Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC)

Meeting Minutes October 19, 2021

Via Zoom

Board Members in Attendance

Co-Chair, Danny Whatley The Rock at Noon Day

Betty Whiton NAMI

David Ley New Mexico Solutions

Cassandra Bailey APD Crisis Intervention Division

Gilbert Ramirez CABQ-Dept. of Family & Comm. Services

Laura Nguyen Albuquerque Ambulance

Matt Dietzel APD Crisis Intervention Division
Maxwell Kauffman Disability Rights New Mexico

Paula Burton Peer Representative
Rob Nelson APD/CIU/C.O.A.S.T
Robert Salazar NAMI Vice President

Rachel Biggs ABQ. Health Care for the Homeless

Introduction to MHRAC

The Mental Health Response Advisory Committee was created by the Court Approved Settlement Agreement (CASA). We've been around since day one and have a focus on three areas, resources, resources being available to access different things within the city that APD and first responders can use as it impacts homelessness and mental health issues. We are also involved in training and policy; training is one of those things we made a tremendous impact on. As far as the training that is offered. Policies are one of those things where the MHRAC is involved with assisting in writing and approving and recommending policy as it relates again to the narrow focus; we think narrow, but sometimes it gets pretty wide focused on how law enforcement interacts with those experiencing homelessness and those experiencing a mental health crisis.

Welcome first-time guests

Breeann Rocha

Licensed Clinical Worker, New Mexico Solutions, Director of ACT Programs. Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) is an evidence-based practice that serves adults with persistent mental illness with a primary issue of thought disorder; our team is multidisciplinary. We are operating in Bernalillo County, Valencia County, and Sandoval County.

Cristina Parajon

Gibson Health Hub aka Gateway Center, System Analyst. I spent a lot of hours volunteering at the Westside Shelter and working at the wellness hotels.

Approval of meeting minutes

Maxwell Kauffman

Asked for his place of employment next to his name be corrected to Disability Rights New Mexico

1st Motion - David Ley

2nd Motion – Maxwell Kauffman

All were in favor of minutes to be approved as written upon the correction stated above.

Public Comment (Two minutes per person, 15 minutes total)

There were no public comments made.

Albuquerque Community Safety Department (ACS) Update, Mariela Ruiz-Angel

ACS was a department created in 2020 specifically to help with 911 calls and 311 calls as well as referrals across the city to be able to send out mental and behavioral health responders to assist that doesn't require a badge and doesn't require a gun. ACS had a soft launch in early September.

Slide 1

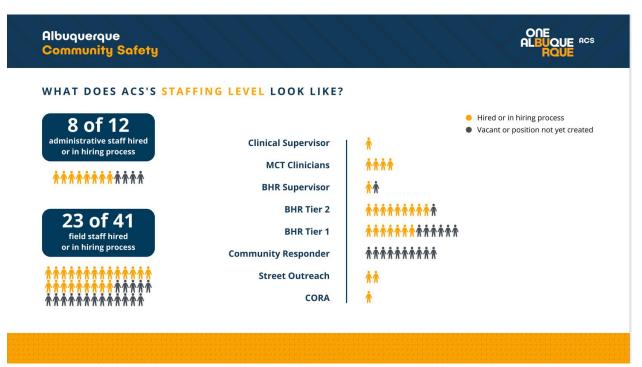


PERFORMANCE UPDATE

10.19.21

Slide 2

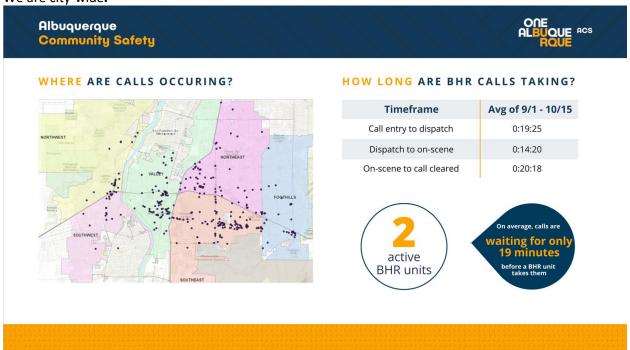
We are still actively looking for a behavioral health supervisor. We've got Tier 1 and Tier 2 Behavioral Health responders as well as our community responder position which is a much different response. A more minimized educational background-position. We have made a first attempt to classify and unionize ACS positions.



