# Southern St. Louis County LAC

## Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2021

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| Present: | Bert Brandt, Carly Hiti Jacquelyn Hanson-Hietala, Justin England-Sullivan, MaKenzie Johnson, Nathan Glockle, Sonja Wildwood\*, Blair Powless\*\*  \*- Facilitator, \*\*Guest |
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1. Blair Powless, Duluth Community Safety Initiative

* Blair is a member of the Duluth Community Safety Initiative which started right after the death of George Floyd
* There were several petitions written and a few marches, a core group of individuals have done at least eight months of research to develop a list of proposals and have the support of local organizations and individuals
* Duluth Community Safety Initiative Proposals and progress updates:

1. *Community led oversight and implementation process for all the proposals*

-To ensure they get followed through on- didn't want to just hand proposals over to the city and walk away

- Ultimately didn't work out, too much bureaucratic work, but 2 people, including Blair, are still working consistently to ensure the implementation of the proposals

2. *Development of community forums for officer-community exchange and engagement*

- Mediated opportunity for officers and citizens to get together and share their perspectives, get to know each other, and hopefully be in a place that is safe for both to share their perspectives regardless of how the other might feel about them (police and the community)

- Just getting started but it looks like it's going to happen

3. *Independent racial-bias audit of the police department*

- Was all set to go then the mayor beat them to it. Mayor announced she had directed the police department to conduct an independent racial bias audit (Blair, NAACP, and police have put together a group of about five other individuals from city commissions (African Heritage Commission, Indigenous Commission, Disabilities Commission, LGBTQ+ Commission)

- Slow process, has been drafting RFPs for last 3 months, now just about at point ready to release that and get applicants

4. *Budget freeze/ De-funding*

- Based on language at the time and did not quite go anywhere

- Did want to make it clear, they are still pushing the idea that hopefully as other opportunities, other ways of conducting public safety come along, that the traditional models will shrink, and those new models will grow in their place

- Now more of a gradual process than complete freezing and defunding budget

- Creating new ways of conducting public safety

5. *An office of violence prevention- developing programs where people could be community organizations that would work*

- Areas where there are more concerns about violence and teaching people de-escalation skills, helping to communicate between the police and the community better

- Developing good relationships with the police department but also looking at the circumstances or problems that can arise that cause violence to occur, attempting to prevent it

6. *Duluth Community Crisis Response*

- Something they researched the CAHOOTS Model from Eugene, OR quite a bit

- Working with county, city, NAACP to put together community response

- Well on its way—HDC got grant from city for $600, 000 and grant from county $600,000 to fund a community response program – officially being rolled out this month (December)

1. Welcome and check-in
2. Time change proposal; membership by-law review; marketing for membership; other logistics

* Proposal made to change meeting start time from 4:30pm to 5:00pm based on member feedback (individuals in group who work as therapists have clients on the hour)
  + Everyone generally okay with change
  + General agreement made to change meeting time from 4:30pm-6:00pm to 5:00pm-6:30pm
* Bylaws and membership
  + Questions of how to add new members and have it so that there are overlaps in membership terms
  + In bylaws, it is written that members can serve up to two consecutive terms
  + Suggestion made to have two member terms with a potential maximum number of three terms
  + In original bylaws, Lynn had put “members will serve two- or three-year terms based on member preference and can serve up to two consecutive appointments
  + Group in agreement that establishing exact language important for recruiting new members
  + Vote completed to adjust bylaws to say members will serve two-to-three-year terms based on member preference
* Member openings
  + As of now, there are three openings
  + For marketing, Sonja talked to Lynn who sent a list of different organizations that she emailed and SLC made a public announcement on the SLC social media platforms
  + 120 applications were received based on that marketing strategy
  + Organizations on the list included Northland Healthy Minds, NAMI, Generations Health Care Initiative, Thrive, Boise Fort, NAACP…)
  + Preference for marketing would be a combination of Facebook posts and emails to work and organizations linked
  + Sonja noted that it is very helpful to share the values of the LAC
  + County is putting out press release tomorrow or Monday; language specifically states that LAC is “looking specifically for individuals with lived experience, themselves or experience with loved ones”—also asked for diverse perspectives
  + Member noted that schools would be good to add as organizations to market to for members
* In-person meeting inquiry
  + Per Rochelle, at this time county policy is not to have any in-person meetings, LAC likely will fall under this requirement
  + Members requested to have a goal set for in-person meetings so members can begin to prepare
  + May meeting suggested as the goal for in-person meetings to start
  + Request made for SLC liaison to update LAC about county policy changes then send a poll to check in with each member personally before proceeding with in-person meeting planning. Vote must be unanimous for in-person meetings to ensure everyone is comfortable meeting in person.
* Elevator speeches- how do we talk about the LAC?
  + General language:
    - The LAC is a county committee tasked with the job to identify gaps in mental health and the mental health system in our region. What we did last year was focus on crisis response the gaps in those services. We’re still pinpointing what we are working on next year
  + The North LAC has done a lot in providing suggestions to fill gaps in the system, south has done some suggestions as well
  + It’s about advocacy- it’s a group of diverse people from diverse backgrounds coming together for a common cause
  + Group in agreement that we need to hear more from lived experiences of all sorts, sustainability for people the people doing the work, continued interest in crisis response and supporting that work.
  + Potential future item collecting/compiling mental health resources
  + Members will be actively recruited ideally to contribute a meaningful perspective
  + Suggestion made to create an agenda around what the members are passionate about
  + Noted that group members have a lot of resources and experience, hearing about personal experiences can bring a lot to the group
  + Group generally in agreement that they would like to do more engagement in the community, visibility, and advocacy around mental health; there is potential for more activeness and engagement
  + Discussions in the past have talked about surveys, going to clubhouses, talking to people in the community
  + Members noted they would like to hear more from members in the upcoming year rather than brining in guests to know more about members and their job histories and lived experience
  + Question asked whether there is funding available to do an incentive to get feedback from the community- something that gives back to people giving their time to the LAC
  + Suggestion made to have sub-committee dedicated to creating something physical/visual (like an infographic) to show what the LAC has been doing each month
  + Suggestion made to have sub-committee based on community engagement- any interested members should email Sonja and she will follow up (Carly and Bert noted initial interest)
  + Another potential sub-committee could be focused on developing a hub of resources- Rochelle noted some potential with the Resourceful platform (Nathan and Liz interested in developing resource hub)
  + Suggestion made to have in-person social gathering- pending COVID situation

1. Announcement of 2021-2022 co-chairs

* At the time of the meeting, there were still several members who had not voted so announcement postponed until more votes came in

[Post-meeting note: Co-chairs elected for 2021-2022 are Sonja Wildwood and Carly Hiti]

Action Items:

* Members do their best to market and share news about openings to their networks
* SLC liaison will update LAC about county policy changes regarding in-person meetings then send a poll to check in with each member personally before proceeding with in-person meeting planning.
* Members email Sonja if interested in participating in community engagement committee

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| **Next meeting:** | **January 20, 2022**  **5:00pm-6:30pm** |