

**Summary of the Board of Supervisors’  
Public Safety Committee Meeting  
February 9, 2016**

**Members in Attendance:** Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova  
Supervisor John C. Cook, Public Safety Committee Chairman  
Supervisor John W. Foust  
Supervisor Penelope A. Gross  
Supervisor Pat Herrity  
Supervisor Catherine M. Hudgins  
Supervisor Jeff C. McKay  
Supervisor Kathy L. Smith  
Supervisor Linda Q. Smyth  
Supervisor Daniel G. Storck

**County Executives:** Edward L. Long, Jr., County Executive  
Patricia Harrison, Deputy County Executive  
David Rohrer, Deputy County Executive

Supervisor John Cook, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:34 AM.

Supervisor Cook opened the meeting with a statement on the excellent quality and importance of public safety in the County, the importance though to reengage the Public Safety Committee as a recurring committee meeting with the spirit that the County should strive to be the best and improvements can always be made. He also outlined some of the public safety topics he plans to schedule for future meetings.

**Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission Update**

Supervisor John Cook, Committee Chairman, Deputy County Executive Dave Rohrer, Police Chief Edwin Roessler, Jr., and others presented, a copy of which is attached.

Supervisor Cook provided an overview of the process regarding the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission Report Recommendations, and how he intends to schedule discussion on the recommendations each of the subcommittees made, and focus the work and direction to staff going forward. All work will be fully transparent.

- **Staff Presentation/Recommendations:**
  - Deputy County Executive (DCE) Rohrer presented an overview of the *Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission Report Recommendations Assignment and Tracking Spreadsheet* and how it will be used. For each of the 202 recommendations, among other classifications to be included going forward, a “Lead Agency/Entity,” “Other Agencies/Stakeholders,” “Link to PERF Report/CALEA,” “Potential Legal Review/Legislative Change Required,” and “Approving Authority” have been assigned as appropriate. He also spoke to the primary initial focus areas he and agencies have been working on, specifically use-of-force philosophy, training, and policy and Diversion First.
  - Chief Roessler provided an *Overview of Re-Engineering of Police Department Use of Force Philosophy, Training, and Policies*. He spoke to the mission and core

- values, such as the “sanctity of life,” accountability, and the importance of community policing to maintain effectiveness trust.
- Further, Chief Roessler also noted that the Department continues to participate in the following activities and organizations that have influenced the Department’s philosophy, training, and policies:
    - Use-of-Force Review – Police Executive research Forum (PERF)
    - National accreditation being pursued through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA)
    - Ad Hoc Commission - input from members and an engaged community
  - Examples of tactical policies that have been updated include revising the Criminal Justice Academy order of training to focus up-front on the sanctity of life, etc.; recruit training; crisis intervention training; training for supervisors and commanders; certifying 20 lead trainers on de-escalation and critical decision-making models; and recruiting a civilian director of the Public Affairs Bureau (formerly the Public Information Office).
  - Several representatives of sworn officers participated in a ***Discussion and Perspective of Commission Recommendations***. Detective Sean Corcoran with the Fairfax Coalition of Police Local 5000 provided perspective on the recommendations, noting that there is a level of anxiety among officers on the street. He asked the County to remember that the intent of the recommendations is to make a good organization better and that the matrix recommendations should be prioritized. He spoke to the concerns and challenges faced by officers and the department, including concerns of officers as to the lack of understanding by some on the legal standards for use of force. Master Police Officer Brad Carruthers of the Fraternal Order of Police later added that officer morale has been negatively impacted, that many in the community support and appreciate the Police Department, and that the County should be cautious in implementing the recommendations, noting that the Office of the Sheriff and others need to be involved.
- **Committee Recommendations/Action:**
    - Other Committee Recommendations/Actions include:
      - For the recommendation tracking spreadsheet Supervisor Cook requested that Recommendations #2 and #3 be changed to reflect the Board of Supervisors as the “Approving Authority.”
      - Supervisor McKay noted that FOIA-related recommendations may be impacted by action during the current General Assembly session. The matrix should be reviewed after the session for noted in the matrix going forward.
      - Supervisor Smyth asked for clarification about Recommendation #36, regarding the projected timeline. Supervisor Cook explained that the timeline noted in the ad hoc recommendation may need to be adjusted. DCE Rohrer added that because this is a living document, changes of this nature will occur.
      - Supervisor Gross asked for more specificity in the “Potential Legal Review/ Legislative Change Required” column.

