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Community Policing Behavioral Health Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2023, 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Zoom

Co-Chairs Taberner and Davis called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m., all members were present with the exception of Ruby Sanders.

Chair Davis requested edits and a motion to accept the December meeting minutes. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Next Chair Taberner asked for feedback regarding a request for \$368K in additional funding to complete the two studies being conducted by the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health (MAMH) and its subcontractor the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC). Chair Davis asked for clarification to ensure the funding source was clear to the Council, Chair Taberner confirmed it would come from the Department of Mental Health (DMH). Chief Martineau asked if this would be one time funding to allow for the studies completion which was answered in the affirmative. Motion was made by Chair Taberner, seconded by Chief Martineau, and passed unanimously with one abstention by Matt Broderick (DMH).

Chair Taberner issued a special acknowledgement to Eric Helmuth for his assistance in linking the dates for the reports to the end of the fiscal year. MAMH and TAC were not able to provide an update on their work during this meeting. An update will be rescheduled to the next meeting in February.

Chair Taberner invited MPTC Executive Director Ferullo to speak to the Council's future work and the accomplishments thus far around training. Chief Ferullo spoke to the extensive amount of in-service training that has occurred as a direct result of the legislative requirement put forward. He mentioned the build out of academies and more training, and at the same time that departments are

losing officers at an incredible pace. Recently there have been a number of suicides and trauma among police officers which is an important issue. Many of those lives lost were personal friends of his as well. E.D. Ferullo suggested we roll out new classes on trauma and mental health focused on the needs of officers, and double down on peer support since mental health is a major issue. Chair Davis thanked E.D. Ferullo for his collaborative approach and willingness to do what is needed. Chief Martineau said he is doing an assessment of the health of his officers right now citing the need for peer support every day. Chief Baker applauded E.D. Ferullo's efforts to enhance MPTC training as it has made huge strides and built out. Chief Baker also suggested that there are repeat calls from members of their community that are in need of long term mental health care. The inability to meet the needs of these individuals often results in his officers having to respond to the same persons repeatedly. Chief Stevens has had two officers commit suicide. He suggests people do not see what is happening behind the scenes, and that there needs to provide more support and resources to officers.

Chair Davis took a moment to acknowledge the losses the Chiefs and other departments have experienced and thanked them for raising these difficult issues, also thanked them as it is National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day.

Chair Taberner referenced a Behavioral Health Roadmap that launched statewide with 25 service providers, suggesting it might be helpful to have a presentation on this initiative in the coming months. The new Community Behavioral Health Centers or "CBHCs" are intended to serve as a front door for accessing behavioral health care, 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. One of the goals of the CBHCs is to allow law enforcement to bring individuals more expeditiously to behavioral health treatment opportunities.

Next Matt Broderick shared that CIT or Crisis Intervention Teams and Mental Health First Aid training programs have been provided to officers in larger numbers this year. DMH is excited to be post pandemic and rebuild momentum on this program. There is a third training need which is specifically for the co-responder model where a licensed clinician helps respond to a call, and trainings in this area are also growing through DMH's grant program.

Charles Smith (DPH) offered his condolences to the Chiefs of Police and suggested that direct care services have suicide prevention programs which may be a great area to collaborate with law enforcement. Their annual conference is coming up in April and he will share details with the group when they are available. Robert Ortiz (council member) expressed his gratitude for the discussion as someone with lived experience. He expressed his sympathy to the Chiefs as well. He believes it is important to offer officers support for their mental health as well and hoped we could further explore that support. Timothy Burton (NAMI) expressed his belief in offering support for individuals in communities and support to responding officers. He believes peer support is very important.

Chair Davis opened public comment and began with June Binney. She emphasized the importance of support for officers and providing forums to discuss the issues. She said the importance of the upcoming conference cannot be over emphasized and this council can keep the momentum going on these issues. Chair Taberner mentioned that cross-agency collaboration is importance. Eric Helmuth thanked the Chiefs for sharing their thoughts and will bring their feedback to Senator Brownsberger.

Monday February 13, 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. will be the next meeting, an invite and agenda are forthcoming. Motion to adjourn was made and passed at 1:30 p.m.