

# Meeting Minutes

Village of Downers Grove  
Human Service Ad Hoc Committee

---

Committee Room

01/28/20

7:00 PM

---

## I. Call to Order

Village Manager Dave Fieldman called the meeting of the Human Service Ad Hoc Committee of the Village of Downers Grove to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Committee Room of the Downers Grove Village Hall.

## II. Roll Call

**Committee Members Attendance (Present):** Samantha Aycock (chair), Chris Gilmartin, Tom Connolly, Azizi Marshall, Kimberly Nagy, Becky Campbell

**Absent:** Stephanie Williams

**Staff:** Village Manager David Fieldman, Police Chief Shanon Gillette, Fire Chief Jeff Pindelski, Deputy Village Clerk Village April Holden

**Guests:** Cavanaugh Gray

## III. Introduction of Committee Members and Staff Liaison

Committee members and staff introduced themselves. Dave Fieldman, Village Manager, introduced Village Commissioner Cavanaugh Gray.

## IV. Purpose of the Human Service Ad Hoc Committee

Mr. Fieldman said the previous Committee has done great work and has already produced a report addressing the role of the Human Service Committee and what it should do to support the Village Council. That report was presented to Council in August and September 2019 and was well received. The Council directed the Committee to build on this report with respect to more specific recommendations and actions, and to prioritize the actions.

Mr. Fieldman said there are many services provided by a variety of groups. The Committee will hear from them.

## V. Committee Deliverables

Mr. Fieldman said the Committee is charged with updating the report with more specific recommendations and actions. In terms of specific deliverables, a written report is due 6/30/2020.

## **VI. Review of Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Fieldman said human service providers will make presentations at the first four meetings. The last two meetings will be devoted to putting together the report. He said they would start with the internal team – Police and Fire Departments. They will hear from representatives of the Downers Grove Public Library and School Districts 58 and 99 in February. In March there will be presentations from representatives of Downers Grove Township and DuPage County, and in April, there will be presentations from representatives of local non-profit organizations. He noted that there will be flexibility in the schedule if more time is needed to compile the report.

Ms. Campbell asked about broadening the spectrum and scope.

Mr. Fieldman said he would like to hear from other Committee members regarding this.

Ms. Aycock mentioned funding and Ms. Campbell said that was a big concern.

Mr. Fieldman said the Council is aware that a funding component is part of this.

Ms. Aycock said the former Committee had great ideas but they came with a price tag and the Committee has no budget. She said it is smart to look at what is available at no cost.

Ms. Campbell said there was discussion about research funding.

Mr. Fieldman spoke about the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and the funding of that Corporation. He said the charge of the EDC has been narrowly focused. He said the Committee discussed including human services in the EDC focus. Mr. Fieldman said the economic condition of the Village has improved over the last several months.

Mr. Gilmartin asked if the Committee is hearing about programs to determine the gap, or to learn of programs.

Ms. Aycock said it is both. She spoke about addressing human services people need.

Mr. Gilmartin said some of what the Committee is to do is to determine whether the Human Service Commission should be reinstated. This Committee will disband in six months.

Ms. Nagy said a recommendation in the previous report was to reconstitute the Commission.

## **VII. Presentations by Village Staff**

Fire Chief Jeff Pindelski said the Fire Department conducts several programs. He provided information on the following:

### Smoke Alarm Program

Under this program, the Village installs smoke alarms in residential units at no cost to the resident. Fire Department staff identify residential buildings which may benefit from the program because they have an elevated risk of experiencing a fire or have high rates of calls for service. Most of these buildings house a large number of senior residents. Fire Department staff inspect the buildings and install smoke alarms in units that lack functioning alarms. Chief Pindelski said 300 smoke alarms were installed last year. He noted that all fire apparatus and Chief vehicles carry smoke alarms to install anytime one may be needed on a call where an alarm is absent or not working properly. Oftentimes, this is in lower socioeconomic homes or homes where elderly or disabled individuals reside.

