

Chico Police Department
Police Community Advisory Board

Wednesday, April 13, 2022

8:00am – 9:30am



Fire Training Center ~ 1466 Humboldt Road

Group Agreements

- Be Respectful • Stay Fully Present • Speak and Listen from the Heart • Expect and Accept Non-Closure •
 - Hold the Complexity of Other's Experiences Without Judgment • Maintain Confidentiality •

AGENDA

- I. Opening Remarks
 - a. PCAB Chair Giovanni Tricerri
 - b. Interim Chief Billy Aldridge
- II. Approval of Minutes
- III. Officer Safety and Wellness – Jodi Drysdale, Butte Strong Wellness Program Unit Manager & Chico PD Lieutenant Terry Tupper
- IV. Schedule of Future Topics
 - a. May – Butte County Mobile Crisis Unit & Chico PD TARGET Team
 - b. June – Report Review

Chico Police Department | Police Community Advisory Board (PCAB)
Fire Training Center Classroom ~ 1466 Humboldt Road
April 13, 2022 8:00am – 9:30am

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Interim Chief Billy Aldridge, Giovanni Tricerri, Scott Kennelly, Kasey Reynolds, Tom van Overbeek

ALSO PRESENT:

Butte Strong First Responder Wellness Program Manager Jodi Drysdale, Chico PD Lt. Terry Tupper, North Valley Community Foundation Executive Assistant Dillon Raney, Chico PD Admin Analyst Crystal Peppas

OPENING COMMENTS

Interim Chief Billy Aldridge thanked Jodi Drysdale and Lt. Tupper for presenting to PCAB and added that the Butte Strong Wellness Program is building and keeps getting better every day.

Jovanni noted that PCAB had not met since December, initially due to a rise in COVID and then because of scheduling conflicts. However, the Board is still going strong and will accomplish what they are tasked to do. This meeting will be on the topic of Officer Safety and Wellness and the next meeting will be on the Mobile Crisis Unit. The Board will meet in June to review, finalize meaningful recommendations, and complete a report for the Chief of Police of all topics PCAB has covered. The Chief will in turn, share those recommendations with City Council.

DISCUSSION

Lt. Terry Tupper is one of three Watch Commanders for the Chico Police Department that oversee Patrol teams, scheduling, and critical incidents. One of his collateral duties is the Chico PD Wellness Program. Lt. Tupper stated an on-duty workout program was initiated for sworn officers and community service officers assigned to Patrol, focused on fitness and strength to meet the standards of the job. An overlap in Patrol scheduling allows for teams to work out on-duty for one hour a day, so long as the workout location is on campus and employees are available to respond to priority calls as needed. This pilot program was vetted through the City's Human Resources and Risk Management Department. There was no push back as the benefits were instantly recognized. Statistics show that worker's compensation claims go down when a workout program is instituted; strong, fit employees are less likely to get hurt.

The tax on the character of police officers is extraordinary as they are held to a very high standard and withstand much scrutiny. This may make it difficult to maintain a positive attitude and enjoy the job. If stress is not managed, it can escalate. In 2019, the number of officer deaths by suicide exceeded the number of officers deaths in the line of duty for the first time. So, partnering with Jodi and Butte Strong First Responder Wellness Program came at a perfect time. Working closely with Jodi has allowed access to trainers and mental health professionals as well as social and family programs for officers, staff, and their families. Chico PD is seeing residual benefits, beyond health, in moral and recruitment and retention.

Tom stated that officers are prone to certain injuries, including lower back injury, and working out can be a preventative measure. There are also the proven mental health benefits of stress management, endorphins, and teamwork. Tom asked if trainers were coming onsite at Chico PD to lead workouts and the answer is not at this time. Trainers are onsite several times a week at the Butte County Sheriff's Office. The workouts developed by the trainers are posted to the "Butte Strong LE Wellness" app, available to Chico PD Employees. The Butte Strong Wellness Program is working on a professional services agreement for trainers and physical therapists to come on campus in Chico.

Jodi introduced herself to the board. She worked for Butte County Behavioral Health for six years in prevention programs in the south county, where she connected schools with Police and Fire Departments to provide positive experiences. Jodi was a wedding planner for fifteen years and she worked for the North Valley Community Foundation with Camp Fire long-term recovery group programs addressing restoration. Jodi's path crossed with Sheriff Corey Honea and he asked if she would help organize a conference for the State Sheriff's Organization on a tight, two month deadline.

When the Butte County Sheriff's Posse was awarded a grant for a wellness program through Butte Strong, Sheriff Honea contacted Jodi to ask if she would manage it. Initially, Jodi declined. After the Dixie Fire, and a sabbatical from summer wedding season, Jodi accepted and devoted herself to this program supporting officers, families, and local agencies.

Jodi said that the program has an organic structure, and she is thankful the research naturally aligned with the direction the program has taken. *Sheriff & Deputy Magazine* notes that several unique stressors affect law enforcement officers including work life balance, jobs becoming their identities, "turning off" the job can be difficult, and producing fight/flight hormones instead of rest/renew hormones. The magazine also states that most law enforcement officers spend more time taking care of their lawns than focusing on their wellness. A paradigm shift is needed to place well-being higher on the priority list. Wellness is not just about keeping people un-sick; it's about keeping them well all around.

Tom said law enforcement is not just a job it's a vocation, a bigger commitment of self. **Lt. Tupper** agreed that the job is who you are. You can't, or aren't willing, to shut it off. Your eyes are open to the evil of the world, and it can make it harder to see the good. Officers live at a higher state of vigilance and it's important to find a way to turn it off and rest.

