

Board of Supervisors
Safety and Security Committee Minutes
January 30, 2024 at 1:30 PM
Government Center Conference Room 11

Board of Supervisors (Board) Members present:

Rodney Lusk, Franconia District (Committee Chair) – In Person
James Walkinshaw, Braddock District (Vice Chairman) – In Person
Jeff McKay, Chairman – In Person
James Bierman, Dranesville District – In Person
Walter Alcorn, Hunter Mill District – In Person
Andres Jimenez, Mason District – In Person
Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District – In Person
Dalia Palchik, Providence District – In Person
Pat Herrity, Springfield District – In Person
Kathy Smith, Sully District – In Person

The Safety and Security Committee (Committee) meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

The National Opioid (Fentanyl) Crisis and Fairfax County’s Response Strategy:
1:35 p.m.

The first item was a presentation on the national opioid (fentanyl) crisis and Fairfax County’s response strategy. Presenters were Ellen Volo, Fairfax County Opioid and Substance Abuse Task Force Coordinator, Community Services Board (CSB); Lt. Kevin White, Overdose Investigations Unit, Police Department; Abbey May, Deputy Director of Clinical Operations, CSB; Mike Axler, Director of Intervention and Prevention Services, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS); and Stefan Mascoll, Student Safety and Wellness Coordinator (FCPS). Volo shared an overview of the County’s Opioid Response Plan, local overdose data that shows 2023 data is trending higher than 2022, and information about fentanyl.

Lt. White discussed the local illicit drug supply, the role of the Police Department’s Overdose Investigations Unit, and their outreach efforts, which includes educating the community about safe reporting laws, participating in community meetings, and training law enforcement.

Ellen Volo then highlighted how the County is using money from the opioid settlement funds for eight projects, ranging from prevention to treatment, to advance the County’s Opioid Response Plan. Abbey May shared an update about the OAA Cooperative Regional Award for youth detox/residential services.

Mike Axler reviewed the governor's executive order that requires school districts to notify families of school-connected overdoses and how FCPS is implementing the order. To date, three community notifications have been sent.

Board members shared their appreciation for the significant work County agencies and FCPS have been doing to address the opioid crisis. Members then asked questions about outreach and prevention strategies in elementary schools, timeline for the planned youth detox/residential facility, federal and state support to address the supply of illicit fentanyl, vaping in schools and its nexus to illicit drug use, clinical workforce recruitment, and regional trends.

Proposed Department of Animal Sheltering (DAS) and Control Services Consolidation: 2:10 p.m.

Deputy County Executive for Safety and Security Thomas Arnold provided an introduction of the presentation on the consolidation of animal services. He acknowledged the shift in focus of public safety agencies towards prevention and service provision at the community level. He highlighted the proposed model's shift in focus to a community model that continues to prioritize the safety of animal populations and communities.

Chief of Police Kevin Davis spoke about the passion of Animal Protection Police and that this discussion doesn't focus on individual officers or their performance. He stated that uniting Animal Sheltering and Animal Control under one chain of command is the right structure for the future. He also noted that this model is consistent with what he has experienced in other jurisdictions.

Deputy Chief of Police Robert Blakey noted the challenges related to goal conflict between a law enforcement mission and a sheltering mission that can cause organizational strife. He noted that Animal Protection Police undergo rigorous training and are required to maintain law enforcement certification, however, policy prohibits them from utilizing these skills. Deputy Chief Blakey stressed that under the new model, there will be very little to no change in the delivery of services. Animal Control Officers will work alongside the Fairfax County Police Department for complex criminal investigations, which is the model Animal Protection Police Officers use today. Deputy Chief Blakey noted that under the proposed model, there will be no change in handling animal-related calls for services.

Reasa Currier, Director of Animal Sheltering, explained the benefits of uniting animal care and control services under one department focused on providing services to keep families and pets together. She noted that a united model that engenders compliance through tiered enforcement is embraced as industry best practice and is utilized by jurisdictions nationwide. She emphasized that the safety of the community will remain a top priority and that Animal Control Officers have the same scope of authorities as Animal Protection Police Officers. Director Currier emphasized that the new model will

prioritize the placement of wildlife with licensed rehabilitators and will invest in the county's support of wildlife rehabilitation. She also discussed how the proposed structure will further the county's equity goals and the One Fairfax Policy.

Next steps involve the proposal being integrated into the county executive's advertising budget in February and proceeding through the budget process. Upon the Board of Supervisors' approval of the FY25 budget, Animal Protection Police Officers will be surveyed to decide whether they will transition to Animal Control Officers or Fairfax County Police Officers. Animal Protection Police pay and retirement will remain unaffected by the change. A transition team will then be formed, and the Chief Animal Control Officer will be recruited. The estimated duration for the transition is 18-24 months, ensuring no lapse in services.

Discussion of board members included:

- Cost savings associated with the consolidated model
- Expansion of services through the new model
- Increase in stray pets in Richmond Highway Corridor
- The duration during which two tiers of pay will be implemented for APPOs and ACOs, and the collaborative approach involved
- The implementation of wildlife management

Additional Information: N/A

The Committee meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2024 at 3:00 p.m