Slide 3We know we can take close to 3,000 calls when you look at the data from dispatch but we only have two units now.



Slide 4We are city-wide.

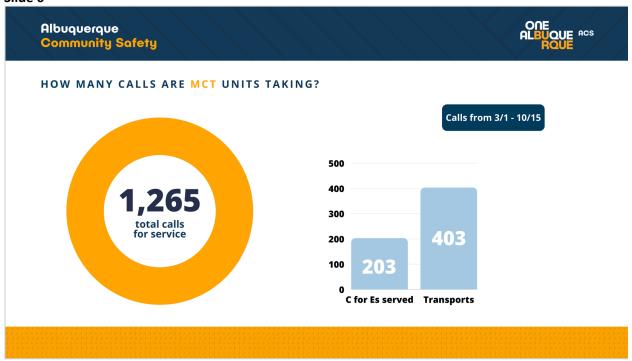


Slide 5

MCT is a co-responder in which we have an enhanced crisis intervention team (eCIT) police officer go out with the licensed clinician; we've incorporated them into ACS since March and they've been going out. They are the only ones who can do a Certificate for Evaluation (CoE).



Slide 6



Slide 7

We started with an alarm room which is like the 911 dispatch and then we have a self-dispatch. As we were implementing we knew that we'd probably do some more self-dispatch. We're trending to start getting more, 911 calls and less self-dispatch



Rachel Biggs

Q. In regards to the resources that ACS is connecting folks to, is there another connection being made to housing resources?

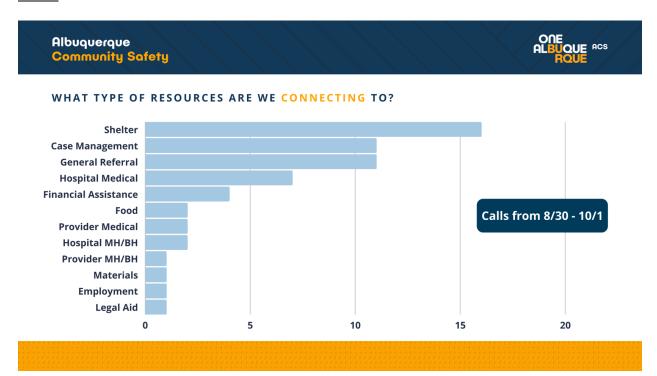
Mariela

A. Our shelter is our housing. We have found people who have qualified for HUD who hadn't connected with their case manager so their application was just sitting there. We're trying to collect data to be advocates for gaps in our system and housing is one of them.

Rachel Biggs

With our housing vouchers on average, it is taking about 70 days to find an apartment for someone because of the market issues and not being able to find units that take housing vouchers.

Slide 8



Jim Ogle

Q. In regards to transport with both MCT and your other team, I am wondering what the system is for transport these days since we have been trying to get away from handcuffing with the police, is that the way it is still being done? With your other teams, I imagine they don't have handcuffs so it's done in a more dignified manner.?

Mariela

A. So our transport is voluntary, we have not started transport at this time. We have written up policy; it just needs to be reviewed by our legal team so we can send it to the MHRAC for review before we can start transport. Our hope is this month. We will have a waiver that states they have chosen to come with us.

Lisa Jackson

Q. How is your team interacting with any of the 988 implementation?

Mariela

A. Broadly, yes, we are very involved we try to make those meetings as often as we can, our 911 dispatch team, our manager there is involved in one of those subcommittees.

Laura

Q. Can you remind us of the current ACS hours?

Mariela

A. Currently, we have two units, which is two individuals per unit and we are right now 8-5. We have another entire cohort who have started and they are in their last week of training; once they come on we will have five units and we will be able to have a longer day. We are still pushing to get all of our responders hired so we can be 24/7 by the end of the year.

