

Working Group for Police & Community - Group Memory Meeting November 18, 2021

Meeting Goal: The primary purpose of this meeting was to continue the conversation on mental health responses in law enforcement.

Pre-meeting Preparation: Prior to the meeting, committee members were asked to continue their review of information about Laramie Police Department's mental health responses and national trends in co-responder models.

Co-Chair Welcome & Announcements: The session began with welcoming remarks from the committee co-chairs. The co-chairs also announced the dates for the upcoming *Community Forums for the Ad Hoc Working Group for Police and Community*. The co-chairs highlighted the press release developed and provided to the city for distribution (the public announcement is available here: <https://www.cityoflaramie.org/civicalerts.aspx?aid=1895>), as well as noted the email address provided for public response (WGPC@cityoflaramie.org). In addition, the co-chairs received feedback from the committee on the format of the forums.

Presentation on Mental Health Responses in Law Enforcement Continued: Councilor Summerville presented remarks on mental health responses in Wyoming, drawing on her experience as the Executive Director of the Wyoming Association of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Centers (WAMHSAC). These remarks provided an overview of state resources, funding, and priorities; potential changes to Wyoming legislation; the impact of federal legislation (e.g., the implementation of a national suicide hotline); and challenges associated with mental health workforce shortages in Wyoming.

Committee members asked clarifying questions about addressing the separate needs of adults and juveniles in crisis (e.g., the need for separate facilities), how a national suicide hotline would be implemented in the local community, and the impact of the shortage of mental health providers on Laramie.

Small Group Discussions on Mental Health Responses in Law Enforcement: The committee had an opportunity to break into small groups to consider the remarks. Members of the small groups reported back to the committee the issues discussed, including topics such as:

- Challenges associated with funding mental health programs and the distinction between one-time funding sources and sustained opportunities for funding.
- Differences between co-responder models (e.g., Paramedicine Model, MHRT) and the benefits of co-responders showing up to calls in plain clothes and unmarked vehicles.
- Opportunities to reinvent and restructure current programs to suit the needs of the local community (e.g., training community paramedics in mental health responses).