### Senior Life Safety Education

Under this program, the Village hosts educational presentations designed to improve safety for senior residents. Fire Department staff identify facilities and buildings as high risk or having high rates of calls for service. Staff then visit these locations and host free educational presentations for making the homes safe from fire hazards, for

developing evacuation plans, and for eliminating trip and fall hazards and other medical emergencies. Chief Pindelski said this is a regular program of the Fire Department.

#### Community Care Program (CCP)

This program, established in 2014, provides services to residents who have a history of frequent calls for emergency services and who demonstrate a need for additional assistance beyond emergency services. Through this program, the Village determines the frequency and nature of call, identifies trends in their level of self-care and then proactively provides services to these residents. Possible conditions needing additional assistance include but are not limited to physical limitations, mental health issues, financial issues, neglect, caregiver burnout, abuse, and hoarding. Services typically provided include conducting home safety inspections to eliminate hazards, providing a listing of resources that can offer assistance dependent on the individual's needs, and sharing information with hospital social workers, physicians or the individual's power of attorney.

Chief Pindelski said from 2014-2019, there have been 73 referrals. He gave an example wherein the Fire Department was able to share data with hospital staff that included the number of calls, trends, and the nature of the calls for a patient. The patient was released into a program with the help of physicians and the power of attorney.

#### Youth Firesetter Intervention Program

Through this program the Village attempts to reduce the likelihood of children intentionally starting fires. It targets children who have a curiosity to experiment or play with fire. Prevention education at the curiosity stage helps prevent destructive tendencies, delinquencies and violence when it is properly targeted, designed and delivered. The root causes of behaviors are explored as they can oftentimes indicate signs of a more severe nature such as neglect, abuse, bullying or mental illness. Chief Pindelski said the program is voluntary and is available to parents seeking assistance for behaviors which they have observed. In some cases, this program is mandatory as a part of an agreement with law enforcement. He told of a ten-year-old child who set a fire because he was not allowed to go out to play. There were serious underlying issues and the child required hospitalization. The program helped staff identify the problem.

Chief Pindelski said these are the predominant programs provided by the Fire Department.

Ms. Aycock asked as to the resources for these programs.

Mr. Fieldman said staff will provide a list.

Mr. Fieldman then introduced Police Chief Shanon Gillette. He said Chief Gillette has over 20 years of service with the Village.

Chief Gillette provided information on the following programs:

#### Elderly Service Officers

The Village provides specialized services to elderly residents by trained Elderly Service Officers. The Police Department has six certified Elderly Service Officers who have received specialized training hosted by the Illinois Attorney General's Office to educate police officers on issues affecting the elderly population. Topics of instruction include the detection and investigation of elder abuse, financial crimes targeting older individuals, and ruse burglaries. Elderly Service Officers provide educational programs to raise awareness of personal safety issues and crimes targeting the elderly. Chief Gillette said the Elderly Service Officers and the Police Department public education specialist partner to bring forth programs, such as the Scam Buster program.

#### Seniors Personal Safety Education

The Police Department's public education specialist partners with nonprofits, schools and churches to provide education on safety training and crime prevention. He said the Police Department worked with other Village departments to create a Scam Busters video to provide information to seniors to avoid common scams occurring

in the community. This series illustrates how common scams operate and offers useful tips on how to avoid them. Other video topics include IRS scams, Grandparent scams and utility scams. Our residents have lost thousands of dollars through scams. He said the Police Department is also reaching out to business owners this year regarding the use of gift cards in scams.

#### Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)

Chief Gillette said the Crisis Intervention Team follows up on mental health related incidents and connects people in crisis with service-based resources in and around Downers Grove. The Police Department has 22 certified CIT officers – 17 officers and 5 sergeants – who have received specialized training in mental health awareness, including mental health first aid, verbal de-escalation techniques, and connecting those in crisis with community resources. Chief Gillette said the Police Department has worked hard to raise awareness of this program. He said CIT officers respond to a police scene. Further, all police reports are reviewed by the CIT officers. In 2019, the Police Department responded to over 350 mental health related calls for service. Crisis intervention officers respond to such incidents to assist on-scene, or conduct follow-up outreach to connect individuals in crisis with service providers. The CIT maintains partnerships with many community stakeholders, including the DuPage County Health Department, NAMI DuPage, and DuPage PADS to provide appropriate referrals to those in need of services.