Rick Miera

Q. Are any of the calls double calls, the same person calling in twice?

Mariela

A. We have a couple of repeat callers; it's mainly callers who have gotten used to ACS and now call us for everything.

David Ley

Mariela and ACS presented to the training subcommittee at the meeting last month; we will be following up with them next week.

<u>Gibson Health Hub Update, Cristy Hernandez, Administrator, Lisa Huval, Deputy Director, Family, and Community Services</u>

Cristy Hernandez

Cristina Parajon is our newest addition to our team is the Gateway Center, System Analyst; she will be collecting data and evaluating our system. She hit the ground running when she started three weeks ago and gets projects up and running.

In addition, we have a few other city staff, Charlie Salas-Ramos, who is a long time city employee who works on the property side so she is helping with the leases on the existing tenants at Gibson as well as new agencies that want to rent space at Gibson to provide services. Vicente Martinez is a long-time city employee who will be working with the Doug Chaplain and Leon on the facilities management side of things. The building is almost 600,000 sq.ft., it is old, and with Vicente helping we're getting things worked out, like the HVAC.

We had a continuation of the Conditional Use Hearing from last month due to our Operating Procedures and our Administrative Procedures Policies were in draft form. We had to finalize draft policies and present them to the zoning hearing examiner; he has 15 days to make a decision on if we will be granted the Conditional Use Permit.

Cristina and I have started doing a gathering at Gibson; we have an informal meeting every Wednesday from four to five at least till January. We have a zoom and in-person option. It's geared mostly towards the business and organizations around the Gibson neighborhood to provide them with updates and build those relationships.

We are working on a plan to do unhoused neighbor outreach in the community; part of that is to hear their voice and get their input as we get going and designing the Gateway.

We are working on the Good Neighbor Agreement, we are doing the outline and it's being drafted. We will be working with the neighborhood associations for their input.

Laura

Q. Your draft plans were posted on the website and you solicited feedback and public comment; I am wondering if any of that feedback or public comment had been incorporated into those plans before they were finalized for the Conditional Use Permit application? And, if they have been revised have they been published so we can see the latest version?

Cristy

A. The draft plans that were on there had already incorporated the feedback from the community and we finalized it there were no changes made to the policy.

Lisa Huval

A. The initial drafts were made from extensive community feedback after many many meetings and then we posted it online with a feedback form.

Nominations for MHRAC Co-chairs

Danny Whatley

Announced his resignation/retirement as co-chair of the MHRAC effective in November, December 2021, or January 2022 and he is leaving Albuquerque to go back home to his hometown of Alabama.

Rick Miera

Announced his resignation/retirement as co-chair of the MHRAC effective in December of 2021.

David Ley

Bonnie Mount oversees a lot of the nurses and crisis services with UNM. We have not stated it publically but we have had inconsistent participation from UNM mostly because they have had the doctors as their formal representatives and we all know doctors rotate. I suggested UNM designate Bonnie instead as a designee to MHRAC because she oversees a lot of the operations, works closely with Dr. Rosenbaum, and is really engaged with the Police Department. Bonnie brings a lot of expertise so we don't need to vote to approve that because UNM as an organization that is named in the CASA as a member of the MHRAC has the ability to designate a representative. Bonnie and UNM have been participating for a while.

Bonnie Mount

I am working closely with developing our new crisis center and as the director for Psyc Emergency Services and I have been involved in Behavioral Health in and around Albuquerque for the last 20 years. I am happy to step into the process of the MHRAC, Mary did talk to me about it.

Maxwell

I recently met Bonnie and I am really glad you are here; it is nice to have a problem solver from UNM as part of the MHRAC group.

David Ley

Q. Should we put the nomination of co-chairs on the agenda for November?

Danny Whatley

A. I am okay with that; it is up to the MHRAC Board Members.

David Ley

Q. What is happening with the Rock at Noon Day?

David Ley

A. We are working on a replacement. We didn't get a lot of resumes. We have an amazing candidate right now. If that happens I will introduce him/her at the MHRAC meeting.

