

**Village of Downers Grove  
Human Service Commission**

Village Hall  
801 Burlington Avenue  
March 22, 2022  
Meeting Minutes

Chair Aycock called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and asked for a roll call.

Members Present

Chair Aycock  
Member Drabik  
Member Loftus  
Member Skerjan

Members Absent

Member Galvez  
Member Nicholson  
Member Silvester

Chair Aycock declared that a quorum was present.

Chair Aycock asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2022 meeting.  
Motion to approve the minutes by Drabik; seconded by Skerjan.  
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Chair Aycock called on staff to provide an overview of the Village's Social Services Referral Program February Monthly Highlights.

Ms.Lippe provided the following report. During the month of February, 60 referrals were received with 83.3% of the residents accepting the resources provided. Types of resources provided included mental health services, housing/shelter, other Village services, Senior Services, Transportation, and Financial assistance programs. 48% of the referrals were requested by Village of Downers Grove Departments and 42% were requested by Village of Downers Grove residents and their families. The remaining were outside agencies and non-residents looking for assistance. 48% were direct referrals, 40% were telephonic referrals, 10% electronic referrals, and 2% were conducted in person. 68% of the referrals were handled by the Village Social Worker, 23% were handled by the Crisis Intervention Team, 3% were a collaborative approach by the Social Worker and the Crisis Intervention Team, and 2% were handled by the Community Care Program. Lippe is tracking the referrals that were not accepted.

Chair Aycock called on Downers Grove Fire Chief Scott Spinazola to provide an overview of the Fire Department's Community 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 this 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 which lack functioning alarms.

In addition, all fire apparatus and Chief vehicles carry smoke alarms to install anytime one may be needed on a call where one is absent or not working properly. Often times this is in lower socioeconomic homes or homes where elderly and disabled individuals reside. Chief provided an example of the Village installing about 300 smoke alarms at multi-family units in 2020.

Chief Spinazola said that school aged children are asked to inquire about smoke detectors at their own houses. Several hundred detectors were installed as part of this program. He also provided an example of a recent fire call at which the Village provided a smoke detector at a single family house. He noted that the Village was responding to several kitchen fire calls and then launched a kitchen safety informational program.

### 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, evacuation plans, eliminating trip and fall hazards and other medical emergencies. Since 2020, the Fire Department has made 14 educational presentations. Chief Spinazola provided an overview of the Vials for Life program to assist residents with managing medicines.

### Community Care Program (CCP)

The Community Care Program, established in 2014 by the Fire Department proactively provides services to residents who have a history of frequent calls for emergency services and demonstrate a need for additional assistance beyond emergency services. Through this program, the Village determines the frequency and nature of calls, 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 and hoarding. Examples of services typically provided under this program include:

- Conducting home safety inspections to eliminate any hazards contributing to the situation.
- Providing a listing of resources that can offer assistance dependent on the individual's needs.

- Sharing information with hospital social workers, physicians, or the individual's power of attorney.

The Community Care Program meets regularly with the Village Social Worker and Downers Grove Police Department to share information and resources. Chief Spinazola provided an example in which the Department was receiving multiple calls per day. The Department referred the resident to social service providers. He noted several community partners including PADS, Good Samaritan Hospital, DuPage County and others. The Department provided 32 referrals in 2021.

#### Youth Firesetter Intervention Program

Under this program, the Village attempts to reduce the likelihood of children intentionally starting fires. This program targets children who have 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 often indicate signs of a more severe nature such as neglect, abuse, bullying, or mental illness. In many cases, the children mimic behaviors they have seen at their house, but have difficulty understanding the behaviors. Many times the program educates adults.

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 part of an agreement with law enforcement.

Member Drabik asked about the data analyst systems and interconnection with the 9-1-1. Chief Spinazola said the Village uses a program called ESO to collect and analyze data. The dispatch center CAD system populates the ESO system.

Chair Aycock noted that she appreciates The Night at the Firehouse Program and conducts fire drills at her own house. The education provided at this event is very effective. The CCP is very interesting to the Human Service Commission. Ms. Lippe explained that she works closely with the Department in the CCP program to identify and connect residents in need of service to agencies that provide service.

Chair Aycock said that Chief Pindelski had noted previously that the FD responded to several calls that would not require a fire or EMS response. Chief Spinazola confirmed that the Department does respond to these types of calls. These calls are relayed to the CCP operators.

Member Skerjan asked about the training of firefighters to identify potential social service issues. Chief Spinazola said that this is part of the training and firefighters are aware of the conditions and circumstances that may indicate other types of issues.

Chair Aycock called on Downers Grove Police Chief Shanon Gillette to provide an overview of the Fire Department's Community Programs. He provided the following information:

### Crisis Intervention Team

The Crisis Intervention Team follows up on mental health-related incidents and works alongside the Village Social Worker to connect people in crisis with service based resources in and around the Downers Grove community. All officers receive Crisis Intervention training. The Police Department has 33 certified Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officers who have received specialized certification in mental health awareness, including mental health first aid, verbal de-escalation techniques, and connecting those in crisis with community resources. Officers develop a high sense of empathy and strong listening skills.. The Crisis Intervention Team meets regularly with the Village Social Worker and Downers Grove Fire Department to share information and resources. The program has improved since the arrival of the Village Social Worker. The Police Department works closely with the Fire Department under this program.

