**Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC)**

Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2024

Via Zoom

**Board Members in Attendance**

Rachel Biggs Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless

Cmdr. M. Dietzel Crisis Intervention Division

Dr. Nicole Duranceaux APD Behavioral Science Services

Betty Whiton NAMI

Mariela Ruiz-Angel /Walter Adams Albuquerque Community Safety

Gilbert Ramirez CABQ-Dept. of Family & Comm. Services

Chief Emily Jaramillo Albuquerque Fire Rescue

Mary Perez UNM Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences

Robert Salazar Peer Representation

Coty Maxwell Crisis Intervention Division

Paula Burton Peer Representative

Bernice Varela Crossroads for Women

**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.

**Fathom Summary**

**Albuquerque Community Safety Department, (ACS) Update**

* Walter Adams provided data on ACS's increased call volume since launching 24/7 operations and their new emergency transport service for shelters. Jody Esquibel discussed expanding street outreach efforts.

**New MHRAC Leadership and Committee Members**

* Rachel Biggs nominated Mary Perez as the new co-chair who was approved. Bernice Varela from Crossroads for Women was nominated and approved as a new committee member.

**Health, Housing, and Homelessness Department Update**

* Gilbert Ramirez discussed winter shelter protocols and the new Gateway first responder receiving area. He emphasized shelter capacity and transportation services for those in need.

**APD and CIU Update**

* Commander Dietzel discussed legislative bills and retirement. Updates included ERFPO usage, CIT training, and case management referrals.

**January Subcommittee Meeting Announcement**

* Rachel Biggs announced the combined training and info share subcommittee will meet on January 29th to discuss a proposed MHRAC ordinance.

**Roll call of Board Members, Rachel Biggs**

Twelve of fourteen MHRAC Members were in attendance.

**Welcome first-time guests**

Jodie Esquibel

New deputy director for ACS Field Operations

**Approval of meeting minutes**

1st Motion – Gilbert Ramirez

2nd Motion – Mary Perez

Minutes from the November 2023 meeting were approved. There was no meeting in December of 2023.

**Public Comment (Two minutes per person)**

No Public Comment

**Nomination of New Board Members, if any, Rachel Biggs**

Rachel nominated MHRAC Board Member, Mary Perez, Associate Chief Nurse, UNMH Behavioral Health, for the available co-chair position, and Gilbert Ramirez seconded the motion. Mary has great experience working with systems collaboration being with UNMH but also being deeply involved in the response to people experiencing crisis and behavioral health crisis in our community. She has many years dedicated to the work and speaks beautifully to the importance of MHRAC and what we all do together.

Rachel nominated Bernice Varela, Executive Director of Crossroads for Women as a new MHRAC Board Member, and Mary Perez seconded the motion. Bernice has a background working in crisis response, which comes from working with Hopeworks and Crossroads for Women. Bernice has been a clinical therapist for about 13 years. She has worked a lot with ACS, MCT, and APD as it pertains to the homeless, mostly during crises trying to get the individual treatment that they deserve.

There was no opposition to the two nominations.

**Albuquerque Community Safety Department (ACS) Update, Walter Adams and Jodie Jepson**

* The new Deputy Director, Jody Esquibel, of ACS Field Operations was introduced. She has been a public servant for over 20 years. Jody received her paramedic license through the fire service and then went on to flight medicine. I did contract work for the State Police via UNM as their Special Operations Paramedic.
* We’re at about 55,000 calls for service, 67% of calls have been diverted from police.
* We launched 24/7 operation at the end of September 2023 and to the end of December 2023 we responded to 4,105 calls.
* ACS has been doing emergency transports to shelters. That runs from 8 pm to 7 am. The emergency transport number is 505-549-0044.
* ACS was formerly dispatched to calls by AFR Dispatch but has now those calls will be transitioned to APD Dispatch. It is for the safety aspect and it is going to be easier for police to get ahold of ACS.
* The outreach side of ACS has a team of seven that Jodie Jepson oversees.
* The Outreach Engagement Team has some amazing responders and we are more strategic in our encampment response and identifying hotspots.
* We are working with APD strategically, and intentionally on how we are responding.