David Ley

Q. To Max: In our bylaws, do we lay out a process for the election of co-chairs?

Max

A. No, it is not exactly that clear, it's a first tour elected, and then a staggard term, so the first one serves a six-month term and then the second one serves a year and then the board elects successors from thereon.

David Ley

Q. Are we getting the MHRAC established on city code as opposed to simply as the result of the CASA especially given the kind of changes right now that we are potentially seeing with CASA and DOJ?

Danny

They did want to codify that and not necessarily make it part of the CASA, but part of the city's way of going forward. Lindsay, when she was with the city attorney's office she was moving in that direction; that may still be on the table. I have not talked to anyone in the city attorney's office; I am not sure what the city's intake is on that now if they still want to pursue that now.

Rachel Biggs

I think that should be a priority for the MHRAC moving forward. I think we should be thinking about the longevity of the MHRAC long-term after the CASA. Looking at the CPOA and their ordinance; I think it is a good roadmap for the MHRAC to follow.

Danny

I think the way this MHRAC has operated has been a benefit to the city, especially to APD, and it should be a model for every major city in the country.

Danny

I had a conversation with the DOJ and they would like new co-chairs by November for the monitor visit, so the Monitoring team can get to know the new leadership. We also need to put together the end-of-year report and that needs to happen sooner than later.

Danny

Q. Did we decide if we are having an election tonight or November?

Wendy Line-Brink

Q. In order to nominate somebody can you Danny and Rick give an overview of what you do so that we can think about what we want to get other people into or people can think about what they are getting into?

David Ley

A. The role of the co-chairs has been as we've seen, running the MHRAC meeting, helping to oversee the agenda, although the agenda is usually set by consensus by email prior. Danny and Rick usually sit on subcommittee during the month including ACS Oversite Committee and attend the status hearing with the judge around the CASA. And Elizabeth Martin with the Attorney General's Office keeps Danny and Rick up-to-date. In addition, they have kindly stepped in and given guidance in more complex situations that have arisen over the years around the issues with the police department.

Danny

A. You are the face of the MHRAC. Co-chairs meet with the city leadership.

Wendy

Q. Can it be a city or a county employee, or do they have to be unaffiliated with the city?

Danny

A.The CASA certainly speaks to that as far as voting members within the MHRAC. The CASA certainly spells out that we have APD involved with their voting and non-voting members. Within the CASA nor do the bylaws say that it cannot be. I think that might be a conflict within the city and it could be difficult for them also because they have to be critical of management or their bosses.

<u>Laura</u>

Q. Danny, can we expect this to be another perpetually renewing six-month term situation?

Danny

A. That is strictly up to the committee. I never thought that was a good idea to rotate those guys in and out so quickly but that is just my personal opinion.

David Ley

As I recall, I think that was a temporary measure that we put in when the MHRAC was first created six years ago and there was a lot of turnover in terms of participation and membership and we needed to get something going. I think at the time we wanted some potential influence but I think it will be open to modification.

Sgt. Matt Tinney

I don't know how it would look to the public if a city member was the head and then giving information back; it could look like we are not being truthful or we are hiding information for the best interest of the city; government as opposed to the city as a community.

Danny

Right now, the community is very untrusting, not only APD, but the CASA, and the entire process so if we threw what Matt Tinney said in the mix it might not be good, especially in this current environment.

Rick read from the chat

Q. Could nominations be made for those already sitting on the committee?

Rick

A. I believe that is what we are looking for.

Danny

A. Yes, that would come from those existing members

David Ley

The way we have always done it, is co-chairs need to be elected members of the MHRAC; they may not necessarily need to be representative of groups that are named in the CASA because we have expanded membership of the MHRAC beyond what was spelled out at very limited bases in the CASA.

Danny Whatley

As David said, we certainly can do this because this vote will be within the committee; we can certainly take comments from anyone on the call. Can we take care of this nomination process and election via email and not have to wait for the next meeting that way whoever is elected can participate in the monitor's visit and any of those meetings going forward?

