

City of Jacksonville

*1st Floor - Council Chamber
117 W. Duval Street*



Meeting Minutes - Amended Subcommittee on Data and Research

Tuesday, December 3, 2019

2:00 PM

Committee Room B 1st Floor, City Hall

Safety and Crime Reduction Commission

*Mark Griffin, Chair
Sam Newby, Vice Chair
Matt Carlucci
Camille Burban
Josh Cockrell
Larry Cook
Richard Danford
Frank Denton
Sabrina Edwards
Tom Geismar
Brandon Griggs
William (W.C.) Gentry
Ellen Glasser
Shelley Grant
Constance Hall
Linda Joseph
Ronnie King
Timothy Sloan
Vicki Waytowich
Shamika Baker Wright*

*Crystal Shemwell, Legislative Services Supervisor
Carol Owens, City Council Staff*

Safety and Crime Reduction Subcommittee on Data and Research

Ronnie King- Chair
Timothy Sloan
Camille Burban
Frank Denton
Linda Joseph- Excused
Shelley Grant

Also: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research; Carol Owens, Council Staff

Meeting Convened: 2:04 pm

Meeting Adjourned: 3:35 pm

I. Welcome

Subcommittee Chair King welcomed the group and called for introductions.

II. Introduction of Subcommittee

Mr. King reviewed the subcommittee mission, which is to utilize data and research to identify possible methods by which to reduce and/or prevent crime. Mr. King also spoke about the difference between correlation and causation, and suggested that the group keep open minds as to the root causes of criminal behavior and not assume to already know. The floor was then opened for discussion.

III. Subcommittee Responsibilities/Plan/Goal/Objectives

The group discussed the database mentioned in the full commission meeting in November. Such a database would aggregate certain risk factors associated with those who commit violent crimes, and could be created through collaboration with JSO. By outlining a portrait of risk factors, it may be more clear how to deploy resources to prevent such crimes. Included among the list of risk factors were: age, gender, race, sexual identity, zip code of residence and incident, mentoring, after school program participation, finances, education, arrest history, drug/alcohol abuse, employment, housing, family incarceration, exposure to violence/domestic violence, gang activity, and access to guns. Other factors suggested for inclusion: answers to the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire, family composition, religious involvement, parental educational attainment, neighborhood culture/norms, and physical/sexual abuse. It was noted that JSO would have to be consulted about their support, but because the time of arrest is stressful and complicated, the subcommittee consensus was that Jacksonville Sheriff's officer making the arrest would NOT be the appropriate person to be collecting the data like was originally suggested at the larger commission meeting. Another possible source of data collection could be prisoner interviews, which could entail issues with access, ethical concerns, building trust and time.

It was decided that at the full commission meeting on Friday, the subcommittee will ask the other members to submit their risk factor assessment questions through council staff to be considered for implementation. The group agreed that any information to be studied needs to be Jacksonville specific, and not drawn from national or other state level data. The members also talked about what types of crimes should be focused upon by the subcommittee - only murders or should attempted murder, rape, and assault be included. Mr. Sloan said that enough demographic data exists already and that the focus should be on nonprofit grant fund accountability/performance measures, crime prevention and community support. Mr. King talked about the impact of resources and services on criminal behavior.

Ms. Burban questioned the driving purpose of the subcommittee, which she believed to be to create a list of questions for those who commit crimes which could then be implemented in some way. Ms. Grant emphasized the potential risks associated with trying to predict who will be a criminal, the need to individualize any list of those who commit crimes and examine what similarities or differences exist between those on that list and those who do not commit crimes. It was mentioned that, in addition to the Sheriff's Office, the State Attorney's Office and Public Defender could be helpful on this topic. Mr. Sloan talked about the CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which is rich with information from middle and high school students. Ms. Burban said that children who have stopped attending school/dropped out may have a greater chance of criminal behavior but would not be included in that survey.

Mr. Denton spoke about using existing academic research and inviting criminology professors to come and speak to the subcommittee. In the academic journal articles he read recently, Mr. Denton noted that rarely is criminal behavior attributed to one risk

factor exclusively (poverty, family structure/dysfunction, mental illness etc.). There are usually a combination of factors and often people exist under similar circumstances with differing outcomes. Mr. Denton mentioned that on a personal level, his own childhood was full of risk factors and adversity, but he did not commit crimes. Ms. Grant said that the group must examine protective factors as well, which are characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of problem outcomes or that reduce the negative impact of a risk factor. Mr. Denton and Ms. Grant may ask Vicki Waytowich to collaborate with them to examine academic research and formulate a relevant model of criminological theory.

IV. Public Comments

Stanley Scott spoke about the need for better leadership in the city and on the commission. Public comment card is on file.

V. Wrap-up/Adjournment

For the full commission meeting on 12.6.2019, the subcommittee will consult with the group to decide which specific crime types to study (ex. just murder, or just violent crime).

For the next subcommittee meeting, the members are hoping to have a better idea about what data will actually be available and accessible from the Sheriff's Office, Public Defender and State Attorney's Office.

Mr. Denton and Ms. Grant will ask fellow Commissioner Vicki Waytowich to join them and participate in a sub-subcommittee to look at existing academic criminological research.

The next subcommittee meeting will be January 14, 2020 at 2:30 pm.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research
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