



Charlotte City Council
Safe Communities Committee
Meeting Summary
May 4, 2021

COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

- I. Family Justice Center/The Umbrella Center – Informational

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Committee Members Present: Larken Egleston (Chair), Dimple Ajmera (Vice-Chair), Renee Johnson, Greg Phipps, Victoria Watlington

Additional Council Members: Braxton Winston

Staff Resource: Emily Kunze, Assistant to the City Manager

Meeting Duration: 12:02 p.m. – 1:05 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Agenda
2. A Review of City Partnerships with Family Justice Center Service Models PPT
3. A Review of City Partnerships with Family Justice Center Service Models Special Report

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

The meeting was called to order at 12:04 p.m., by Chairperson Larken Egleston. Mr. Egleston noted that members of the Family Justice Center have had different informal discussions with Council members suggesting they would be willing to accept \$5 million in financial assistance from the City; however, to date, they have not formally submitted that request to the City. For the purpose of today's presentation, the official request stands at \$10 million.

Family Justice Center/The Umbrella Center

Ms. Marie Harris, Strategy and Budget, reminded Committee members that the City had received a funding request through the Mayor from Safe Alliance and other partners in December 2020. The Mayor then made a referral to the Safe Communities Committee to review the request. The Committee tasked Budget and Effectiveness with providing additional information for the Safe Communities Committee to assess the request. Ms. Harris recognized Sr. Policy Analyst Lauren Ruvalcaba Stegall and Policy and Budget Analyst Chris Thaxton, as well as other budget analysts within the department for their research in preparing the report.

Ms. Harris stated that The Family Justice Center Service model is a nationally proven model. Federal recognition and funding have been allocated for the service since 2003. Strategy and Budget reviewed the proposal through a public health lens and whether it complemented the City's current initiatives in its violence reduction framework. Ms. Harris reported that the City of Charlotte currently partners with Safe Alliance by providing \$397,038 in funding for FY 2021 towards the operation of Safe Alliance's Victim Assistance programing. A recap of the Survivor Resource Center services and providers were provided. The City is participating by providing \$71,555 for leased space for revolving CMPD officers. Key findings and considerations included 1) Mecklenburg County's new Office of Violence Prevention 2) Collaborative work with the County, CMS, the Sheriff's Office and other community partners, and 3) Continuing with the County as the lead since they have responsibility for Health and Human Services, as well as the Family Justice Centers being a robust system with leveraged, centralized resources throughout the community.

Ms. Harris shared the following recommendations and proposed next steps:

- Collaborate with Mecklenburg County and the other municipalities within the county to determine current issues, models in place, opportunities for streamlining services, and assess participation options.
- Continue collaboration on the Survivors' Resource Center and explore expansion options when capacity of the current service model and facility is no longer feasible to meet the community's needs.
 - Request additional supporting documentation for the rationale to support the intended use of the requested funds, and the analysis of alternative facility options considered.
 - Review available spaces with consideration of accessibility and confidentiality/client comfort in being able to discreetly access facility when needed.
- Assess City Council's prioritization of a Family Justice Center compared to other community initiatives.
- Work with Mecklenburg County on options for increasing collaboration, focus on capitalizing on lessons learned through the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee members were asked to review the report distributed for further assessment of the options moving forward.

Additional information was requested on the following items:

1. Will the off-site providers be on-site in the new building?
2. Are there any revisions from Safe Alliance as a result of the Feb. 2nd presentation?
3. Has the CMPD allotment of personnel been confirmed?
4. Since the Survivors Resource Center opened, are there any preliminary metrics/data for its impact on violence prevention?
5. Why is a representative from the Umbrella Center not present?
6. How much more investment would we need to make?
7. What commitment is the County considering?
8. Who will own the building?
9. Will the Committee receive more data, such as the MOU?
10. Is Telehealth being considered?
11. Request the Steering Committee create a decision tree.
12. What is the staff desiring from the Committee regarding today's presentation?

13. What other public safety community initiatives that are seeking public dollars, especially the capital budget, should we be looking at while we are trying to assess the priority?

Considerations:

1. Look at the issue from a local community public safety standpoint and not human services issue outside of our realm.
2. Look at corridors of opportunities and unused buildings to house the new Family Justice Center
3. Committee should revisit what the City is attempting to do with the FJC and why it is important. Determine how we integrate all the programs into one entity to efficiently and conveniently service the desired clientele as soon as possible.
4. Bring the stakeholders back with a more robust presentation that addresses the questions asked today.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.