

**TUMWATER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
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CONVENE: 8:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Chair Peter Agabi and Councilmembers Leatta Dahlhoff and Kelly Von Holtz.

Staff: City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Finance Director Troy Niemeyer, Acting Police Chief Jay Mason, Deputy Fire Chief Shawn Crimmins, Paralegal Sharleen Johansen, and Police Administrative Supervisor Laura Wohl.

**APPROVAL OF
MINUTES:**

**PUBLIC HEALTH AND
SAFETY COMMITTEE,
MARCH 11, 2025:**

Councilmember Dahlhoff moved, seconded by Councilmember Von Holtz, to approve the minutes of March 11, 2025 as presented. A voice vote approved the motion.

**CHANGES TO
AGENDA:**

Following a discussion to remove the Flock Camera Process from the agenda because the presenter was not in attendance, members agreed to retain the topic on the agenda for a general discussion.

**CRISIS RESPONSE
AND FDCARES
PROGRAM UPDATES:**

Deputy Fire Chief Crimmins introduced Ariana Gomez with the FDCARES Program. The City of Tumwater is collaborating with the Olympia Fire Department to participate in the City of Olympia CARES (City's Community Assistance Referral and Education Program).

Ms. Gomez reported she served initially as the program's intern and now serves in a part-time capacity to support the program. To date, the program has provided services to 23 clients. She is currently working with 11 clients. One of the success stories is assisting an individual who repeatedly called 911. The client has reduced calls to 911 by 40%. The Fire Department continues to forward new referrals.

Deputy Fire Chief Crimmins explained that the program transition takes some time because it is dependent upon fire personnel referring individuals for assistance with different needs. The fire crews are becoming better acquainted with the program and he anticipates more referrals will be forwarded to the program. The program supports community members that are not able to be served by fire personnel as resources are lacking to address many issues other than immediate needs. Many customers require more services. Officers and

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firefighters on the scene refer individuals to the FDCARES Program to receive assistance.

Sarena Bellovich, Olympia Fire Department CARES Program, described the process for referrals. When a call is dispatched through 911, crews respond and often the needs are greater than the purpose of the initial 911 call, such as poor living conditions or poor health outcomes, etc. The purpose of the CARES Program is to refer those individuals for an initial screening, assessment of needs, establishment of goals for the individual, and connecting the individuals to local services. In many cases, the intent is to teach the appropriate use of 911 while also improving health outcomes for people.

Councilmember Dahlhoff inquired as to whether the program publishes a list of local services. Ms. Bellovich advised that a list has not been officially established other than the program continues to compile a list each time a new resource is identified. The list is not published to avoid any appearance of favoritism for particular resources.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked about the possibility of the Council reviewing the list when the list is published. Ms. Bellovich advised that the list is not planned to be released at this time, but prior to release, the Council would receive a copy of the list.

Chair Agabi asked whether services are restricted to community members in Tumwater or throughout Thurston County. Ms. Bellovich said the Tumwater program serves individuals served by the Tumwater Fire Department. The Olympia Fire Department serves community members who are served by the Olympia Fire Department. The program is not a countywide program at this time.

Joe Avalos, Executive Director, Olympic Health & Recovery Services, reminded members of the last update in October 2024 regarding House Bill 1134 passed in 2023 to enhance the behavioral health crisis response system in the state. The legislation aligns with 988 legislation and the move toward the vision of having someone to call, someone to respond, and somewhere to go for those individuals who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis. The 988 program is active and operational. Within Thurston and Mason Counties, the program receives an average of 500 calls per month. The legislation established a response network of mobile rapid response crisis teams, as well as a community-based crisis team (CBCT). The team partners with a licensed behavioral health agency (Olympic Health & Recovery Services) and Tumwater Fire Department.

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An application for the program was submitted to the Health Care Authority earlier in the year. At this time, the application received conditional approval pending a virtual onsite visit scheduled in the next week. Only two CBCTs have applied. At the October meeting, the application had not been submitted. Since then, the application has been approved by the Health Care Authority tasked with funding and overseeing the partnership. The program is similar to teams currently embedded with the Thurston County Sheriff's Department, Lacey Police Department, and the Mason County Sheriff's Department. The program consists of a crisis clinician paired with a certified crisis peer (team of two) to respond to behavioral health crisis calls from 911, 988, or through the regional crisis line in Thurston Mason County with the main focus within the City limits of the City of Tumwater.

