

Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC)

Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2024

Via Zoom

Board Members in Attendance

Commander. G. Bartlett

Chief E. Jaramillo/Chief C. Ortiz

Dr. Wayne Lindstrom

Robert Salazar

Paula Burton

Ellen Braden

Rachel Biggs

Jane Garland

Dr. N. Duranceaux

Coty Maxwell

Mary Perez

Betty Whiton

Crisis Intervention Division

Albuquerque Fire Rescue

Bernalillo County Behavioral Health

Peer Representation

Peer Representative

Health, Housing, and Homelessness

Albuquerque Healthcare for the Homeless

NAMI Albuquerque

APD Behavioral Sciences Section

APD Crisis Intervention Division Detective

UNM Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences

NAMI Representative and Liaison BHPC, BHI

Introduction to MHRAC

The Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC) was created by the Court Approved Settlement Agreement (CASA). We've been around since day one and have a focus on three areas, resources, and resources being available to access different things within the city that APD and first responders can use as it impacts homelessness and mental health issues. We are also involved in training and policy; training is one of those things we made a tremendous impact on. As far as the training that is offered. Policies are one of those things where the MHRAC is involved with assisting in writing approving, and recommending policy as it relates again to the narrow focus; we think narrow, but sometimes it gets pretty wide-focused on how law enforcement interacts with those experiencing homelessness and those experiencing a mental health crisis.

Attendance of Board Members

Brenda Vigil-Gallegos took the roll call. Eleven of the sixteen MHRAC Board Members were in attendance.

Welcome First-Time Guests

Due to the large number of first-time attendees, Co-chair Ryan Delaware welcomed everyone all at once, as opposed to the MHRAC's normal practice of having individual self-introductions.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

1st Motion – Rachel Biggs

2nd Motion – Dr. Wayne Lindstrom

Minutes from the October 2024 meeting were approved.

MHRAC Member Nominations (If Any)

None

Public Comment

Comments were made by meeting attendees: Ilse Biel, Paula Barteau, Holly Mell, Anami Dass, Marceline Kostiner, Zoe Rob, Courtney Montoya, Pete Taylor, Mama Zeigh, Sarah Azibo, and Janus Herrera

Multiple commenters expressed concerns about the Encampment “**draft**” Policy and how it will have an impact on unhoused individuals:

Comments

- Potential for further traumatization and destabilization of unhoused people
- Lack of sufficient shelter/housing resources to support those displaced
- Need for greater accountability measures for city workers involved in encampment interactions
- Requests for temperature/weather exceptions and preservation of essential survival items

Suggestions

- Body cameras for all city workers interacting with encampments
- Clear documentation of property disposal
- Improved accessibility considerations for shelter placements

City of Albuquerque Response to Public Comments

- Emphasized policy goals of increasing transparency, consistency, and accountability
- Highlighted outreach and resource provision as primary focus, not criminalization
- Noted policy aims to reduce APD interactions with unhoused individuals
- APD is only called if there is a reason; APD is sometimes there for security as well.
- Explained a tiered system for addressing encampments based on location sensitivity
- Described ongoing efforts to expand shelter capacity and supportive services, along with offering storage for personal belongings when needed.
- City departments do their best to engage with unhoused individuals to offer solutions and resources.
- Several city departments work collaboratively alongside each other for the betterment of unhoused individuals and the community.

MHRAC Response

- The public is to submit written comments on the encampment “draft” policy to the MHRAC committee and the MHRAC will compile and finalize policy recommendations, and submit them by the deadline to the City of Albuquerque which is the end of November 2024. Two email addresses were added to the Chat for the encampment “draft” policy public comments.
- January meeting to include presentation of draft ordinance to formalize MHRAC as board/commission

Next Steps

- The City is aiming to finalize the encampment “draft” policy in December.

Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS) Update

- ACS Deputy Director, Walter Adams, informed the group that ACS launched an emergency transport service that transports people between 8 pm - 7 am and has transported 250 individuals since November 1, 2024. The phone number is 505-418-6178.
- At the end of October ACS started the last academy of 2024. ACS currently has five responders in that academy.
- ACS is hosting a hiring event on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, from 9 am to 12 pm for all field responder positions and supervisors.

Gateway Center and Health, Housing, & Homelessness Update

- New services are coming online, including medical sobering, medical respite, and additional shelter beds.
- A more robust support system for unsheltered individuals for example would be the medical sobering services that will be able to help individuals in a way that we may not have been able to address with the care campus alone.
- Medical Respite will be providing more services for individuals.
- Having a space for ADL issues and individuals being discharged and have wound care issues or other healing so having a space will be helpful. The space will have 50 beds. It does not meet the entire need but it is a step in the right direction.
- The Housing Navigation Program Gateway Center for men has another 50 beds and more coming on in the summer. It is only a 90-day stay but it is that transitional space that can help individuals move from being unsheltered to a more stabilized housing situation.
- The Family Navigation Center provides 65 beds for families.
- The Young Adult Program that is going to be coming on in June will be providing 30 beds so that the transition age is right for individuals who are coming out of the foster care system.
- The renovations at Gateway West include new beds, new bathrooms, outdoor recreation, security measures, and a new provider. This is a place where people go to get support, to get out of the cold, a more humane place that is cleaner, a better set-up, casework, and more security.
- We have a lot of efforts related to housing vouchers; we have 500,000 vouchers that are supporting clients right now.
- We are doing affordable housing units, so operating and running 600 affordable housing units with more on the way.
- The city is working in each area of the housing continuum to provide supportive services because we are seeing our housing needs to grow.

APD, CIU, and BSS Update

- Commander Bartlett informed the group that the CIU is hosting a DOJ-supported 40-hour Crisis Response and Intervention Training (CRIT) Train the Trainer. We have three Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in the field of Crisis Intervention.
- We are looking to take some of that instruction and use it to supplement some of our existing instructions associated with certifications using it as an infill for some of our state-mandated 40-hour CIT block of instruction and use it to supplement some of our eCIT training.

- Dr. Duranceaux, director of the Behavior Sciences Section (BSS) is recruiting to fill two vacant clinician positions within the CIU team. They would be non-sworn independently licensed masters-level clinicians who assist the CIU in supporting individuals who are living with chronic mental illness and other major psychosocial stressors that lead them to come to usually many police encounters. It is a way to divert from incarceration and offer support.

Training and Infoshare Sub-Committee Update

- Rachel updated the group on what was discussed at the October meeting.
 - City Legal, Attorney Lauren Keefe presented the encampment “draft” policy.
 - Most of the sub-committee meeting was spent with the MHRAC members giving comments on the encampment “draft” policy.

MHRAC Final Discussion

- January MHRAC meeting to discuss draft ordinance for formalizing committee structure
 - Prepare draft ordinance for MHRAC codification, and present at the January 21, 2025 meeting.
- We are going back and forth between the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and what that looks like to just be transparent. But we strive to follow the OMA as much as possible.
- A new MHRAC meeting invite for 2025 will be sent out before the January 21, 2025 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20

The next MHRAC meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2025

The full unedited Fathom transcript of the MHRAC Meeting is available upon request, email bvigil-gallegos@cabq.gov.