Rick Miera

We'd had a discussion on this situation right now, and those individuals who are interested are interested now and in the next week or so. I think the thing to do is make a motion at the appropriate time to do exactly what Danny Whatley just stated so we can have a vote on it that way it would be documented in the minutes. I think that would facilitate the appropriate changing of the guard.

Danny

I make a motion that the MHRAC via email makes nominations to either Rick Miera or myself; we will share those with the entire committee and then have that election via email.

David Ley and Rick Miera

Second the above motion

Maxwell Kauffman

I don't know the answer but I would like to make sure we are compliant with the open meeting act.

David Ley

We wrestled with this issue a few years ago, and the determination was made because we are not a city body, we are not a governmental entity; that we're not subject to the open meetings act. However, we made the decision at that time, that wherever possible, we would continue to comply with the open meeting act to the best of our ability.

<u>Paula</u>

I would like for you to consider adding to the election a date so that everyone will know that the election will be on a certain date so that it does not get lost in the shuffle of email.

Danny

If you are going to nominate someone, you don't do it blindly, have a conversation with that person before you nominate them. If you want to nominate yourself, you can do that too. Those nominations that come in will be shared with the entire committee and we will be running all nominations through Brenda via email. We can have nominations open till Thursday or Friday of this week and then put that out for a vote. The process will just have to be hammered out on how we are going to do that.

David Ley

Due to going out of the country for the rest of the week, I nominate Rachel Biggs, Health Care for the Homeless, for one of the co-chair positions. Rachel comes with an extraordinary level of experience in the legislative and advocacy kind of world. She brings a world of experience with persons who are unhoused ensuring their rights and needs are respected. I can't think of anybody that would step in better.

Unfortunately, I am not available to step into the co-chair position if nominated due to a commitment in Santa Fe that pulls me away from Albuquerque.

Danny

There is a nomination on the floor and with that nomination comes a vote; there is a vote for Rachel Biggs. You couldn't find a better person on the committee and you couldn't go wrong with Rachel Biggs to go forward with the MHRAC.

Rachel Biggs

I will accept the nomination; I am not going to decline, as David has declined. I just want to add that I have been a part of this process for a long time with APD forward; I have been involved with the CASA since about 2016 and I am looking forward to helping move MHRAC forward and helping us set some strategic priorities regardless if I am the chair, or not. I think there is a lot we can accomplish together and I am excited about the possibility. I want to continue having MHRAC be that shining star that the monitoring team has identified and we need to continue to find ways to codify MHRAC for the long term; this is a great process and a great committee.

Betty Whiton

I'd like to say that Bonnie and Rachel look like two fantastic candidates for co-chair and I think they would do a magnificent job for us all.

Bonnie Mount

Yes, I would be interested to learn more of what the role entails and I would definitely have to do more investigation with having the CTC coming up and getting into that process. Thank you that is such an honor. I think Rachel is great and I have been able to observe her here at this meeting over the past months. Let's talk more about it. I think Rachel is a fantastic choice.

Danny Whatley

We have a nomination and we have a vote. Rick and I have had this conversation and we were both interested in Rachel being the next co-chair, so I think you have more than one vote, you have three votes for Rachel. If you are interested or you want to nominate someone else send me an email.

Potential Mass Eviction, Rob Nelson

At a workshop, Coalition to end Homelessness, I realized that we are not prepared for what is going to happen due to the moratorium getting lifted at the end of the month. we are going to have a new population that will be homeless and we need to be somewhat prepared for what is going to happen.

Danny Whatley

Hopeworks has been struggling through the pandemic and trying to be open as much as possible, are not having to limit their services. The Rock at Noon Day has been in a situation where we have not been able to open at all; we are shooting for November the 9th to be open completely. Most of the day shelters and their services are non-existent for the most part.

Rachel Biggs

From the perspective of Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless; this is something we have been preparing for this since the beginning of the pandemic. We were seeing an increase in homelessness upwards from 40 to 45% based on what past unemployment has reflected in terms of homelessness. We have rental assistance funds coming down and we should make sure we are connecting people to nmrenthealth.org. The concern is rising rent, the rental assistance is

only going so far when a landlord is responding to the market and can end a lease with all legal terms and then turn-a-round and rent that apartment for more money. Another issue is the source of income discrimination, where you don't have to accept a voucher when someone has their apartment at the market rate where we typically use our voucher for housing. It's getting harder and harder to find apartments where we can use our vouchers to house people.

