



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

DAVID H. KNAPP
Chairman

MELANIE VILARDI
Deputy Clerk

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PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES – DECEMBER 14, 2021 CHRISTOPHER J. RYAN, CHAIRMAN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Rowley, Ms. Kuhn, Mr. Holmquist

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. McBride

ALSO ATTENDING: Dr. Chase, Mrs. Ervin; also see attached

Chairman Ryan called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. *A motion was made by Ms. Kuhn, seconded by Mr. Rowley to waive the reading of the minutes of the previous committee meeting. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED. A motion was made by Ms. Kuhn, seconded by Mr. Holmquist, to approve the minutes of the previous committee meeting. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

1. JUSTICE CENTER OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE:

a. Confirming Reappointment to the Onondaga County Justice Center Oversight Committee (Casandra Jones-Ingram)

Mrs. Ervin:

- Retired police officer; one of first African American females on Syracuse Police Department (SPD); served amenably throughout her term; agreed to be on JCOC, understanding time commitment, and she believes in what they are doing
- Fully and wholeheartedly recommend keeping her; she adds value, and is a great person in community

Chairman Ryan said he yields to Leader Ervin, and said Ms. Mims fully supports this.

A motion was made by Ms. Kuhn, seconded by Mr. Rowley, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

2. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: Daniel Wears, Commissioner

a. Authorizing Payment for COVID-19 Mandated Non-Congregate Sheltering Costs to LeMoyne College (\$822,081)

- LeMoyne reimbursement - early in COVID took on responsibility of doing non-congregate sheltering as part of quarantine and isolation in conjunction with county when there were cases on campus
- LeMoyne attempted to apply for funding from FEMA directly, but not able to get reimbursement directly
- Looking to enter into contract to reimburse them for expenses of non-congregate sheltering
- Will seek reimbursement from FEMA for funding; done in consultation with NYS and FEMA; 100% reimbursable from FEMA under Stafford Act

Chairman Ryan thanked Mr. Wears for the info and stated that entities like these are dealing with costs well beyond their control. He said he understands how important LeMoyne is to the community.

A motion was made by Mr. Holmquist, seconded by Ms. Kuhn, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

b. 2021 Transfer Resolution (\$15,000)

- Annual transfer of funding from legislative contingency into Emergency Management operating budget
- Volunteer Firefighter's Association – funding for education and training for the public and firefighters
- Execute grant for fiscal year 2021

A motion was made by Ms. Kuhn, seconded by Mr. Holmquist, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

c. Personnel Resolution Amending the Salary Plan

- Looking to create 3 new titles in salary plan; all part-time staff; not adding new positions or personnel
- (1) Junior Fire Investigator – NYS changed how they certify fire investigators; certification more significant than it used to be; used to be able to bring people onto fire investigation team fully certified by NYS standards
- Changed - looking to bring people on while in certification process; get field training and what is required
- Not fair to bring people on that are not fully certified and cannot conduct their own investigations, and pay them as a normal fire investigator
- Already have part-time Fire Investigation Unit; add this title and it keep going
- Usually have 10 fire investigators (at 7); build up with 2 Junior Fire Investigators as they go through certification
- Will be around 10 again; all of these are budget neutral; not asking for funding, only creating titles
- (2 & 3) Senior Fire Investigator and Senior Deputy Coordinator - already have part-time for both as Fire Investigators and Deputy Coordinators; looking to change one of each of those titles to senior level
- Minor financial incentive to take on more duties and responsibilities to manage the two teams
- In total have 25 part-time employees; give 1 Fire Investigator and 1 Deputy Coordinator a bump up to do a little more in the office and support/manage the teams; not adding new people; will still maintain their duties (i.e. in Cicero area)
- All in 103; no new dollars; just changing titles
- Grades: Seniors are 1 step up and Juniors are 1 step down; the senior titles might be \$200 extra per year
- These are 103 positions; not looking to hire anyone fulltime in these titles

A motion was made by Mr. Holmquist, seconded by Ms. Kuhn, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

Chairman Ryan took the agenda items out of order

4. INFORMATIONAL: Evidence Storage

Chairman Ryan:

- Spoke to Sheriff and Chief about 2 property storage facilities in need of repair
- County does not have a sufficient facility, nor does the city; asked city about a property they might have to do joint agreement, consolidate, and work together; they do not
- Slowly moving through and checking boxes; working in conjunction with Chair Cody through Facilities
- Finding a suitable facility that fits Sheriff's needs and city; hopefully can work together; facility no longer sufficient
- Time to look at properties; would prefer looking at facility big enough, secure enough, and one that someone could potentially build out for the county and county could take over; an IMA joint facility
- Next step, do due diligence on front side; Legislator Holmquist was chair of Public Safety and dealt with this too

3. INFORMATIONAL: Violence Interrupter's Training Program

Chairman Ryan introduced Michael Montes (Chairman), Clifford Ryan (Vice Chair and founder), Karen Rigney (training consultant), Dave Babcock (Budget Director), and John Hohl-Shambo (Treasurer).