**Gibson Health Hub, Family and Community Services, Gilbert Ramirez**

* We used to be Family and Community Services; the department is very large. We have Early Childhood Development Centers, Community Centers, and our division of behavioral health. We have homelessness program initiatives and then housing as well as a little bit of funding for the area on aging which supports our Department of Senior Affairs.
* We split into two, Youth and Family Services (YFS) (Early Childhood Development and Community Centers). And Health, Housing, and Homelessness (HHH) (the rest of the programs).
* We did a presser on the winter storm warning and watch right before our big snowstorm to announce all things citywide with us and ACS. The call number for transport was hugely helpful.
* There are discharges from the hospital, and they could use that transition into a shelter.
* We partnered with ACS to provide the bus that was a retired “out-of-service” Sunvan that needed some work so we got it up and running.
* We are making sure that we’re letting folks know we have bed capacity. We see high numbers over at our Westside Emergency Housing Center, but we still have capacity. We have engaged a little bit of overflow space at Gateway. We have 35 additional beds that are full there with the ability to expand.
* The Gateway has a lot of components going on over at the Gibson Hospital and the receiving center is designed to support our first responders.
* Traveling out to the Westside Emergency Housing Center or other areas, takes our responder out of service, so our goal was to have an alternative for appropriate referrals for them to bring folks in. In partnership with UNM's Office of Community Health, we hope to have some community health workers there. They can kind of triage. We're going to phase into that. We're finalizing the contract details with UNM as we speak.
* We hope to start and prioritize the evening hours because that's where the biggest gap is. And then we'll add daytime hours and eventually be 24-7.
* The site facility, though, is done. It looks beautiful. We kind of gave the press a little opening eye as to what that receiving area looks like. We have waiting rooms, and resting rooms, and we even have capacity for a few overnight, like bed areas that we can support folks with.

**CIU, APD, and BSS Report and update, Commander Dietzel, Dr. Duranceaux, Lt. Lowry, and Sgt. Tinney**

* The legislative session has started and there is one bill, House Bill 27, which I am watching closely. It is some changes to the Extreme Risk Firearm and Protection Order law. It would allow us to file much quicker without controversy. There are some great changes like search warrants being considered, and 24-hour judge availability.
* Our representative, Joanne Garrett, is the co-sponsor on that one and she does a really good job of putting this together.
* I would like to recognize the team of all the Extreme Risk Firearm and Protection Orders filed in the state. This division has probably done 90% of them at this point, and it is because they are trying to keep people safe. It’s a very controversial law but it should not be.
* I am retiring in the next few months. APD has already named my replacement, Gerard Bartlett, who will be promoted to commander soon. I bring it up because that is a big deal; he is super smart and is going to do a great job. He has a master's in counseling and he cares about all this and has history in it.
* We just wrapped up a CIT 40-hour and this is the first class we hosted over at the BCSO offices. We had BCSO deputies in the class. This is an extension of combining in terms of training. Their behavioral health director is one of our old sergeants.
* We also hosted Michigan State Police, Solid Waste, and US Probation who attended the CIT 40-hour.
* We are excited to be bringing Tricia Baca this week as our second crisis clinician. Tricia comes over from ACS. We are still working on a third position.
* We had 435 referrals for December that we reviewed; I was able to assign 98 cases. That means that 312 were not assigned and we were only able to ask for 25 cases to be referred out to outside agencies. We are still hoping to find a group that can follow up on people who are high-risk, especially high-risk suicide. The Community Engagement Team (CET) has been great about taking anything but I don’t want to burden them. They are a much smaller agency.
* Detective Coty Maxwell is presenting on the Extreme Risk Firearm Protection Order (ERFPO) to “One Thing I Can Do is Educate about Gun Safety” organization.
* Detective Jeff Zamorano was helping MCT with a suicidal threat. Jeff was able to get him to a hospital and he completed an Extreme Risk Firearm and Protection Order. When we went there we discovered that he had been manufacturing AR-15s with no serial numbers so we were able to get those and hopefully, we can get him continuously connected to services.

**MHRAC Training and Infoshare Sub-Committee Report and Update, Rachel Biggs, & David Ley**

* Due to the holidays we did not have a sub-committee meeting. We will meet again on Monday, January 29th.
* We have combined the Training Sub-committee and the Inforshare Sub-committee. If you are on the committee, you are required to attend. We will work on getting an agenda out.

**MHRAC Final Discussion**

Rachel Biggs

* The city has been helping us work on an ordinance and something drafted; I have some comments but I have been delayed in getting my edits to Andrew. He will put together a short presentation for us at our February meeting to talk about MHRAC being codified in the city ordinance. I would appreciate input from everyone on that.

Andrew Magida

* I know everyone likes to group chat, but in an effort to comply with the Open Meetings Act (OMA) requirements, let us all strive not to do that at least not for the more substantive contributions to avoid that issue of having something that can’t be accessed by the public.

**Next meeting: February 20, 2023**