

Present:

Councillor Stutt, Chair
Councillor Kooner, Vice Chair
P. McEvoy
P. Richards

Absent:

R. Rai
A. Barmi

Staff Present:

T. Waterhouse, General Manager, Community Services
B. Aasebo, Manager, Community Safety
J. Burger, Manager Operations, Police Support Services
L. Thomas, Fire Chief, Surrey Fire Service
R. Costanzo, General Manager, Corporate Services
S. Lee, Administrative Assistant

Guests:

S. Gill, Chief Superintendent, Surrey RCMP

A. ADOPTIONS**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

It was

Moved by P. McEvoy
Seconded by P. Richards
That:

1. The agenda of the Public Safety Committee meeting of June 28, 2023, be amended as follows:

- a. Add Item C.1: 2023 Committee Workplan Revision under Other Business;
- b. Renumber Item C: Next Meeting as Item D: Next Meeting; and
- c. Renumber Item D: Adjournment as Item E: Adjournment.

2. The agenda be adopted as amended.

Carried

2. Adoption of the Minutes – May 31, 2023

It was

Moved by Councillor Kooner
Seconded by P. Richards
That the minutes of the Public Safety Committee

meeting held on April 26, 2023, be adopted.

Carried

B. STAFF PRESENTATIONS**1. Surrey Anti-Gang Family Empowerment (SAFE) Program Sustainability**

Community Safety Manager, Community Services, provided a presentation on SAFE Program Sustainability. The following information was highlighted:

- SAFE Program takes a coordinated approach to prevent and address youth gang violence. The five-year \$7.5 million program, funded by Public Safety Canada and led by the City of Surrey, started in 2019 and is working to keep children and youth out of gangs while building positive life skills and increasing connections with family, school, and community. With a large population of children and youth living in Surrey, SAFE involves 10 partner agencies delivering 11 individual programs that are disrupting negative pathways to gang violence.
- SAFE has a goal of supporting a total of 4730 at-risk children and youth by the end of its five-year funding cycle. From January 2019 to March 2023, SAFE partners collectively extended services to 4394 unique clients including 3879 children and youth at-risk for gang involvement, meeting 82% of their target. Surrey has become a national leader in youth gang prevention starting from the Surrey Wraparound Program and now the SAFE Program. They often take opportunities to promote best practices through local, national, and international audiences.
- The SAFE Centre is at the heart of the SAFE Program and is a new approach to a healthier, safer community. The Centre is a collaborative space where the City of Surrey's Community Safety section is based, and partners meet to coordinate and deliver services. Over 1000 community safety enhancing functions have been hosted on site supporting over 12,000 total visits by professionals and clients in the past four years of operation. Examples of some functions are workshops, trainings, clinical counselling sessions, and collaboration meetings.
- A key initiative that takes place via the centre is the Children and Youth At-Risk Table (CHART) weekly meetings. CHART aims to lower the risk of gang involvement by providing tailored support to children, youth, and their families. They have accepted 588 children and youth aged 6 to 19-year-olds, with 56% identifying as male. Out of the 516 clients closed, 70% were concluded as having experienced a significant reduction of risk for getting involved due to the multi-agency collaboration. The City tracks the clients' neighborhood, age, gender identity, and ethnicity, which allows them to find trends and source more fundings and grants to do more things around youth and gang prevention such as Empower Surrey, Blueprint Pathways, and Surrey Youth Resiliency Program (SYRP).

