

Chico Police Department
Police Community Advisory Board

Wednesday, May 11, 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. Chief Matt Madden

- II. Approval of Minutes

- III. Support Service Units – Melody Robinson, Crisis Services Program Manager with Butte County Behavioral Health & Chico PD TARGET Team

- IV. Schedule of Future Topics
 - a. June – Report Review

Chico Police Department | Police Community Advisory Board (PCAB)
Fire Training Center Classroom ~ 1466 Humboldt Road
May 11, 2022 8:00am – 9:30am

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chief Matt Madden, Antonio Arreguin-Bermudez, Scott Kennelly, Kasey Reynolds, Tom van Overbeek

ALSO PRESENT:

Butte County Behavioral Health Crisis Services Program Manager Melody Robinson, Chico PD Lt. Brian Miller, Chico PD Admin Analyst Crystal Peppas

OPENING COMMENTS

Chief Matt Madden thanked Captain Billy Aldridge for stepping in while Chief Madden was in the role of Interim City Manager and asked for any comments related to the last meeting on the topic of Officer Safety and Wellness. **Kasey** said that Jodi Drysdale, Butte Strong First Responder Wellness Program Manager delivered a great presentation. Officers seem to be using the offerings and the program may be an incentive in recruiting and retaining employees. **Chief Madden** said both he and Sheriff Honea are strong believers in the Butte Strong First Responder Wellness Program. They are bringing on physical trainers, therapists, organizing an orientation and onboarding day for new employees, planning family events including a Law Enforcement night at the Paradise Ice Skating Rink and Family Day at the Forebay. These types of events are creating ties and allows for bonding across law enforcement agencies in the area. Chico PD has instituted an on-duty workout program and Jodi helped to acquire equipment for the gym. The on-duty workout program is on a trial period right now, but it is working. Workman's Compensation claims are down, and one Community Service Officer has had dramatic weight loss results. For the first time, officers are making mental health and wellness a priority and a mentally, physically strong officer is a good officer.

Today will be a conversation with Butte County Behavioral Health Crisis Services Program Manager Melody Robinson and Chico PD Lt. Brian Miller about the Mobile Crisis Unit.

DISCUSSION

Scott introduced Melody Robinson, Butte County Behavioral Health Crisis Services Program Manager. The Crisis Team responds to all 5150 calls in some way, whether it's on the front end, the back end, or on the street. The program was started under a previous Butte County Behavioral Health Director, Dorian Kittrell, and Melody is the one that oversees it.

Melody shared that Butte County Behavioral Health has many options for crisis services including walk-in services, the Crisis Response Team, 24/7 phone and text lines, as well as the Mobile Crisis Team. The Mobile Crisis Team collaborates with law enforcement to provide crisis-related outreach and engagement, as well as respond to 911 requests regarding possible psychiatric or emotional crisis in the community.

The Mobile Crisis Unit started in 2017 with funding from the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and input from the community. In January 2018, two full time staff members were hired to work with Chico PD in the north county and cover seven days a week. The team members began training, going on ridealongs, and attending police briefings and began to see what the program could look like and fine tune it. More funding was added with community support, and two additional staff members were hired to work with Butte County Sheriff's Office in the south county in 2019. 2019 also saw the addition of Peer Support Specialists with lived experience, helping to connect and provide perspective to those facing mental health challenges. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grants have recently allowed for the expansion of service location and hours. In July 2021, a counselor was hired to serve the Ridge and the Camp Fire impacted communities including Magalia, Concow, and Yankee Hill. Butte County Behavioral Health is currently recruiting to fill 8 additional positions to expand coverage.

Mobile Crisis Team members need to navigate and work in the world of law enforcement, as well as social work. Trainings include Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), Mental Health First Aid, Nonphysical Crisis Intervention and De-escalation, 5150 Designation, Safety in the Field, POST Certified Hostage Negotiation, as well as orientation and shadowing staff in the field for six weeks. Tiffany Larson with the Butte County Sheriff's Office has provided some instruction on how to identify those under the influence, best practices in handling domestic violence calls as well as training on radio etiquette, which can be intimidating for civilians.

Currently, the Mobile Crisis Team is available in Chico 7 days a week from 8am to 6pm. Coverage is expanding to include working with Gridley PD and Paradise PD. The future goal is to have funding and staffing for 24/7 coverage for all of Butte County.