Bree Rocha

The information I have heard is while there is no order yet written, the Supreme Court is looking at January 3rd, 2022, to lift the eviction stay. That process is ongoing; we have our legal service providers continuing to engage with the Supreme Court to work to develop eviction diversion programs and other methodologies to get the \$300,000,000 that we have which means the emergency rental assistance funds from the federal government to get that money to tenants to keep them housed. There is the money going out the door, tenants are being approved, and checks are being sent to their landlord; the landlord is not accepting that rent, checks are getting lost, so there is a decent amount of people becoming homeless after those checks are rejected, specifically because the market value has shifted so much. We have an influx of people moving and a dire amount of need. I have been in conversations with our Coordinated Entry Director, Alex Pisanio, who has indicated that between the Coordinated Entry System and the 768-HELP line that Coalition and Homelessness now facilitate, we are receiving 7,000 calls a month for people who are in immediate need of shelter; this is an upward trend from about 5,000 calls. A lot of folks are not getting those needs met. There is a lot of families sleeping in their cars.

Gilbert Ramirez

A lot has been going on with regards to the partnership with the state, as some may know, or not know, we combine our money with the state, with the Rent Help New Mexico Program. The good news is we are able to obligate a majority of that money so it would not get returned to the federal government. This is round one of the emergency rental assistance; we do expect that there will be a second round of additional funding. They have also implemented a court program so those individuals have been asked to show up for a court hearing and asked to fill out an application. Problem is, some of the folks are not showing up to their hearings and that is detrimental to their case. The WEC is open and there is space available. We do have a whole designated hotel with regard to needs for families and referrals can go there; that one has been used the most. We plan to have that hotel available for our community at least through the end of the fiscal year, end of June, or July 1.

Danny

Q. What are APD and ACS going to tell folks because they are going to be dealing with a lot of these issues?

Mariela

A. We are leaning heavily on providers who have motel vouchers; housing vouchers, we are not seeing that many and the qualification are pretty steep.

Lisa Chavez

Q. The criteria to get into a tiny house is difficult; I am wondering if someone can talk to the county to start getting people placed in there?

Danny

A. I think the county has drawn a line in the sand as to how they plan to use the tiny homes.

Wendy

I think our religious partners are an untapped resource; historically when people were feeling distressed that is where they would go. We need to think about engaging them more.

Mariela

We have activated many of our religious affiliations, Catholic Charities is one, and there are quite a few groups that are very active in this area especially during the winter months. One of the things we do hear from people in the community is that they do not want to be affiliated with a religion of any sort so that tends to be a barrier.

Max

Q. to Bree: It is good that you have a statewide coalition; do you anticipate newly evicted folks from communities surrounding Albuquerque to come to Albuquerque seeking assistance. Is that something you think Albuquerque should be anticipating in January?

Bree Rocha

A. There have already been multiple folks who have already been evicted that have come to Albuquerque. Depending on the community and the number of resources there are; they may go to the next best place. Albuquerque does have a reputation in small rural communities for having those resources. So yes, I think it is something we need to talk about and include in our plans and operations.

Gilbert Ramirez

I want to add that for those folks who are victims of violence or domestic violence the DVRC is receiving a \$100,000.00 contract for hotel vouchers specifically; that came out of the Mayor's DV Task Force recommendation and was funded by the City Council. That contract is nearly up and running so that is another resource to look into for folks who need to get placed.

David

Q. in the Chat: What about the use of the Gibson facility?

Gilbert Ramirez

A. We have submitted our conditional use to zoning and hearing; the facility is not zoned to be allowed to have a shelter so until we have that approval, we cannot use the shelter in that capacity.

Report and Update from C.O.A.S.T, Rob Nelson

COAST did open up a position; it is now closed. I don't know how many people applied for it but we are hoping within the next 90 days that Lisa and myself will soon have some help because we have seen a drastic influx in calls from newly unsheltered people, to people stranded here looking for bus tickets. There have been some unusual asks lately and I think it is due to people starting to panic.