#### Language Line

Chief Gillette said the Police Department maintains an agreement with Language Line Interpreter Solutions to provide ADA compliant interpreter services, including American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for hearing impaired individuals. Police officers have immediate access to certified interpreters through an electronic application to facilitate communication, by video or conference call, with individuals while on the scene of traffic stops, accidents, crimes and other calls for service.

#### Peer Jury

Chief Gillette said this is a program for juvenile offenders. Peer Jury is a balanced and restorative justice program than provides a means for young offenders to account for their behavior to a group of peers and repair the harm caused to the victim and to the community. It holds the juvenile responsible and restores the victim. The Peer Jury program provides opportunities for minor offenses to be adjudicated through community service and education, while providing jurors a meaningful volunteer and leadership experience. This program was reinstated in January 2019. Chief Gillette said this is a very beneficial program in the Village and in DuPage County.

Chief Gillette said there are two pilot programs – the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) DuPage Direct Referral Pilot Program and the De-Centralized Mobile Crisis Response Pilot Program.

#### National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) DuPage Direct Referral Pilot Program

The Police Department has partnered with the National Alliance on Mental Illness to participate in the NAMI DuPage Direct Referral Pilot Program. Officers who respond to the scene of a mental health related incident that does not require hospitalization or immediate intervention may provide a voluntary referral to NAMI DuPage for follow-up counseling and mental health support services. Chief Gillette said this program fills a gap in services that are provided.

#### De-Centralized Mobile Crisis Response Pilot Program

The DuPage County Health Department has invited the Police Department to participate in a pilot program to improve access to mental health services. The De-Centralized Mobile Crisis Response initiative provides alternatives to emergency room admissions for qualifying mental health conditions. When contacted by a participating law enforcement agency, the DuPage County Health Department will provide in-home assessments, phone consultations, or will accept voluntary admissions to their in-patient treatment center for individuals in need of assistance but not requiring immediate hospitalization. This program allows for tiers of services.

DuPage PADS Partnership and Street Outreach

Lastly, Chief Gillette said the Police Department maintains a partnership with DuPage PADS to provide sheltering assistance to homeless individuals. Police officers conduct well-being checks during inclement weather and will provide transportation for homeless individuals who are eligible to stay at DuPage PADS shelters. A police sergeant serves as the Village's PADS liaison to maintain communication and partnership with PADS staff. The Police Department also provides referrals to the DuPage PADS Street Outreach program, in which PADS staff members will visit homeless individuals in the community to offer services. Chief Gillette said the department is in the midst of a two-week outreach with DuPage PADS.

Mr. Fieldman added that the Village opens up the train station when it is really cold, although it is not a formalized shelter. Police also do foot patrols in inclement weather.

Mr. Fieldman said the Village operates a taxi coupon program which provides subsidized taxi rides for qualified residents. The Village has also contributed an annual financial contribution of \$30,000 to the DuPage Senior Citizens Council for the Meals on Wheels program.

Ms. Aycock thanked the staff for the presentations. She said she was unaware of many of these services. She spoke about concierge services – to create an easily accessible document to let people know about these programs. She asked about the mental health pamphlet.

Chief Gillette said he would get a copy to the Committee.

Ms. Aycock said it is important to know that the phone numbers in a publication are working numbers.

Ms. Nagy noted that the Fire Department has a lot of services. She asked as to awareness of them.

Chief Pindelski said they look at large complexes; single family homes are by call for services.

Ms. Aycock asked if the Fire Department is staffed to provide services.

Mr. Fieldman said the Community Care Program was designed to be a cost reduction program. He said frequent callers for service caused the Department to be out of service for other needs. This was a way to reduce services, not expand them. There was discussion about advertising this program, but it was decided that it was out of our scope. The concern is that the demands would be massive and well beyond our scope.

Mr. Connolly noted that these are reactionary programs. He asked about proactive services.

Mr. Gilmartin spoke about resources.

Chief Pindelski said the Community Care Program works with resources at the hospital to divert services from 911 calls.