- Supervisor Foust asked about the “Lead Agency/Entity” column. He noted that “DCE for PS” is listed as responsible for implementing an auditor position and independent review recommendations. DCE Rohrer explained that he was a placeholder there. Supervisor Cook added that this is a discussion that the Board will have at a future meeting.
- Following the Chief’s presentation and the discussion by the sworn officers’ representatives the Committee praised the work of the Police Department in maintaining Fairfax County’s relatively low crime rate, but emphasized that some changes are needed, just as changes are needed in other areas as the community changes, expectations change, etc. The Committee acknowledged the anxiety of the officers and noted with appreciation that the staff, including officers, participated in the ad hoc review process. Policing is changing and Fairfax County needs to stay “fresh and on the leading edge.”
- The Committee noted that it is important to keep the recommendations in context to avoid pulling resources from other law enforcement efforts.
- Supervisor Cook stated the committee would have more detailed discussion on the *Use of Force* policy discussion today during the next Public Safety Committee meeting.

### **Diversion First Initiative**

A presentation was made by Gary Ambrose, Chair, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB); Laura Yager, Strategic Projects Coordinator; Patricia Harrison, Deputy County; Dave Rohrer, Deputy County Executive; Sheriff Stacey Kincaid; Police Chief Roessler; Fire Chief Richard Bowers; Bob Bermingham, Director of Court Services, Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court; and Tisha Deegan, CSB Executive Director. A copy is attached.

### **Staff Presentation/Recommendations:**

- Fairfax County has launched a program to steer people with mental-health problems away from jail, using evidence based practices and a sequential intercept model. Under the Diversion First program, police take nonviolent offenders to a crisis-response center in Merrifield or another facility, where they receive counseling instead of being incarcerated.
- Diversion First includes an emphasis on crisis intervention training and appropriate response to someone in crisis.
- Mr. Ambrose provided a brief overview of jail diversion and the importance and benefits of the effort in enhancing the welfare and treatment of those in crisis and public safety.
- Laura Yager briefed on the specific steps to scope and launch the Diversion First initiative to date, and a brief overview of the sequential intercept model. She also discussed other initiatives, such as Mental Health First Aid training.
- Preliminary data collection and measurements were discussed, but this is a work in progress as comparative measures are better defined and disparate data systems better aligned.
- The county began the program at the start of 2016.

- DCE Pat Harrison briefly discussed a draft multi-year budget for the program, but explained too that several departments have each contributed resources to begin this initiative in the current fiscal year at the Merrifield Resource Center.
  - The County Executive has included some funding for Diversion First and the Ad Hoc Commission recommendations in the FY2017 Advertised Budget for the Board's consideration prior to adoption.
  - Staff will also be aggressively seeking additional grant funding.
  - DCE Rohrer noted that pre-arrest diversion is not appropriate in every case, but the sequential intercept model's goal is that persons receive appropriate support and treatment at multiple points in the criminal justice system.
  - Sheriff Kincaid spoke to the commitment of the Sheriff's Office to Diversion First, and outlined some initial steps they have undertaken. She added that 40 percent of the county's jail population is suffering from mental-health problems.
  - Chief Roessler similarly affirmed the commitment of the Police Department.
  - Chief Bowers spoke to the Fire and Rescue Department's preliminary steps to also implement Emergency Room (ER) Diversion so that persons in mental health crisis are not just taken to an ER when they call, but are provided access to appropriate resources for treatment.
  - Bob Birmingham spoke to their efforts to ensure juveniles, not only adults, receive appropriate diversion as well.
- **Committee Recommendations/Action:**
    - Supervisor Hudgins asked about Mobile Crisis units, and the plans to increase the number.
    - She also asked a question about minimizing anxiety of persons in crisis being transported. Chief Roessler noted that we are in a transition period, and exploring alternative methods for transportation.
    - DCE Rohrer noted the need for more secure beds capacity in our region, and the need to engage the Commonwealth and other partners in working to close the gaps.
    - The Fairfax County Public Schools need to be a partner in Diversion First.
    - Supervisor Gross asked that all remember a need to also focus on jobs/employment and housing assistance as an integral part of this initiative, although there was no mention of this during the discussion.
    - Staff confirmed that the estimated total cost of \$14 million noted in the presentation is cumulative if adopted over the next few fiscal years, but for now it is only a placeholder for discussion by the Board during budget consideration. The Committee asked that staff provide a summary of the funding already expended in support of these types of services (e.g., mobile crisis units).
    - The Committee also asked for an analysis of potential long-term savings if this initiative is successful, such as reduced costs for incarceration.

### **Other Business**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 AM.