CIU, APD, and BSS Report and Update

Cmdr. M. Dietzel

The controversial handcuffing policy that seems to come up perpetually here; it's not a final draft, but a 15-day commentary for officers came out on PowerDMS, and it specifically talks about involuntary and voluntary transport. Involuntary right now does have a clearer option to not handcuff people, (i.e., someone who wants to get their medication adjusted or getting to the point where they feel they may need to be committed) they have the option right now in the policy as drafted could be transported without handcuffs. The MHRAC will get a copy of the policy shortly as soon as the officer commentary is done. I just want to thank the board for pushing this for years because we finally have it in the policy as a direct result of this board.

Report and Update from Sub-Committees

David Ley

We continue to work closely with ACS around their training curriculum; that is moving very well and positively. We are definitely making some progress in assisting them with those training programs.

MHRAC Bylaws, Maxell Kauffman

Given the discussion tonight, I think I want to shift around some of the priorities of the bylaws because of the nominations. I think there are two big things, membership, and the process for commenting on policies from the city. We had talked about expanding membership to include ACS since given the discussion with the DOJ and the parties to the CASA that MHRAC would have some involvement with ACS similar to MHRAC involved with CIT/CIU.

- Q. Does it make sense to have a representative from ACS on the board?
- Q. Who else could we benefit from? Paula mentioned we would like to see more involvement from UNM and Bonnie was able to join the board today, so that worked out nicely.
- Q. Could we open this up to someone from the Black Mental Health Coalition? Or, New Mexico Coalition to end Homelessness?
- Q. Is this something that we do now since we have nominations as it relates to the bylaws?

<u>Danny</u>

Q. Nineteen is a pretty large committee; if you expand it more, are you going to be able to handle it?

Maxwell

A. I think we should at least be open up to ACS.

David Ley

I don't think it would be appropriate to have city employees voting on our body's view of city actions that feels like a conflict.

Danny

The situation with the ACS that we still haven't resolved, the DOJ has given us their opinion, and the monitor has given us their opinion, and the court has sort of leaned in that direction. I would be careful because the ACS is not part of the CASA unless they change the CASA. I do not have a problem with them being non-voting members.

Mariela

We're fine being non-voting members. We just want to have a better relationship. The bylaws will give us some guidance and clarity.

Max

It's fine to table this until we get more clarity on what the CASA calls for on this.

Max

In regards to the Inforsharing sub-committee and giving feedbacks on SOP's. I know we've had a question, why do we have to have such short timelines when we get SOP's? We get two weeks for MHRAC to give a response. I do recall there is a lot of process that goes with getting policy implemented; my understanding is that you have to go through so many hoops. Then we discussed, can the Information Sharing group take some of that on? I propose we move the Information Sharing group to the first Tuesday of every month so if a policy comes and they would need two weeks, it would cover that two weeks. That group would be able to discuss it, vote on a decision, and deliver it to the co-chairs and at the same time be more transparent with the whole board and maybe within three business days of that meeting an official opinion from the MHRAC is given. That is still a lot of crunch time but it might accommodate both the city and MHRAC time to give feedback.

Cmdr. Dietzel

I like that idea a lot; I will send out an email to everyone who usually attends that meeting and we will coordinate that first Tuesday if that is acceptable to everyone.

Rachel Biggs

I remember there was a lot of talk at the beginning about SOP 3-52 and policy review and how that works so I just want to make sure we are aligning with that SOP if we're going to be that specific in the timelines for MHRAC's review process.

Danny

The CASA clearly tells us we have to respond. It is certainly one that we need to continue the discussion.

<u>Danny</u>

I will be sending out an email tomorrow to talk about the co-chair nomination and voting to put some sort of process together.

Gilbert Ramirez

I would like to nominate Maxwell Kauffman for one of the two co-chair positions, given his work and his commitment.

Max

I will accept the nomination

MHRAC Final Discussion

Next meeting: Tuesday, November 16, 2021