

Community Engagement Taskforce Meeting

City of West Palm Beach Police Department

600 Banyan Blvd.

West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Wednesday, February 14, 2023, at 12:00 pm

Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Barbara Cheives, Co-Chair
Chief Javaro Sims, Co-Chair (Retired)
Major Chris Keane, PBSO
Capt. Todd Baer, PSO
Chief Asst. State Attorney, Cheo Reid
Chief Asst. Public Defender, Daniel Eisinger
Ricky Petty, Director, Healthier Boynton Bach
Ontario Johnson, Neighborhood Renaissance
Adam McMichael, Asst. US Attorney
Greta Britt, United Believers
Jeanette Marshall, Healthier WPB
Annie Ifill, Healthier Belle glade
Kenya Madison, Healthier Delray Beach
Rev. Kevin Jones, West Palm Beach Police Department

Guests Present

Arlene Griffiths, Public Safety Department
Jessica Hidalgo, Public Safety Department

Staff Present

Rosalind Murray, CJC
Regenia Herring, CJC

Co-Chairmen, Cheives and Sims opened the meeting. Participants made introductions.

Retired Chief Sims requested approval of the agenda. The agenda and minutes of October 26, 2022 was approved by Cheo Reid, and seconded by Dan Eisinger.

Update on Community Engagement Activities

Jessica Hidalgo, Re-Entry Manager stated that based upon feedback from the Dialogue to Change, they applied for a grant for Re-Entry from the DOJ last year in August 2022. They were awarded the grant in November 2022 for the Glades. The grant will include many of the same services providers that currently supply housing, employment, education, a gambit of things. The planning process is just starting. We have had conversation with CL Bumbreck Health Clinic for utilization of services. We will know more as we continue the planning process.

Mr. Reid, asked is it only for adults. Ms. Hidalgo replied, yes it is only for adults. There is a potential for expansion. We had a meeting with the Re-Entry Taskforce and the CJC asking for additional funds. We can easily replicate the offering now because of the current footprint for re-entry. Ms. Herring added that we have had conversations on asking for additional dollars. She is not sure of the timing knowing how tight the budget will be. Chief Sims asked if we should wait to see how the first phase goes. Ms. Herring stated that we have to determine where the ask will come from; Public Safety or CJC. Ms. Hidalgo stated money could be used for building capacity out there in the Glades. It is a three-year grant. Ms. Murray asked Jessica did you state how many clients would be served from the grant. A minimum of 30 individuals per year. How many people are released to the Glades yearly asked Ms. Cheives. Ms. Hidalgo did not have statistics. It is a sizable number. Ms. Herring states the budget process is coming up soon. We must great a winning strategy for this request. It is needed in the Glades. Ms. Cheives shared information about the Department of Corrections Mobile Unit. She sits on Board of Lord's Place and they have a mobile van. Why not have a mobile unit? It was donated by GL Homes. Why can't we use a concept like this? Ms. Herring states the purpose of the grant is to provide service in the Glades in accordance with community wishes. The Dialogue group is just a service to study. We must build capacity in the communities. The people can do the work, they just must be trained to further refine their services.

Ms. Cheives asked if we have sent out regular updates on the Dialogue. We should send out regular updates as to where we stand on this. Ms. Murray said, Jessica and I talked back in December on how to provide updates to folks especially one of this magnitude. I was waiting for Public Safety's lead since it is their grant. Ms. Herring stated that Rosalind and I talked the other day about other issues, Delray Beach request for Racial Equity Training. The REI training is in the police budget in the Police Budget. Retired Chief Sims said that he would reach out to the new Chief to see if it is still in budget. Ms. Herring stated that, we can't require people to attend. Ms. Cheives said it was never a requirement. Ms. Herring said, I know but it may be interpreted as such. Our former county commission endorsed the nine items. Not sure, how the existing commission will feel about this. That is where we stand with Delray. Look at the iCard, Rosalind and Clerk came up with a unique process. Instead of printing a physical card, we will use the text reminder system to link the services of public defender and clerk via text message. They can put the case number into the system to keep abreast of their case. Uptrust can do this at no additional cost. Ms. Cheives said she appreciates the update but when will we get information to the people who participated? Ms. Herring stated I will be honest, we are working on the annual meeting. By the end of the month, let us provide an update. Ms. Cheives it is a credibility issue. They should get a monthly update. We will get it out by end of the month. Mr. Eisinger asked when would the iCard project be completed. Ms. Herring and Ms. Murray felt as though it would be up and running with our vendor, Uptrust this month. Mr. Eisinger asked that the iCard be included in update. Ms. Herring stated that in the comments section from our vender, Uptrust, that many people left comments that are not answered by anyone stating they had covid, or were sick, etc. and could not attend court.

Why Did you Stop me?

Captain Baer stated that everything is underway for next month's program. We are full to capacity so thank you all. Instructor wanted a maximum of 40 but the room holds 100 so we can increase, I am meeting with Executive Command on Thursday. They will use the training facility that was the Old Kings Academy. Ms. Cheives asked if young people could attend. Captain Baer stated that he will ask him but his gut says no. He will be here for a 5 day training, sworn, new hires, command, corrections, and supervisors. Saturday is for community. His target audience are folks who do not trust the Police. We

want those people in the room. He is a dynamic personality. Ms. Cheives went on to discuss someone who was part of the Dialogue who has no trust in law enforcement. She is the audience for this event.