Jodi explained that the Butte Strong First Responder Wellness Unit is a multi-agency unit dedicated to the wellness of the staff, volunteers, and families serving in local first responder agencies. Funding was awarded to the Butte County Sheriff's Posse by the Butte Strong Fund and administered by the North Valley Community Foundation. Actively participating in leadership are members from the BCSO, Chico Fire, Chico PD, Cal Fire/Butte Unit, Paradise PD, Butte County Probation, and Chico State Police. The Unit has an advisory board that meets twice a year. There is a separate Wellness Unit Team as well as a Family Committee, with Fire and Law Enforcement family members as liaisons.

The Butte Strong Wellness Program offerings are free of charge and include Physical Fitness, Mental/Emotional Wellness, and Family Outreach/Social Activities. Fitness classes for agency staff, volunteers and spouses include functional fitness, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, yoga, and self-defense.

Incident-based therapy sessions are available for mental and emotional wellness. There are currently five therapists on board and employees can receive up to four sessions. Three of the therapists are part of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), so if an employee needed to continue with sessions, they could work through the City's EAP provider to continue. FirstAlarm workshops are three-hour training sessions regarding PTSD and suicide prevention to cue into behaviors, language and traits that indicate a co-worker may be in need. Members of the county wide Peer Support Team recently attended a three-day training session about how to be proactive, provide support in critical incidents, and normalize language around mental wellness. The app lists all members of the county-wide Peer Support Team and any are available to talk, not just the members from your own law enforcement agency; a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being drafted across agencies.

On the family front, the first onboarding day recently occurred. Law Enforcement Academy graduates and their spouses toured at their respective hiring agencies and attended training regarding creating a financial foundation, work/life balance, what to expect during their field training programs, and about other available resources. Family events also include Family Skate Night at the Paradise Ice Rink, Painting Events (fee applicable for this event), and the upcoming Family Day at the Forebay.

The best way for employees to see and access program offerings, along with other fitness, nutrition, and useful information is to download the "Butte Strong LE Wellness" app. The login is specific per agency, not to individual employees. The app includes current programming, past workouts, functional fitness tips, and contact information for Peer Support Team Members and therapists. Jodi was able to visit several briefings at Chico PD and it resulted in 66 app downloads. Hopefully, those that downloaded the app are already finding it to be useful.

Lt. Tupper said all law enforcement personnel have calls that hit deep and its necessary to find ways to cope. The stigma of talking about these issues and seeking help is breaking down. Detective John Nickelson and the Peer Support Team have been doing a fantastic job at Chico PD. The team members are highly respected within the department and that has helped the program be successful. While Chico PD has a schedule and venue for a fitness program as well as a Peer Support Team, the collaboration with the Butte Strong Wellness Program helps to fill the gaps and has led into a

holistic wellness program. **Jodi** stated that Butte Strong Wellness has a broad menu of programming that is used often, but there is even more available for any given instance. It's encouraging to see the programs being used and providing a space that was not previously held.

Scott asked about funding for the program. The initial grant is through the North Valley Community Foundation, but grants can be feast or famine. What are the prospects for future funding? **Jodi** responded that the program has currently used approximately \$300K of the initial \$1M grant and it's estimated that the current funding will last 2 to 2.5 years. In that time, she hopes to collect data as to the use and realized benefits of the program. There may be state, federal, or even local grants available to fund the program in the future. All the local agencies that utilize the services may be able to add a line item to their budget and contribute to keep it going. **Jovanni** added that identifying resources, creating pathways, and demonstrating the impact of the program leads to its long-term sustainability. Another possibility for the future is a funding match, where agencies contribute a portion of the funding, and that amount is matched through a grant.

Interim Chief Aldridge said that data would be necessary and very valuable in order for the police department to ask the City Manager and Council to add a line item in the budget. It may be wise to plan those expenses out over a longer period than just one year, as is done for capital projects. Overall, the amount needed to fund the program is a drop in the bucket for the impact made. **Kasey** stated that some other local agencies are offering a \$40-\$50K signing bonus per officer. If a program such as this can help recruit and retain Chico PD employees at a lower cost, it would be worth it. However, the request for funding the program would be more likely to be approved if there was a funding match agreement such as Jovanni mentioned before.

Lt. Tupper stated that the wellness program is changing the habits of employees starting with those coming out of the police academy. The concept of wellness is starting to become embedded within the organization and the minds of the officers and agency staff. Feedback will be gathered from the sergeants on how many are participating in the on-duty workouts. We know that not everyone on Patrol participates, and it may be that some workout on their own time. **Jovanni** added that this is a culture change, and it takes time to be built into the fabric of an organization. This kind of holistic wellness program needs buy in from the top down. Some may naturally buy in, others will not. If they are not taking advantage of the program benefits, then it would be good to find out why.

Tom said some officers like to operate alone and are tough physically, emotionally, and mentally. The level of support needed may vary by person and that may be a challenge to pinpoint. **Lt. Tupper** agreed and said that the level of supervision on Patrol is very good. Sergeants are in touch with their team and are informed when something is happening in their lives such as family, divorce, or health issues. They are aware of those team members that should participate in programming and can encourage them. However, there is always the chance that someone falls through the cracks.

Interim Chief Aldridge said that programs available through the Butte Strong Wellness Program can help when there is a traumatic event, but participation cannot be forced. Participants must accept and acknowledge what they personally need or want from these offerings for their own wellbeing, or it won't be genuine. The ease of accessibility to the Peer Support Team and therapists vs. going through an EAP is wonderful. There is comfort and confidence in talking to those that know your story.

Department leadership sees a focus on wellness as a way to demonstrate that we value the people we manage, along with internally utilizing the four tenants of voice, respect, neutrality, and trustworthiness.