

**Date: May 7, 2020**

**Subject: Meeting Minutes, CUSP Personal and Public Safety Committee**

**Location: Creekside Counseling, Idaho Falls/Zoom online**

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Dr. Janet Allen, Committee Chairwoman.

In attendance:

- Dr. Janet Allen, Chairwoman
- Paul Allen
- Brad Landes
- Rolanda Bjornson
- Anthony Tirino (co-chair)
- John Ferguson
- Amy Gamett (co-chair)
- John Ferguson
- Not in attendance: Amy Gamett (co-chair); Carol Mascarenes

A quorum was in attendance. No representatives from the public called in to the Zoom meeting.

Chairwoman welcomed everyone.

Approval of minutes from previous meeting: Brad made note that the minutes had an error in that Captain Hulse had indicated that the "Nortenos" identified with the color red, and the "Sorentos" identified with the color blue, but the minutes inadvertently stated "blue" for both. With that correction, the minutes from the last meeting were approved.

Chairwoman then asked Anthony to report on the CUSP Chair meeting he attended on behalf of our committee. Anthony indicated that after listening to all the presentations, that all groups seemed to be about where we were. Juan would like to see the following:

- 1) By end of summer, "ideas" should be more concrete with some focus;
- 2) By fall there will be a call for an "interim report";
- 3) Anticipate that final reports will be presented to the City Council in the February/March 2021 timeframe.

Anthony also indicated that Juan has suggested we all look through a COVID-19 lens as we consider the impact the current pandemic has had on our city. There will be another chair-person meeting in mid-June, and the hope is that CUSP committees are able to meet in person again by June, though sooner is possible if proper measures are taken.

Chairwoman then asked each member to provide an update on their own thoughts and ideas regarding our mission.

- Rolanda will follow-up with Domestic Violence Intervention Center for better/more complete information from them than she has received thus far;

- Brad thinks that we should emphasize things the City can do with existing resources, or for little cost, like updated the webpage to pull together all the various resources, and some bike safety activities.
- Paul observed that because several large groups in Idaho Falls (INL/DOE, Melaleuca, the Hospitals/Medical community, the LDS church and other churches) took an early leadership role, it helped keep COVID-19 minimal (to date) in Idaho Falls, and that that is a strong argument for the Community Advisory Boards/Coordinating Bodies that John has previously discussed.
- John observed that the community has generally been very cooperative through the COVID-19 crisis.

Chairwoman then asked for any thoughts or reactions from Captain Hulse's presentation at the last meeting.

- Janet mentioned being struck by his remarks concerning the need for more accessible mental health services;
- Brad discussed the "Free 2 Succeed" program that helps reduce recidivism back to prison, the program that Stephanie Silva-Taylor runs locally;
- John was pleased to hear that interdepartmental communication seemed effective, which creates a solid framework for public safety.

Chairwoman then led a discussion that began with thinking back to the topics we first all voted on, and the ones that rose to the top: Access to mental health; Suicide Prevention; and Education. Strong indication that one of our principal foci should be Mental Health, and Janet acknowledged that she assumes that's why the Mayor asked her to chair this committee. Anthony strongly endorsed the notion that mental health is central to safety, and suggested that part of our focus needs to be helping people before they get into trouble/danger rather than only after they are already in trouble.

Rolanda inquired about what resources are available now to people that lack insurance, and Janet discussed briefly Medicaid and the Crisis Intervention Center, but that there isn't a lot. Anthony cited past experience in NY where there are often are no resources available to people until after they have "crossed a line." Rolanda acknowledged that when it comes to domestic violence there are resources available to women and children after an assault, by not generally before. Janet discussed that Board that Chief Johnson had asked her to participate on that could be a resource for collecting private funds for the purpose of supporting community-based mental health services, but that since COVID-19, nothing has been done with that Board as far as she is aware.

John discussed then a community foundation that was used in his previous community that collected funds from two counties that helped a variety of community endeavors, including such things as mental health services and the arts.

Rolanda discussed the benefit of classes in the community that could help destigmatize mental health issues and could help provide a "volunteer advocates" for mental health needs. These classes might be especially well suited as CE classes for medical, legal, law enforcement and mental health professionals.

John discussed the community foundation with which he was familiar that was similar, and which was specific to the prevention of suicide, and how they obtained grants that were coordinated through

Human Services Coordinating Body that was then able to offer suicide prevention/recognition/intervention/empathy classes that helped destigmatize mental health, and “stigmatize” suicide.

Brad mentioned that there are current resources, and showed the group some printed materials from some of them.

Chairwoman summarized that we ought to start down the path of building networks, organizational structures, and communications to the community advocating for groups and individuals to help. She discussed the notion of leaning on retired mental health professionals in our community who could go out and offer some of that advocacy, training, and even mental health services.

Anthony noted that cost is always going to be an issue for City government, but that relying on volunteers requires little in the way of cost, and noted that when volunteer structures are mentioned, that the Mayor clearly takes note.

Rolanda mentioned that in order to cover the costs, the community could consider a model for donations that is similar to “Breaking Boundaries”, which supports a foundation for education and assistance related to HIV.

Paul suggested at that point that we begin the process of outlining the ideas that were coalescing around mental health that could bring some structure to our thinking at the next meeting, and that he and Janet would take that.

The Chairwoman discussed “think-tanking” some of our specialty areas and how those could contribute to the end goal of preventative mental health serves, and bringing that to the group next time. Suggested breaking up into small “Subcommittees” for the moment: Janet & Paul; Brad & John; Anthony and Carol; and Rolanda & Amy.

John and Rolanda expressed some concerns about doing that, both in terms of public meeting policy and the value of the diversity of the group. The Chairwoman acknowledged that those are legitimate concerns, but that Juan had assured her that as long as “policy wasn’t decided” and that the discussions were broad and open ended, that the public meeting policy wouldn’t be violated. And she further indicated that these breakout teams might only be for between now and the next meeting, and that she wasn’t necessarily advocating for them to be permanent.

John observed that, as we go forward, we ought to be mindful of the mental health component of so many things that aren’t necessarily related to public safety, such as green space in a city, trees, bike paths, etc.

Anthony noted that just because the current charter for the CUSP committees was for a short-term duration, that there was nothing preventing this committee from continuing to find an ongoing mission and to contribute to the City Council for years.

Chairwoman then asked each “subcommittee to try to have a discussion between now and next meeting, and bring something to the group next time. All agreed, but there is some concern as people continue to wrap their minds around what we’re trying to do.

Chairwoman opened up the discussion at that point to ask about future guest speakers, such as Chief Johnson from IFPD, Chief Nelson from IFFD, Ginny Griffin from SPAN and Dan Weinrick from the INL.

Brad suggested we might like to hear from Stephanie Silva-Taylor concerning the work she does. All agreed those would be helpful, as well as a possible representative from the School system.

Next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 28th at 7:00 at Creekside Counseling, 550 W. Sunnyside Ste. 1, Idaho Falls, with participants to join via ZOOM. ZOOM link will be provided with the next agenda.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.