Re-Entry Simulation

Adam McMichael from the US Attorney's Office addressed the Taskforce requesting support for this event. We all met back in the October. This Re-Entry Simulation was done last with the City of West Palm Beach in 2019. US Attorney brings the staff to run it but we need partners. Riviera Beach, Mayor's Office is supportive. We need help planning and we need support. The simulation lasts about a half day. Ultimately gives two sides, volunteers who represent probation officers, act as the Feds, etc. Then the group of participants, who are the returning citizens, some just released. They have tasks they must complete in 15-minute segments. There are impediments. You see that it become even more difficult as you miss the milestones for task. I have been a prosecutor for 17 years. I participated, walked in one way, and walked out changed. It helped me decide to do more than just prosecute. It is a fantastic program. I think it could be very successfully just getting one on the books in 2023. As it stands, we have staff that comes up from Miami. The date is reserved. We will help with volunteers. We need a minimum of 50 to be successful. It is a simple idea that has a ripple effect that can grow. I am not a planner. We have identified the Wells Recreation Center. Riviera Beach is the prime location; it is a designated area by the Department of Justice. We are focused on prosecuting and important to engage the community. We do food distribution every month in Riviera Beach. I am asking for your support and then on to the CJC for their support. We can get the volunteers. We just got 49 people to attend the Why Did you stop me event at PBSO. We will look for government leaders, business owners. Orie Bullard has been very helpful.

Ms. Herring would like for CJC Board members participate. If they understood, the plight that many go through, it would be impactful. Whole concept is perspective. It would be good to encourage participation. Co-Chairs could make this a recommendation at the Annual Meeting. Many leaders in system may participate. Let us get one in the book, create some traction. Ms. Cheives, the Lord's Place would be great for Volunteers. Michelle at the Economic Council, would be nice to see them participate Career Source is another good place for volunteers. Ms. Hidalgo asked to collaborate with the Re-Entry Task force. Returning citizens be part of this. Ms. Herring stated that we create a small work group. It is also Second Chance Month. Perhaps changing the date for the event because it is before it. Mr. McMichael stated I could be there to support the pitch. I can also create the outline. We need Riviera Beach Re-Entry to participate as well. Ms. Griffiths suggest we invite the new county commissioners. In the past, employers may not want the public to know that they support returning citizens, but I think the climate has changed. Ms. Herring suggested that she would set up individual meetings with Commissioners. Adam stated that last time we did not have a public presence but this may be different focus. Having press, etc. is important. Mr. Mc Michel asked when the meeting takes place. He will prepare an outline and create a planning group.

Member Comments

Ms. Herring stated that the community of Lake Worth Beach is now contemplating some aspects of the community's request from the Dialogue Group. Captain Foley who is in charge of mental health and behavioral health unit at PBSO, the Sheriff has a grant and if they reallocate this grant, perhaps Lake Worth could be a pilot for the program requested. It would be a specially trained law enforcement officer assigned to this beat. They are teamed with the MRT. Conceptually, it is a viable possibility.

Mr. Johnson stated how important it is to get information back to participants of the Dialogue. It is an important part of the information loop. We will need their help in the future. This is paying it forward.

Major Keene asked if there are two meetings on 2/27? Ms. Herring stated that the 27th is the date of the Annual Meeting that includes a strategic planning session. A survey was mailed to all of you for feedback. Community Engagement is a key part of this. The head of the McArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge will be in town doing a site visit that week. A series of smaller meetings will also be set up with some key stakeholders, including community members to provide a better understanding of Palm Beach County. We have an opportunity to highlight the work. We want candid conversations. Ms. Cheives asked if she is going to meet with large groups. Ms. Herring stated that it would be smaller groups.

Mr. Petty said it is important to have these candid conversations during and after the Annual Meeting. Mr. Sims is working on a Job Fair. He does not have a date or time. He is working with Pastor Dames to host a Law Enforcement Community Forum. A Delray Beach Forum with law enforcement was sponsored by Alphas. One of the residents asked a question of the Delray Beach Chief, had you had the talk with your kids? He had no idea, thought it was the birds and bees. We need cultural competency in law enforcement. It is about the culture. Chief Sims said we have to keep law enforcement and community together and talking. Chief Sims has asked people to come with prepared questions for law enforcement.

Major Keene said this is the exact purpose of this training. We are super excited about this training. We discussed Second Chance Month. Ms. Griffith stated we bring focus and awareness to re-entry in month of April. Law Enforcement will have a major paradigm shift. Prediction is feeling will be 50/50. It will challenge folk's perception of their own views. I would not gage success immediately that we do not leave the meeting with a definite set feeling. It is perhaps something that should stay with you for a while for that aha moment. A survey will be provided. Ms. Herring said I think key is willingness to do this. Ms. Cheives asked would this consultant ever have community and law enforcement in the same room. Maybe in the future. If we see, value and then we host repeatedly. The timing of this event is good. Major Keane stated, this is always a good time for something like this. We are taking applications and looking for talent on our staff. Chief Sims talked about the process for hiring and how difficult it is. Ms. Herring talked about the cultural understanding. The difficulty in the psychology and lie detector testing. There is a skill set for passing the tests.

Meeting adjourned at 1:20 pm.