The overall crisis program is available to every Thurston or Mason County resident. This particular CBCT program focuses on Tumwater.

In terms of volume, the program has become highly utilized as more individuals learn about the program. The Mason County program has the highest volume. The CBCT team has the ability to transport individuals who need service or voluntary inpatient care.

Next week, assuming the program is approved, the contract between the Health Care Authority and Olympic Health & Recovery Services will be executed in July. The actual start time will be in 90 days to afford time to staff the program and establish program parameters.

Mr. Avalos explained that the CBCT teams excludes law enforcement and are only imbedded with fire departments. The organization plans to pursue changes in legislation next year as law enforcement was excluded in the legislation.

Councilmember Dahlhoff recommended the committee schedule quarterly updates on the programs to ensure the Council is informed of any unmet needs.

**THURSTON COUNTY
DISTRICT COURT
UPDATE:**

Frankie Peters, Court Executive Officer, Thurston County District Court, updated the committee on activities of the Thurston County District Court. The District Court has provided services to the City of Tumwater for the last 11 years for misdemeanor offenses, gross misdemeanors, and civil infractions.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked about the status of legislation that dictated public defender case loads in terms of the impact to the court and level of service in meeting the new requirements. Mr. Peters said

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conversations are occurring with the City of Olympia to develop a contract for the court to provide services to the City of Olympia. Based on existing information, no changes are foreseen in the number of attorneys within the county with the intent to have services remain contracted by the City of Olympia similar to the court's contract with the City of Lacey. No impacts are anticipated. However, the service level between the entire justice system to include attorneys and the courts has suffered, as staffing is short. The Legislature did not provide the desired level of funding. Funding is an ongoing conversation between District Court and the County Manager. The office is examining case flow management and how to support court cases as well as the attorneys who are providing services for defendants, the City, and for the state. Case filings and proceeding counts are beginning to increase drastically. Over the last five years, many changes have occurred. For the City of Tumwater, there has been an increase but not at the level of other jurisdictions. Certain case types are up by 50% to 60%. Generally, all jurisdictions are experiencing an increase with proceeding counts at District Court increasing from 45,000 proceedings per year to 65,000 proceedings per year over the last 18 months. The office is examining ways to increase efficiencies to support attorneys and docket types that can include some additional support to attorneys. One area is the non-compliance docket by addressing the docket more administratively through the judge without the presence of an attorney in some cases.

Chair Agabi asked about the potential impact to Tumwater if the court contracts with other local jurisdictions. Mr. Peters responded that the county is working with jurisdictions to identify the resources to support contracted service without affecting other contracted jurisdictions or the services provided by the county. The intent is not to impact the services provided to other jurisdictions. If the contracts proceed, there would be no negative impacts to the City of Tumwater.

Acting Police Chief Mason conveyed appreciation to Mr. Peters for the support the county provides for the City and the police department. The partnership speaks to a tremendous value for both parties.

Mr. Peters commented on the span of therapeutic options offered by the court. Some transitions have occurred within the court for Mental Health and Veterans Courts with new staff hired to support participants. The court secured some funding through the Administrator Office of the Courts to support participants to work with horses in a therapeutic environment. The first cohort was held last week with the second one scheduled in the next week.

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Councilmember Dahlhoff asked about the status of the discussions on a homeless court. Mr. Peters cited the existence of the Mental Health and Veterans Courts and mental health probation, a program providing extended services following a sentencing by providing therapeutic support and resources through the probation program. The county also offers the substance-monitoring program funded through the end of 2026 where all substance testing is provided at no cost to indigent defendants. Other programs include pre-trial services through the county and Thurston County Court Alternative Program, a homeless court model. Several representatives from Thurston County visited California to review the state's homeless court model. Based on observations, the representatives explored a similar program in Thurston County. The program is in its infancy to determine how the program can serve all community members. The intent is to assist those with lower level offenses who may not otherwise qualify for any other programs whereby the program through the attorney and prosecutor can identify some resources for an individual. As long as individuals work cooperatively with their case manager, they receive services with an opportunity for pending charges to be dismissed.