- In April 2021, the SAFE team launched Empower Surrey, a first-of-its-kind resource offering tips, tools, and information to empower parents, caregivers, and other trusted adults. The website was developed with input from over 100 local youth ages 14 to 19, and professionals from over 14 partner agencies. It has over 23,000 unique visits in just over two years. To further explore website content, the City and its partners launched the free in person Empower Surrey Parent Workshops in November 2021 which has supported over 1362 registrations across 29 weeknight events. Facilitated by the City of Surrey Community Safety Division and supported by Surrey School District, Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSEU), and SAFE Program clinical counsellor and local youth workers, these workshops provide parents, caregivers, and trusted adults with localized knowledge, tips, and tools to minimize risk and build protective factors.
- The City also secured funding to implement the Blueprint Pathways program, which supports vulnerable youth with one-on-one mentorship and counselling. They provide a youth counsellor to meet with 13 to 19-year-olds in schools and the community. Youth agree to participate in the program before receiving individualized support including setting goals and developing actions to meet them. The program has supported 22 youth since they started. Activities include connecting youth to recreational, volunteer, and employment opportunities, assisting youth to leave negative relationships, reducing barriers such as transportation that affect school and appointment attendance, and referring youth to additional services. Blueprint Pathways activities are expected to increase resiliency and strengthen client connection with school, family, and community.
- The SYRP Programs support children, youth, and their families by providing services that will help divert young people from gang involvement. The City and its partners launched SYRP in Spring 2023, introducing eight new projects led by eight community organizations. These projects are Block Youth Enterprise, Blueprint, Chart School Response, Club Utopia, Risk Prevention Team, Skookum Windspeaker, Focus, and Yo4Youth. The SYRP Program receives \$3.95 million through the federal Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) which allow Surrey to grow its inventory of gang prevention programs by including additional after-school programming, youth outreach and mentorship, enhanced access to trauma counselling, and new culturally sensitive services for youth. Some programs deliver culturally appropriate support to groups such as Sookum Windspeaker, Club Uptopia, and Black Youth Enterprise; while others prioritize targeted neighbourhoods and populations such as the Risk Prevention Team.
- The SAFE Program has been the foundation for all city-led youth gang prevention programs such as Empower Surrey, Blueprint Pathways, and SYRP. However, there is currently no funding to continue the SAFE Program after 2023. CHART plays a key role in identifying clients for referrals to other SAFE program services. The lack of ongoing funding for SAFE programs creates a concern that the programs will not be available to address the needs identified by the CHART table. The City will include CHART into its core operations but additional funding is needed for the other SAFE services to continue.

- According to General Manager, Community Services, the Mayor met with Minister Marco Mendicino, the federal Minister of Public Safety and Member of Parliament and Mike Farnsworth, the provincial Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General to discuss the SAFE Program, and the City made a formal request through Minister Mendocino for the funding to continue. Though the City did not receive a response yet, they are ramping up the efforts to continue getting funding for SAFE. Staff will also formally report to Council to ensure they are informed about this situation.
- One of the challenges is that there are very few precedents of the federal government providing additional funding after the cycle has ended for a program. The Surrey Wraparound Program was an exception. With the support of the Surrey School district and others, the City managed to secure successive funding following the life of the grant. They are hoping to do that again with the SAFE program and are looking for advocacy and support from the Committee to find sustainability funding to continue this program.

In response to questions from the Committee, the staff provided the following information:

- According to CHART Dashboard, 94 people declined services and 12 withdrew consent. Some clients are brought up without their knowledge because things were going negative for them. They may decline services as they do not want them. Sometimes people also accept services but later refuse them for reasons such as not liking the workers, a change of heart, or nervous about someone finding that they are involved in criminal enterprising. It is a combination of both parent and youth consent depending on the age of the youth.
- The clients that decline services are not necessarily more at risk. There are mature youth who are struggling and at high risk that have accepted services. But it is also possible that the clients that decline services are at higher risk since they may be actively involved in crime or do not see an issue in their life.

The Committee noted the following comments:

- The Gun and Gang Violence Action Fund (GGVAF) was on a five-year cycle, and it has recently come back with more money. The Committee suggested that the City could try obtaining federal funding under GGVAF.
- The Committee noted the suggestion from Surrey RCMP that the Community Safety Manager continue to work to coordinate with the Surrey RCMP for community safety programming.

2. Second Responder Program Update

Fire Chief, Surrey Fire Service (SFS), provided a presentation regarding the Second Responder Program Update. The following information was highlighted:

- Second Responder Program is a partnership with SFS, Fraser Health, and Health Canada. Health Canada gave the City a grant for 18 months which will run out at the end of September, 2023. In Surrey, SFS supports the BC Ambulance Service in responding to medical incidents and are often first to arrive. Fire crews respond to thousands of drug poisoning calls per year and deliver naloxone to patients.
- SFS has real time data on overdose responses. For fatal and non-fatal overdose responses combined, they respond to approximately 2,200 incidents each year, which is 6% of their annual 36,000 incidents. Of those 2,200 responses, over 200 a year are fatal. The rate in Surrey last year was 43 deaths per 100,000 residents a year, and this year was around 35 deaths per 100,000 residents a year. With a majority of fatal overdose occurring in residential settings, they observed that there was typically a previous emergency response to a non-fatal overdose at the same location.
- The objectives of the program are to use SFS call response data to identify residential locations where people may be without connections to harm reduction services and have overdosed alone in their home, introduce persons at the locations to Fraser Health's Overdose Outreach Team (OOT) to offer the most appropriate support options based upon each person's needs and preferences, and decrease the number of repeated overdoses and the tragic number of deaths that are occurring in residential locations.
- The design of the program is to locate people in need, visit them to offer help, and prevent future fatal overdoses. The idea is to offer support for people who experienced drug poisoning and to provide harm reduction education to family or friends, during a "window of opportunity" following an overdose. The message is that they care and are ready to connect people to resources that they might not be aware of or might not know how to access. The result is to provide help and support and avoid harm from overdoses in the future.
- According to the program, a team of one firefighter, one clinician, and one peer will do follow-up visits within a 72-hour window of the emergency at the overdose location. Participation is voluntary for the patients. The firefighter introduces themselves at the location, explaining that they are returning to check how the person who overdosed is doing and introduces the rest of the team. The clinician is a member of the Substance Use Services Access Team or OOT specialized to help people explore their relationship to substances. The peer is the most valuable member of the team - creating a safe environment for the person who overdosed, building understanding and trust through shared experiences and relationships and continuing follow-up.

