



**Longmont Housing and Human Services Advisory Board
Special Meeting
Minutes of July 23, 2020 Meeting**

Members Present: Jake Marsing, Madelyn Woodley, Graham Steers, Brian Coppom, Kaitlin Abbitt, Deanna Blair, Karen Phillips, Ann Baldwin arrived at 5:35, Polly Christensen (Council Liaison) arrived at 6:00 p.m.

Members Absent: Shaquita Yarbrough

Staff Present: Karen Roney, Eliberto Mendoza, Nicole Blair

Guests Present: None

Agenda Item 1: ***Call to Order:*** LHHSAB Chair Brian Coppom called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Agenda Item 2: ***Public invited to be heard:*** No public present.

Agenda Item 3: ***Review final draft of Request for Increased Funding Letter:*** The Advisory Board workgroup which consisted of Graham Steers, Madelyn Woodley, and Deanna Blair, along with staff member Eliberto Mendoza, created a draft letter to City Council that was presented to the Advisory Board for review and discussion. Staff members Karen Roney and Eliberto Mendoza also drafted a letter, which represents what staff would recommend should Council ask for staff's opinion about the HHSAB's request. The major difference between these letters is amount of increase being requested and the source of this revenue increase. In the Advisory Board's draft letter to City Council 10% of the police services' budget, which equates to approximately \$2.1 million, is being requested to be transferred to human service funding. Staff's letter is asking Council to stay on its current course to increase the human service funding set aside to 3% of General Fund revenues by 2022.

Board members acknowledged the value of this difficult conversation that the Advisory Board has had, and the video should be shared with others as an example of how to effectively engage in hard conversations about race and equity. The Advisory Board has done an amazing job at having these difficult conversations, and members took a moment to again thank each

other for their thoughtful, open/honest and respectful discussion. The Advisory Board would like Council to watch the recording of these meetings to fully understand the work that is being done as well as understanding how heavy this topic is weighing on everyone's minds.

The Advisory Board listened to the work group provide a summary of their letter and then staff provided a summary as well.

The Advisory Board workgroup shared that they wanted to make the letter firmer in hopes that City Council wouldn't just read it and push it aside; they felt that asking for 10% from the police services' budget would get their attention. It was no one's intention to blame or punish police services by suggestion a 10% reduction in their budget. The Advisory Board doesn't want to send a letter to Council that doesn't represent a unanimous opinion among board members, and that staff couldn't support, if asked. The point of the work group was to construct a letter to get 100% support. The letter was edited in real time during the work group meeting and the main points are that non-profits have needed and continue to need increased funding. The Advisory Board felt like it was a good letter and appreciated the work that was done.

Staff discussed their letter. Their intention was to articulate their opinion, should City Council ask for it. After reviewing the advisory board's draft letter, staff was compelled to draft a letter that it believed captured the advisory's board purpose and intent, but offered an alternative funding strategy to support increased human services. Staff believed that asking for 10% to be re-directed from the police services budget was a non-starter, and lessened the effectiveness of the Advisory Board's message and request. Staff also wanted to be transparent with the Advisory Board about staff's response in the event that Council asked its opinion about the Advisory Board's request. The Advisory Board asked staff if they don't think the right thing to do is to allocate 10% or just don't think it is a request that council will hear; staff said it is both. The Advisory Board asked if staff would be supportive if the percentage was changed to 5%. Staff indicated that it was not in favor of any amount being re-directed, but stated that staff's role is not to work against what the Advisory Board wants to do, and that staff would not do that.

A lengthy discussion was held discussing various points and opinions on this difficult topic. Highlights of the discussion follow. The Advisory Board agreed that everyone wants a safer community and both letters serve that purpose. Believe we can get there by having a greater level of human service funding. Asking for 10% will definitely provoke a conversation, but also can be seen as punitive. Don't have precise targets for how that additional funding will be used which takes on symbolic

meaning rather than practical meaning; need to articulate how this additional money will create a safer community. What is the path to a safer community? If taking 10% from police services' budget means fewer police on the street, what will that look like? Are our human service agencies currently equipped to go into the situations that the police go into? Do they need training is there a transition plan for moving duties from the police to human service agencies? It will put us at odds with the police department and they are our partner in serving the community. We need to capture the moment and take action on systems change.

There is a major difference in the public safety budget compared to human service budget and some believe it's important to make a strong stance and reallocate funding priorities. Reducing funding is not punishing; it is a change in funding priorities. Need systemic changes along with alternatives and systems to ensure accountability. Other key points from the Advisory Board discussion:

- Is more training on handling behavioral health issues needed?
- Is more training regarding bias needed?
- Unintended consequences of budget reductions (e.g. staff reductions); need better understanding of police operations and/or programs before making a suggestion about budget reduction
- Need to clarify purpose of letter to Council and what Advisory Board is trying to accomplish
- Want to encourage ongoing opportunities for the community to provide input to police/city officials and to share their experiences (both positive and negative); could Longmont Public Media have a role in this?

Some procedural questions were asked about how the Advisory Board's letter would be shared and considered.

The Advisory Board expressed interest in leading and/or participating in community discussions about systemic changes within police operations and the relationship between police services and non-profit providers in the human service delivery system. What is the right delivery system for human services – particularly involving crisis services? Should human services be embedded within police operations?

After the discussion some closing questions were raised:

Should we be sending a letter at all?

Do we take more time; spend some time exploring this issue, sending out surveys, etc. to see what changes we really need to do and then go from there?

What is best route to get the conversation started?

Council Member Christensen was asked if council needs a letter or can council take the conversation about policing and reallocation of money without one. Council Member Christensen feels that Council does need the letter to get the conversation started; Advisory Board support is critical for City Council to have a conversation and schedule a presentation with police services.

Graham Steers motioned to submit the first letter, which is the letter drafted by the work group; the motion was seconded by Jake Marsing. The motion failed: 2-5-1.

Jake Marsing motioned to formally support Council Member Christensen in bringing this conversation to City Council, as recorded in this official record of the HHSAB's July 23 meeting. The motion was seconded by Madelyn Woodley. The motion passed unanimously. This topic will be added to the August HHSAB to determine any further action at this time.

Agenda Item 4: ***Other business:*** None

Agenda Item 5: ***Adjournment:*** There being no other business to conduct, the meeting adjourned by consent at 7:21 p.m.