Mr. Peters said the department continues to explore ways to provide more clear, open, and transparent access to the courts. The court uses Zoom for appearances in court. There has been a reduction in warrants as many people are working to maintain jobs and cannot take time off during the workday to attend a court proceeding. Zoom provides the ability for them to attend online without affecting a person's workday or finding childcare. At the beginning of the year, the office expanded text notifications as the first court in the state to implement text notice reminders for court dates. Any changes in court dates, court conditions, and other changes are transmitted by text to defendants.

Chair Agabi inquired about the possibility of the office providing other types of programs that could help defendants remain outside the criminal justice system. Mr. Peters said staff has been exploring different programs. Other programs outside of the courts can assist individuals in avoiding the criminal justice system. However, the office in its capacity requires individuals to have a case filed with the court before any other level of support can be provided. The court has been exploring expansion of programs, such as the substance use program through probation offering extensive supervision with the client as they work on their issues. The office is also exploring the expansion of providing internal victim impact panels and domestic violence programs.

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PROCESS
DISCUSSION:

attend the meeting to provide an update on the Flock Camera Program.

Councilmember Dahlhoff inquired as to whether an alternate can be assigned in those instances of illness or unforeseen circumstances preventing a presentation. During a previous discussion on the Flock Camera Program, Acting Police Chief Mason had advised that the program was not moving forward as more discussion was warranted. However, City Administrator Parks indicated the program was included in the budget. She asked about the timing of receiving the final budget document adopted in December 2024. She was able to review some budget documents but was unable to identify the Flock Camera Program as a budgeted item. She would like to know the status of the program, as well as receiving a copy of the final budget.

Director Niemeyer responded that in terms of the budget document, staff forwarded a complete budget to the Council; however, staff continues to finalize the complete budget book. The Council has received some high-level budget documents, summaries, and a detailed line item budget. However, the line item budget lacks specific references to programs, such as the Flock Camera Program. Staff is also preparing schedules A-I with accompanying spreadsheets for professional services, staffing, and other major expense categories. The committee should receive those documents later in the week. The final budget book should be forwarded within the next several weeks.

Councilmember Dahlhoff thanked staff for their work while acknowledging the many community discussions surrounding Flock and that it was included within the budget. She was unable to identify the program within the budget and her goal is to be informed and well prepared when responding to questions from the community.

Discussion followed on the unanswered policy impact questions regarding the Flock program. Councilmember Dahlhoff suggested scheduling a discussion on the program with the committee accompanied with a draft policy to determine if the program should be recommended to the Council. Outstanding questions include how long data are retained, who has access to data, and a review of other draft policies from other jurisdictions, such as the City of Olympia in conjunctions with draft policies from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

Councilmember Von Holtz requested follow-up and discussion in response to previous questions about the City's policies on the City's response to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

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activities in the City. Many community members have expressed concerns about immigration actions. Many leaders who are people of color mentioned that they do not feel welcome in Tumwater. City Administrator Parks had advised that any policy would be at the discretion of the Council. She asked the committee to forward a request to Council on the policy for the Tumwater Police Department regarding response to federal agencies.

City Attorney Kirkpatrick advised that the policy by the Police Department is posted on the website under the Tumwater Police Department webpage. Councilmember Von Holtz suggested more clarification would be warranted during this particular time in history. She suggested posting information on social media platforms.

Councilmember Dahlhoff cited former postings by Police Chief Weiks on actions by the Police Department and planned actions by the Department, which have been reflected as not engaging with ICE.

Councilmember Dahlhoff recommended the committee forward a recommendation to the Council to discuss Tumwater's position on Tumwater's response to ICE and immigration activities. City Attorney Kirkpatrick affirmed the topic could be included as a Council agenda item.

ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Chair Agabi adjourned the meeting at 8:58 a.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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