

02-22-2023 Town Council Meeting Responses to Council Questions

ITEM #11: Re-Imagining Community Safety Task Force Update

Council Question:

Could you please share more about the new Counselor dedicated to providing resources and assistance with crisis situations that arise on buses or bus stops? Is it fully dedicated to Transit-related issues or as needed? How is the availability of this new resource being shared with collaborating entities and public? Is it responsive only or also playing a proactive role?

Staff Response:

This position is fully dedicated to Transit-related issues. The Transit Crisis Counselor plays both a responsive and proactive role by building relationships with community members through outreach and providing immediate, on-scene responses to crisis situations that evolve at the bus stops and on the buses. This counselor connects with community partners (SOHRAD, IFC, etc.) through their work. This includes referring vulnerable community members to those partner services. When discussing safety with community members, Chapel Hill Transit and the Police Department mentions the new resource and we have had some local media coverage of the new position.

Council Question:

Could you share more about the Mobile Crisis Team pilot?

Staff Response:

This request would provide a Crisis Counselor who would be on a county-wide Mobile Crisis Team. The plan is for this team to be a two-year pilot program in Chapel Hill and expanding to county-wide response after analysis and evaluation of the pilot program. The team would include a peer support specialist, a crisis counselor, a mental health professional to triage calls in our 911 center and a community paramedic. The purpose of this team is to respond to lower-risk emergency calls to 911 that are related to addiction, mental health crisis and/or community members living unsheltered who don't pose a danger to others. The team would respond by meeting people where they are to address immediate health concerns, de-escalate, problem solve and link community members to additional resources and support.