- April Caricchio
  - Let's take time to review Craig's proposed statements
- Dana Baldwin

- When police are called, the situation is already escalated – that’s why the police were called – by nature the police handle the more threatening, unpredictable situations
- Pedro Vazquez
  - My neighbor is a racist and who doesn’t like me
  - The call against my kids was an instigation
  - The officer should have responded – but the way he talked to my kids was escalated
  - We also need to collaborate with Portland
- April Caricchio
  - We have to put on our listening ears for people of color talking about white people
    - We need to say “I hear you”
    - We hold all the power to make change for others
- Chief Sheehan
  - Explanation about the regional dispatch system
    - It’s a true regional system
  - Accolades to the Fire Department for responding to people temporarily housed in hotels to make sure their needs are being met
    - These preventive measures are making a difference in the amount of calls and hospitalizations

## Emerging Conclusion (Craig’s Idea)

- There are instances of escalated response (turns out an officer didn’t need to be sent OR the escalation is due to the prior experiences and/or the emotional state of the resident) but no evidence that South Portland police officers deliberately or intentionally escalate situations.
- More resources are needed for South Portland residents, both to prevent crisis situations from happening in the first place and to better handle crisis situations with appropriate services after.

## Ideas for Next Steps

- Look at the second part of the question more
  - What services we are not providing and should be provided
- Consider Craig’s “emerging conclusion” and look at this again next time
  - This should be the focus of the next meeting
- Start to look at needs – how could needs be better addressed
- Look more at the Cahoots Model and design our own version of this
- Explore The Home Team model in Portland

- Give more staff to Kathleen's Department
- Learn more about The Home Team in Portland

## Closing Comments

- Pedro Vazquez
  - Thanks to everyone for focusing on this and spending your time and energy
- April Caricchio
  - We did away with AMHI to move to a system of community health – but we don't have community health
- Chief Wilson
  - Although we are the fire department but 90% of what we do is EMS.
    - Services that used to be provided by others are gone so now the Police Department and Fire Department of picking up these services.
  - Should the Police still be the “stop gap?”
- Kathleen babeu
  - Very encouraging that we are working towards the same goal
- Greg L'Heureux
  - Would like to learn about The Home Team

## Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:03pm

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## Chat

Here is the record of Chat from the meeting:

16:59:16 From Hailey Fardon to Panelists : Hi  
 17:04:14 From April Caricchio to Panelists : Hello and welcome  
 17:05:24 From Craig Freshley - Facilitator : Today's Agenda  
 5:00 Opening  
 5:10 Escalation  
 6:20 Next Steps  
 6:50 Closing Comments  
 7:00 Adjourn  
 17:05:46 From Craig Freshley - Facilitator : All documents here:  
<https://bit.ly/3f95eFO>

17:06:08 From Craig Freshley - Facilitator : ServiceCallComments@SouthPortland.org  
All emails sent to this address will be shared with all members of the Working Group, the  
City Manager, and the Facilitator

17:07:34 From Pedro Vazquez – Resident to Craig Freshley - Facilitator (Direct  
Message) : It appears Greg is in the chat with a raised hand...

17:07:51 From April Caricchio S.P. City Council Member to Panelists : can folks please  
mute?

17:18:30 From James Wilson - Fire Chief to Craig Freshley - Facilitator (Direct  
Message) : Looks like Greg is on but not a panelist

17:46:13 From Craig Freshley - Facilitator : Today's Agenda

- 5:00 Opening
- 5:10 Escalation
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17:53:55 From Craig Freshley - Facilitator : All documents here:  
<https://bit.ly/3f95eFO>

18:33:15 From sascha braunig to Panelists : What data is supporting Craig's first  
assertion?

18:41:25 From April Caricchio S.P. City Council Member to sascha braunig, All  
Panelists : Good question we need time to consider these statements

18:43:30 From April Caricchio S.P. City Council Member to Panelists : I hear you Pedro