

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

**(NO PHYSICAL LOCATION)**

**CM JOYCE MORGAN CM BOYLAN**

**SAFER TOGETHER WORKSHOP MINUTES**

**MAY 1, 2021**

**9:30 am**

Meeting Convened: 9:31 am Meeting Adjourned: 11:48 am

Attendance: CM Morgan and CM Boylan

Also: Peggy Sidman, Office of General Counsel; Heather Reber and Jeff Rodda, Auditor’s Office; Richard Distel and Yvonne Mitchell, Council Research; Dr. Tammy Hodo and Dr. Brian Van Brunt

CM Morgan opened the meeting. CM Boylan talked about civilian review boards and research done by Jeff Clements, Chief of Research, regarding what surrounding municipalities have done. CM Boylan talked about the work done by ICare. CM Morgan gave an overview of the topics which will be discussed in the workshop today.

Dr. Hodo asked Director Bruno to give his introduction. Director Bruno said he is glad to be on the call to have a conversation about these great programs. Dr. Van Brunt talked about the importance of community-based programs and the ability to build skills through these programs.

Stacy Peterson, Director of Duval County Teen Court Program, gave a description of how the program works. Teen Court is a pre-arrest diversion program designed for eligible misdemeanor offenders between the ages of 10-17. The program gives youth the opportunity to accept responsibility for their actions. Ms. Peterson talked about the importance of intervention to keep these kids out of the criminal justice system. Ms. Peterson explained that citations are given out at the scene of a crime. Specially trained youth serve as prosecutors and defense attorneys, bailiffs, and jury members. A volunteer judge, who is a practicing attorney oversees a mock trial and approves a sentence formulated by the jury. The defendant, along with their parent/guardian, signs a contract agreeing to complete all the assigned tasks. Upon successful completion of all tasks and restorative sanctions, no arrest or criminal charges will appear on the youth’s record. If a civil citation is not issued, then the officer must give a legitimate reason for it not being given. Admission of guilt is a requirement of being in the program. Case workers work with the intake, which is currently being done remotely due to the pandemic. Ms. Peterson explained the sanctions that are given to those that go through teen court.

CM Boylan asked the size of the program. Ms. Peterson said there are currently 200 teens active in the program. In 2020 there were 450 kids, and in 2019 it was 650. Dr. Van Brunt asked about the demographics of the population. Wells Todd asked about the accreditations of the clinicians. Ms. Peterson said they have contracts with service providers in the community. Kelly Coker, Duval County School Board Member, asked if they will use technology going forward to make sure kids can stay in school while in the program. Ms. Peterson said they are looking into that to make sure they do not need to take kids out of school. Nathan Alexander asked how many people do not get the citation signed because the parent is not available. Director Bruno talked about the civil citations that JSO issues which is in step with the State Statute. These civil citations are reviewed every two weeks.

Amy Reid, Director of Juvenile Justice Program, talked about the Kids Hope Alliance Diversion Program and the groups which they work with through the program. There are approximately 400 to 600 cases per the year and the program receives kids pre and post arrest. There are also non-arrest cases which come from an incident report and instead of filing charges they are diverted to the program. They work with the families to make sure there are as few obstacles as possible for the kids. Ms. Reid explained their assessment process and the 3-tier system which correlates with the length of time a juvenile can spend in the program - from 60 days to 180 days depending on the tier. Sonja Jones asked about youth avoiding records and whether there is an audit done to capture what the racial breakdown is of those that were arrested and not diverted.

Chief George Pratt explained Adult Drug Court and JSO’s involvement in the program. Chief Pratt explained that it is a 12-month minimum court diversion program. The number of admissions for 2020 was 43, a large reduction from previous years which were more than 100 admissions. There have been 44 people who have successfully completed the program. Dr. Hodo asked if Drug Court handles marijuana arrests. Chief Pratt said it is focused on harder drugs such as meth, fentanyl, heroin, and cocaine. Kiersten Washell asked about the cost of the program. Chief Pratt said there is a cost of $480 per person for the whole treatment and a public defender application fee. Wells Todd highlighted that these discussions are about community issues. CM Boylan talked about the work that is being done in the State Legislature and that these programs being discussed today are not all JSO programs.

Bobbie O’Connor voiced frustration feeling that these meetings are not getting to the root of the problem. Ms. O’Connor said she believes there is systemic racism in JSO. Director Bruno said these workshops are focused on looking at the baseline and where JSO can do better in community policing. Director Bruno pushed back at the statement that JSO is systemically racist. Dr. Hodo gave a definition of structural racism.

Paul Tutwiler, Cure Violence, talked about their program, how it helps the community and how it is an alternative to programs which run through JSO. Cure Violence is focused on diffusing the problem of violent crime. Jacqueline Collier talked about how the program is focused on different areas of Jacksonville experiencing patterns of violence. Cure Violence focuses on building trust and relationships within the community they serve.

YSRYL YSRYL thanked CM Morgan and CM Boylan for taking the time to have this workshop. Adrian Kelly talked about a police interaction that made him and children feel uncomfortable at an event. Director Bruno said it is important for the community to open to have a conversation with officers and give them the benefit of the doubt. Maria Garcia asked about police accountability. CM Morgan said there are many subcommittees and committees which are looking into the issues around police accountability and where funding is directed. Michael Sampson said it is important for people in Jacksonville to feel that they have a seat at the table in these discussions. Dr. Hodo said that the next meeting will take place on May 21st at 9:30 am.

Minutes: Richard Distel, Council Research

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