

Chief's Advisory Committee

August 31, 2021, at 2:30 p.m.

Meeting Participants: Chief Bieber, Captain Braman, Captain Buttice, Roger Esparza, Sandy García, Kanasha Henderson, Noah Leavitt, Dick Morgan, Steve Moss, Roberto Rodriguez

Guest: Chief Bob Yancey and Deputy Chief Eric Wood of the Walla Walla Fire Department

Absent: Brooke Bouchey, Earl Gooding, Ruthell Martinez, Curtis Phillips

- 1) Differential Call Response and the Community Paramedic Program** — Chief Bob Yancey and Deputy Chief Eric Wood of the Walla Walla Fire Department (WWFD) were invited to attend today's meeting and provide additional information on the Community Paramedic Program. Chief Yancey noted this program has already been successfully implemented in bigger cities. We considered implementing a Community Paramedic Program in Walla Walla ten years ago; however, for various reasons it did not happen until last year. In searching for funding, we requested a portion of Walla Walla County's 1/10th of 1% of sales tax (that is dedicated to mental health) be invested into this program. Unfortunately, the WWFD's request to fund a position was turned down due to the program not having any local statistics.

Earlier this year Providence St. Mary Medical Center agreed to fund one years of salary for one position in the local pilot program. While the bulk of the expense (salary) is covered by Providence St. Mary Medical Center, the rest is covered by the City of Walla Walla (vehicle, office space, etc.). The Community Paramedic Program has been in place since May 2021. The single employee designated as the Community Paramedic has been busy with local customers. It takes numerous outreach visits to establish a relationship to help the customers get the needed resource(s).

Deputy Chief Wood noted public safety workers (including law enforcement, paramedics, mental health workers, hospital personnel) often need to treat clients with mental health and substance abuse conditions. The program was developed for emergency room diversion. The goal of the Community Paramedic Program is to provide a unique solution to unique situations. Paramedic Cody Maine has picked up and delivered medicine to clients to treat their underlying condition. We are a liaison to appropriate help that is proactive rather than reactive (like calling 9-1-1). Paramedic Maine has provided service to clients outside of the City of Walla Walla limits—including serving those residing in College Place and Walla Walla County.

Deputy Chief Wood stated rather than law enforcement being the first responder on site to a 9-1-1 call, the Community Paramedic is now the first one rolling in. Since the safety

of everyone involved is the highest priority, there are times when it is not safe for the paramedic to be on scene without an officer being present.

Community Paramedic Cody Maine has almost finished completing a ten weeklong mental health training. Paramedics do not usually get this enhanced training. Since experience has shown the peak hours for providing service is Monday through Friday from 8am to 8pm, so Community Paramedic Maine's work schedule is Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm. When Community Paramedic Maine is off duty or taking vacation, there is no one providing coverage.

Community Paramedic Maine has been working at the fire station when a 9-1-1 call has come in and he recognized the address that was requesting service as belonging to a client. He has taken that call for service and freed up the ambulance for other needs.

Chief Yancey is looking around for additional funding options and ways to reduce cost. For example, the Community Paramedic Program needs a Zoll monitor. Providence St. Mary Medical Center may donate a retired cardiac monitor unit to us to utilize as a trade-in towards a new one.

It would take three Community Medics to cover the twelve-hour span over five days a week, plus allow for staff to take vacation, sick leave, etc. Clients not being compliant with their anti-psychotic medicines is a big issue they can assist with.

A spreadsheet titled "Community Paramedic Expenses" was distributed. This spreadsheet contained a breakdown of the estimated expenses between having one, two, or three positions funded for up to three years. The May, June, and July updates on the Community Paramedic Pilot Program were also distributed.

- 2) **Next Meeting**—September 28, 2021, from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 in-person at the WWPD. During the next meeting the group will discuss whether to recommend the City Council place extra funds towards body-worn cameras for WWPD personnel, or to fund additional personnel for the Community Paramedic Program.

NOTE: Chief Bieber will discuss with Steve Moss whether the Advisory Committee should meet twice during September.

The August 31, 2021, meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.
Submitted by Deborah Minter