- For follow up, Fraser Health provides a wide variety of resources to help clients make informed choices about support options, and peers follow up with clients to continue the connection. The harm reduction approach is employed which tailors support to the needs and goals of each client. Clients are involved in support planning including goal setting and outcome evaluation. During the initial visit, some of the resources Fraser Health Authority provides are substance use support, social work support, support for family members, access to Naloxone kits, information about the Lifeguard app, and connection to related health promotion and prevention programs.
- Fire Chief shared two positive feedbacks from their clients regarding this program and noted that all the feedback has been consistent. He also shared some positive feedback from team members who found the design of this program a rewarding experience.
- According to the latest 6-month (Sept 2022 – March 2023) review of patient contacts who voluntarily provided their information, 53% of clients visited by the Second Responders followed through with a referral, and 44% of those followed through with services from the OOT. Out of the 147 visits, 84 clients were willing to talk to the team, 47 clients consented to provide their BC Public Health Number for tracking purposes in a secure application, 25 clients followed up on referral, and 11 clients followed through on a support service. Though the sample size is small, it is a representative sample.
- The funding for the Second Responder Program is running out in September 2023. There are staffing challenges for public safety in all areas such as police, firefighters, and paramedics. Using the overtime model to have off duty firefighters support this program is not sustainable under the normal operation mode. SFS is reaching out to the Province to continue the funding for this program. One such initiative was SFS delivering this presentation at the Gathering Hope: Positive Impacts in Community Overdose Response Conference hosted by Local Leadership United team at Community Action Initiative in June 2023.

In response to questions from the Committee, the staff provided the following information:

- The Second Responder Team does not visit overdose locations if they occurred on the street, supervised consumption sites such as SafePoint, or temporary shelters as there are support services available. They focus on addresses such as single-family residential houses, townhouses, or apartments where overdoses have occurred. Before visiting the locations, they check with Fraser Health if the clients are in hospital, has been released, or passed away.
- Since the decriminalization of possession of small amounts of some opioids for personal use in BC by the federal government, the number of overdoses in the first three months of 2023 remained the same as last year, but they slightly increased in April and May. However, the number of deaths related to overdoses declined slightly in the first three months of 2023 and they stayed the same in April and May in Surrey as compared to Vancouver, Victoria, and some small towns in BC. The data for Surrey is easily trackable, but not the data for small towns in BC.

- The initial source of funding for the program was \$50,000 from the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, and later Health Canada provided a grant of \$600,000.
- To assist with the mental health impact on firefighters, SFS provides many programs such as peer support, referral programs, and constant education. Many firefighters have reported that the Second Responder Program is rewarding as it provides a different perspective. The proactive approach of following up with clients provides balance from their regular work and an opportunity to show empathy and compassion.

The Committee noted the following comments:

- The Committee suggested that the Fire Chief provide a presentation on HomeSafe Program at a future Public Safety Committee meeting.

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS:

1. 2023 Committee Workplan Revision

It was Moved by Councillor Kooner
Seconded by P. Richards

That staff:

1. Develop an Integrated Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan that covers all aspects of safety and wellbeing, encourages community participation, and leverages the existing partnerships with the school district, health, housing, and social service agencies;
2. Connect the Plan to the work of the Livability and Social Equity Committee; and
3. Report back to the Public Safety Committee on delivering the Plan.

Carried

D. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Public Safety Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, September 27, 2023.

E. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by Councillor Kooner

Seconded by P. McEvoy

That the Public Safety Committee meeting

be adjourned.

Carried

The Public Safety Committee adjourned at 7:02 p.m..

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Councillor Stutt, Chairperson