In 2021, the Downers Grove Police Department responded to over 540 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 Crisis Intervention Team maintains partnerships with many community stakeholders, including the DuPage County Health Department, NAMI of DuPage, and DuPage PADS to provide appropriate referrals to those in need of services.

### Elderly Service Officers

Under this program, 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 provided a summary of the Scambuster education program and gift card scam prevention program.

### Seniors Personal Safety Education

The Police Department's Public Education Specialist partners with nonprofit organizations, schools, and churches to provide education on safety training and crime prevention. The department also worked with other Village departments to create Scam Busters videos to provide information to seniors to avoid common scams occurring in the community. The Scam Busters series illustrates how common scams operate and offers useful tips on how to avoid them. Topics include IRS scams, grandparents scams, and utility scams.

### Language Line

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 with individuals while

on the scene of traffic stops, accidents, crimes, and other calls for service. The officers' smart phones have an app to access these services.

#### Peer Jury

Peer Jury is a balanced and restorative justice program that 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. 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. More information can be found on the Village's [website](#).

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

The Police Department has partnered with the National Alliance on Mental Illness to participate in the NAMI of DuPage Direct Referral 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 of DuPage for follow-up counseling and mental health support services. The Village Social Worker also has the ability to provide a voluntary referral for follow-up counseling and mental health support services.

#### De-Centralized Mobile Crisis Response Program

The DuPage County Health Department invited the Downers Grove 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. The pilot program has concluded, and this is now an ongoing service accessible to the Police Department.

#### DuPage PADS Partnership and Street Outreach

The Police Department works with the Village Social Worker to maintain a partnership with DuPage PADS to provide sheltering assistance to homeless individuals. A police sergeant serves as the Police Department's PADS liaison to maintain communication and partnership with PADS staff. The Police Department works alongside the Village Social Worker to provide referrals to DuPage PADS Street Outreach Program, in which PADS staff members will visit homeless individuals in the community to offer services.

Member Loftus asked about the age of the offenders in the Peer Jury. Chief Gillette said that the offenders must be students at high school or middle schools.

Chair Aycock asked about any incentives offered to Officers to achieve CIT certification. Chief Gillette said there are no incentives. The Village pays for the training and Officers volunteer to be part of the program.

Member Loftus asked about any changes in the profession regarding an increase in social work related calls.

Chief Spinazola said there is greater awareness and therefore an increase in the services being provided.

Chair Aycock asked if there are specific issues or service gaps that need to be addressed. Chief Gillette noted that services are available in the County and the addition of Ms. Lippe to the staff has improved the Village's ability to connect residents in need of services to these services.

Chair Aycock summarized the first meeting of the HSAHC where members noted the many social service needs of the community and how they HSAHC learned at subsequent meetings that service providers are available in the County.

Chair Aycock asked if the FD and PD have access to the senior resource guide. Ms. Lippe said that they do.

Ms. Lippe explained the Village's taxi cab coupon program - a 50% subsidy on taxi rides. Staff goes to senior living facilities to register people for this program. Three licensed taxi companies participate in this program. The number of coupons sold has declined in the past several years, perhaps due to the pandemic.

Ms. Lippe explained the Village's financial contribution to the Meals on Wheels program. This program includes friendship calls and minor home repair referrals.

Chair Aycock noted that this session will be helpful in identifying social services gaps.

Chair Aycock asked for any public comments.

David Rose asked if there is a distinction between when the FD or PD is called. Chief Spinazola explained that the dispatch center makes a decision based on information provided by the caller.

Mr. Rose asked about the effectiveness of using FD and PD personnel to respond to social services type calls. He asked if there was a definition and differentiation of social services calls. Ms Lippe explained that the PD and FD respond when the call for service is of an emergency nature. She noted that social workers are not required to or necessary to respond to these types of calls.

Chair Aycock asked about experiences in other states and trial programs in this area.

Manager Fieldman explained the new state law about social services responses which will establish a system for social service providers to respond to calls for social service needs. The system will be established several years from now.

Mr. Rose asked about efforts and programs designed to prevent or divert social service calls from being 9-1-1 emergency calls. Chair Aycock noted that the Village's program summarized here tonight are examples of this effort. Member Loftus said the Village's Social Service Referral Program is designed to achieve this goal. Chair Aycock asked "What else can we do?" - a legitimate question for the Human Service Commission to consider.

Mr. Rose asked about the previous Village services and the current Village program. Manager Fieldman stated that the Village previously operated a Counseling Services program and now operates a Social Services program.

Mr. Rose asked why municipalities would have to be in the business of service referral programs. Ms. Lippe noted that residents may not recognize they need services or may not be aware that services are provided. Manager Fieldman explained that individual social service agencies may lack the resources to effectively communicate to the general public about the services they provide. Municipalities have resources and systems to communicate with the public. Therefore, municipalities are positioned well to inform community members about social service providers and refer residents to these service providers.

Mr. Rose asked about the process for identifying social services gaps. Manager Fieldman noted that this will be the topic of the April HSC.

Chair Aycock asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn by Member Drabik; seconded by Member Skerjan  
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:14pm.