Ms. Nagy said this sounds like a useful program to add to the Committee's wish list.

Mr. Gilmartin spoke of leveraging data to prove its worth. The data will "sell" the program. They need to know how to think about programs in terms of the number of elderly and where the need is. It is also important to have an understanding of those things the department feels they should not be doing, such as moving furniture, etc.

Ms. Campbell said a Committee staff person could be a conduit to other services.

Ms. Aycock said the Council wants priority recommendations. She would not advise they do a budget analysis. Upon receiving recommendations, the Council could direct Dave to review budgetary matters.

Ms. Campbell spoke of accessibility. She said she looked on the Village's website for information regarding these services and it was difficult to find.

Mr. Connolly said the police see things at the street level that may not have been addressed.

Chief Gillette said this group and the Council provide direction as to programs.

Mr. Connolly asked as to the number of homeless.

Chief Gillette said he will get that information for the Committee.

Mr. Connolly asked about the number of wellness checks on homeless people.

Chief Gillette said it is nightly in inclement weather.

Mr. Fieldman said we check on people but they are not moved from their sheltering places. Mr. Fieldman said the Census Bureau is trying to conduct a count of the homeless.

Chief Gillette said there are 10-15 people the Police Department knows of; it ebbs and flows with the need for shelter.

Ms. Campbell asked about the number of homeless youth.

Chief Gillette said youth are typically seen in PADS shelters and the police do not typically go to the shelters. They do not typically see homeless youths on the streets.

Mr. Connolly asked about those ineligible for PADS.

Chief Gillette said the train station is open in bad weather but it is not a formal policy.

Mr. Connolly asked if drug related issues are included in mental health issues.

Chief Gillette said they are. All officers carry Narcan as do the firefighters. It is responsive to opioids. Opioid use has been on the rise. Chief Gillette said he will provide statistics on administering Narcan.

Mr. Gilmartin asked if there are things the departments would ask for where the Committee could help.

Chief Gillette said the department has been fortunate. He said we look at trends nationwide; the profession is proactive. In Downers Grove 32-33% of the officers are Crisis Intervention Team certified. He said they are open to new ideas and they keep an eye out for new trends.

Mr. Fieldman said service levels in both the Fire and Police Departments have increased without a change in policy or asking for more money or staff.

Chief Gillette said they are always looking to improve.

Ms. Campbell asked if there is a program in place for parents of children who have outbursts.

Chief Gillette said the department shares information. He said the officers are not mental health experts; they are outreach and networking experts. He spoke to issues such as threats, bullying, etc.

Ms. Aycock asked about the terms of the two pilot projects.

Chief Gillette said the NAMI project has been in place for six months and will continue.

In response to Ms. Aycock, Ms. Marshall, a therapist with NAMI, said most of their referrals come from parents. NAMI works to provide free or low cost services.

Chief Pindelski said the Fire Department is a model benchmark across the nation.

Mr. Connolly said the 911 response time is unbelievable. Cases are handled well and with empathy.

Mr. Fieldman spoke of the rating agencies for the Fire and Police Departments – both departments are outstanding.

Ms. Campbell said she learned a great deal from these presentations. She said the goal is to get more of these programs to residents.

Mr. Connolly said the Committee might be able to look at ways it can help.

### **VIII. Public Comment**

Village Commissioner Gray thanked the Chiefs for their presentations. He wants to see the Committee succeed. He spoke of his work with the homeless in Carbondale and issues affecting homeless people such as the need for hand warmers, socks, etc. He said everyone wants to see this group succeed.

### **IX. Adjourn**

Mr. Fieldman said follow-ups include providing resources of the Community Care Program, resources at the Police Department, confirming phone numbers in pamphlets distributed to people and statistics regarding Narcan use.

Ms. Campbell asked about an age breakdown for mental health reports.

Chief Gillette said he did not know if the information could be sorted that way.

Mr. Fieldman said a similar format will be used next month. He will email the list of nonprofits to the Committee members.

Ms. Marshall asked that NAMI be included.

Ms. Aycock asked that Hope for the Day be included.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

April Holden

Deputy Village Clerk