Mr. Montes:

- OG's Against Violence is a 501c3 charitable organization

- Involved in organization since 2018; became 501c3 non-profit in 2019; currently Navy Captain in Washington DC
- Came back to encourage Legislature to give resources to make a difference in community
- Particular mission – focus on reduction of violence; boots on the ground, out in the community; directly talking with folks to make sure they are on the right path
- Unprecedented violence in nation and CNY; crime has no boundaries; what happens in the city also happens in county
- County services go to city problems; looking for support and opportunity for training program the Community Foundation developed; brought in Ms. Rigney to help develop it
- Training program to allow opportunity with financial resources to put more people out in community to help make a difference and be credible messengers

Mr. Ryan:

- Founder of Our Generation Against Violence (OGs Against Violence); began in 2015 as a way of directly going into community and dealing with violence (boots on the ground); have to address the problem from that perspective
- To date stopped 44 shootings, 300 stabbings, and 1,076 fights in community by himself; say that with respect
- Trained and certified in every aspect of this including: Know Your Rights presentation, Professional Board Membership Training, Onondaga County Mental Health First Aid certified, Toastmaster's Professional Presentation Training, trained with Syracuse Police Department at Citizen's Academy, certified in Alternatives to Violence Conflict Resolution Training, and certified in Peacemakers Mediation Conflict Resolution Training
- Program very important to community; encourage to help bring into fruition more; gotten to level that is very important
- Strong team in place to be able to bring a strong impact in community; the 44 shootings stopped speaks to the matter
- Can no longer take side approach to violence facing in community; go out directly and stop individuals from shooting, stabbing, and fighting each other
- (i.e.) 2 individuals ready to use firearms against each other; stepped in-between and able to deescalate the situation, so they did not lose their lives
- Survivor of gun violence; had a son shot and killed in the city; advocate in community for over 20 years, but did not start own organization until 2015; wanted stronger impact in community
- Please take into consider strong effort made in community and proper resources to make stronger impact

Ms. Rigney:

- DeWitt Town Counselor; educator for over 25 years; created other training programs and manuals
- Thrilled when asked to help create training for OGs; violence in city escalating; region is reactive; send police in after violence has happened; many organizations in city of Syracuse for helping people
- One thing missing, or not strong, is violence interruption; beginning point; other resources can jump in and help people to have alternatives to violence; all want to prevent violence; do not want to run to it after it happens
- Objective of training is to increase number of credible messengers – people from community who understand the experiences of the people in their community (i.e. someone who was in jail; suffered murder in family)
- Mr. Ryan's job will be to get credible messengers into training
- Credible messengers would do work of violence interruption in the city of Syracuse
- Training program is designed to prepare messengers by teaching them the techniques and strategies to:
 - Defuse potentially violent encounters
 - Understand and utilize all the resources in the community that support alternative ways to resolving conflict
 - Learn how to understand the communities, as well as their own, trauma
 - Learn all the important tenets of conflict resolution
- Started working with Mr. Ryan a year ago; he is the content person who spent a long time developing way of interrupting violence; did series of interviews with him; did not add content
- Researched violence interruption programs around country and abroad; system Mr. Ryan created is highly effective
- Same tenets used in effective way; Syracuse behind ball in addressing it; would be good to get funding needed
- Created student and instructor manuals, as well as supporting material - PowerPoints, handouts, evaluation mechanisms
- Instructor manual – detailed way of teaching credible messengers in above list, and teaching methodologies
- Addressed in program is introduction to violence interruption - what is it?
- Learn about community outreach; violence prevention requires multi prong approach; Syracuse has lot of resources
- Credible messengers will learn what the resources are, so when in situation to interrupt violence, will help that person(s) get resources for alternatives to violence
- Section on trauma – learn about their own trauma, what a traumatized person does and looks like in order to address

them; section on suicide prevention; section on basic conflict resolution; section on actual techniques of being on ground, looking at situation, and how to defuse it

- Accomplishing through classroom discussion, reading, looking at videos and analyzing, role playing, and going out once or twice a week with mentor to see how to do it (eventually doing it themselves)

Mr. Rowley asked how the group interacts with the Syracuse Police Department (SPD), and what do they think about the organization. Ms. Rigney responded that they do not. Mr. Ryan:

- Took SPD citizens academy training; good relationship; reference Chief Buckner and Sargent Malinowski in that regard
- (i.e.) Coming down street with his sign in very violent area, one officer got out and shook his hand, thanked him for doing work in the community
- Member of Citizens Review Board in city of Syracuse; have rapport with SPD from level of respect

Ms. Rigney:

- Most of the time this is separate; police are reactive; good for Mr. Ryan to have good rapport, but credible messengers are the key; need to be people that the people on the ground trust; sometimes they do not trust police
- Separate from reactive; to help police in large sense; more prevent violence, less police intervention

Mr. Rowley asked how they do their work, and he said the analogy that comes to mind is the Guardian Angels in New York City. Mr. Ryan responded:

- Absolutely; met with founder of Guardian Angels, Mr. Sliwa, through Mayor Walsh in Syracuse
- Difference with Guardian Angels and this program is that they are preventing crimes and making citizens arrests; Mr. Ryan does not make citizen arrests; he interrupts the violence
- (i.e.) 2 individuals ready to shoot each other; helped unpack what the ramifications of actions would be; one individual threatened Mr. Ryan, but knew he was a peaceful person; looked at him and said he would put a bullet in Mr. Ryan; Mr. Ryan said no disrespect, trying to save both lives, and prevent him from doing something that will impact his life, his family and the other person's life and family
- Knew it was a dangerous situation; did not show fear; understanding how to go about this is important
- Educated in conflict resolution training from different avenues; alternatives to violence
- Certified facilitator; skill set to deescalate situations; takes person with right mindset to go out into that environment and deal with that on a day to day basis

Mr. Rowley asked how they encourage people to participate, because he would not do what Mr. Ryan described.

Mr. Ryan replied:

- Approach those who have gone through tragedies; very important; have an entire community under trauma looking for solutions; want to bring in members that have a like-minded mindset as himself; challenging to find individuals
- Know they are out there; people actively contacting to get involved; have a list of contacts
- Need resources to help build the team that they are seeking; why here today
- Formidable program that will have strong impact in city; need resources to bring to fruition; very important
- Individuals who are getting out in community are looking for that resource; other organizations in city have resources and built teams based on resources
- With resources and correct individuals, believe can train individuals properly, so they do not have to worry too much about the work; understand it takes special person

Mr. Montes commented:

- Agree with Mr. Ryan; running any organization takes money; need financial resources to do it, but also incentive; people will come out for community walks, and they try to encourage them to be credible messengers
- People respond that they do not have time, or it is dangerous work; need to be committed; want incentive to get people to walk city streets late in evenings

Mr. Rowley asked if they are insured, and how do they mitigate risk if someone gets hurt. Mr. Montes responded:

- Do have insurance for the board members; if they are out, or things happen, but need to expand insurance when putting more people on the streets - will be contractors; need to up insurance costs; have \$10,000 additional money to expend

Ms. Rigney added:

- This type of work is stressful, dangerous, and scary; resources also needed for support for these people; not just financial, but also to deal with stress
- Created basic training, but in order for it to be fortified and strong, will need funds for support for brave people

Ms. Kuhn commented that this is not unlike police or fire where they are asking people to walk into a dangerous situation. Ms. Kuhn asked if they have a data driven aspect to the program the committee can look at. What is the provision for data to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program? Ms. Rigney answered:

- Built surveys into training to start this; can look at data from other programs that are comparable in other places; other variables with different aspects, funding and support
- Type of training and work for this type of violence interruption is very effective; can dig up that information
- Have some mechanisms to do some data research

Ms. Kuhn stated that she is more interested in getting data for this program to demonstrate the impact over time, so the funding will continue. Mr. Ryan said the data stated earlier regarding shootings, stabbings, and fights is what the data looks like right now for impact (stopping one fight that could have potentially lead to a shooting or stabbing). Ms. Kuhn does not doubt the data. She wants to make sure it is embedded in the program to be able to demonstrate how the program is doing.

Mr. Montes commented:

- Always say, if they save one life, it is worth it
- Cost to all of it; about saving a life; cannot stop violence, but they can slow it down and save a life this week, or this month, then they are successful
- Hard to put metrics on something when something did not happen; 44 shootings could have been 44 homicides

Ms. Kuhn said that every gun fight that they may save a murder, they also save hours of police time. There are savings concerning the Public Safety Building and police.

Chairman Ryan thanked them for their presentation, and continued:

- Hard to comprehend the work they do, and the way they put themselves at risk in community; appreciate it
- Will need backup statistics to help the legislature; money attached goes to Ways and Means, a fiscal committee; anything they have done now or in future to quantify it would help support program narrative
- Look for any and all backup or supporting documents specific to training with regard to curriculum and training; (i.e. conflict resolution and what it does); helps legislature understand beyond that
- The more information they have helps support the program

Chairman Ryan responded to Ms. Rigney that she can get the information to him in the next couple weeks.

Mr. Ryan responded to Ms. Kuhn that they have not done community walks lately, but after the holidays and after they introduce the Violence Interruption Program, they will reintroduce the community walks. These walks include people from all walks of life, and it is a deterrent for individuals to come to those areas for violence. Mr. Montes added that January 29th they will be having an open house to kick off the training program and introduce it to the community. He will send the invite soon. Chairman Ryan thanked them for their presentation.

A motion was made by Ms. Kuhn, seconded by Mr. Rowley, to adjourn the meeting. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

DATE: DECEMBER 14, 2021

| NAME (Please Print) | DEPARTMENT/AGENCY |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Kristi Sailey | Funcops |
| Bonnie Shultz | Public. OG's Agg Violence Board |
| Tenisha Murphy | CE office |
| Dea Weary | em |
| Michael Montes | OG's Against Violence |
| Clifford Ryan | OG's Against Violence |
| Kerin Rigney | OG's |
| Paul Babcock | OG's board member |
| John Holt-Shawbo | OG's Against Violence |
| Yvette Velasco | Law |
| | |