Tom said this program is great and asked if the Team members respond to calls by themselves or alongside law enforcement. Melody responded that the team does not respond without law enforcement. They respond to calls by request or listen to the call and stage nearby, if they feel their services may be of use. Once the scene is evaluated, they may stay behind on their own to handle the call or go with the subject to the hospital. These alternative options free up law enforcement to go and respond to calls elsewhere. **Chief Madden** said that the Mobile Crisis Team co-responds with law enforcement and officers will often be heard on the radio asking, "is Mobile Crisis available?". They are learning to slow down and address situations at the lowest most level, which is the first rule of de-escalation.

Tom also asked how often calls for service were for subjects experiencing homelessness or are drug induced situations. Melody stated that she estimates it is about half of calls for service are to a residence versus on the street. Closer to two-thirds of the calls involve a reaction to drugs and not solely a mental disease.

Lt. Brian Miller oversees the Chico PD TARGET Team. The goal of the TARGET team is to reduce chronic crime and quality of life issues in the community using creative, long-term solutions. TARGET team members are responsible for identifying and partnering with other community advocates and organizations to address these problems. They work closely with the Mobile Crisis Team and often interact people in the field that are experiencing mental health issues.

There was a time when Patrol had an almost adversarial relationship with Enloe hospital. Once the Mobile Crisis Unit was initiated, the relationships with Patrol, Enloe and Behavioral Health changed for the better. A new system was in place, and everyone is on the same team. As Chico PD continues to work closer with Behavioral Health in a community policing model, it helps bridge the gap and creates a network with stakeholders. It used to be that officers felt that the "buck stops here" and they were responsible to resolve every call that they were dispatched to. They are learning that there are better ways, and professionals that may be better suited to handle a situation. At first it was uncomfortable to have civilians in a police briefing, but the Mobile Crisis Unit has become part of the team.

Lt. Miller shared a time when neighbors reported that a subject was yelling in his backyard while holding a rifle. Officers responded along with a member of the Mobile Crisis Team to calm the situation that day. Then, a call for service came a few weeks later for the same subject who had now discharged the firearm. The subject was having paranoid delusions and believed the manager had installed cameras. The same Mobile Crisis Team member responded and was able to talk the subject into leaving the firearm inside and go with him to Behavioral Health. It was the first incident where Lt. Miller as a watch commander realized the true impact and benefit of a Mobile Crisis Team.

There was another situation where an elderly man reported being abused by his adult son. The man was outside with police, while the son was inside armed with a crossbow. The Mobile Crisis Team was able to determine that this was not a Behavioral Health related issue and law enforcement then stepped in to detain the subject safely.

Chief Madden said that is important for the Mobile Crisis Team to let the on-duty sergeant know if there isn't anything that they can do, and then law enforcement can change course tactically. The Mobile Crisis Team is another tool in the toolbox that can be utilized to avoid use of force. Other tools include drones, less lethal ammunition, and robots.

Scott said that assembling the Mobile Crisis Team has been a journey and trust had to be built. When you see where it started, to where it is now, it is impressive. Initially, there was minimal funding, basically bubblegum and string, and a donated vehicle from the Chico Police Department. Even with today's funding, recruitment and retention is a challenge. Working in the field with law enforcement is different than working in an office and they hopeful to be able to increase the pay scale. Butte County Behavioral Health is looking to expand the program to partner with other local law enforcement agencies. Community awareness is key so people know that they can ask for Mobile Crisis.

One piece of the puzzle that is missing is a sobering and detox center in Butte County. There currently is not a facility of this type in the region. Individuals could sober up and detox at the center under supervision, and then work with drug and alcohol counselors to turn their lives around. Anthem Blue Cross and California Health and Wellness have funding for a center, but they need to partner with a health provider. This item has been placed as a standing item on their meeting agenda. **Chief Madden** added that there are medical issues related to coming off opioids, and people need to be eased through the process. A holding facility or jail is not the place for this. So, how do you get to a point of clarity and stay there? There are some successes at the pallet shelter. Several occupants are requesting to be in a sobriety section and that is a good sign.

Kasey said that mental health crises do not just happen Monday through Friday 8-6, so what happens after hours? **Melanie** said that the Mobile Crisis Team is available 7 days a week, but not 24/7 and that is the future goal. Walk in services are available from 6am to 11pm, 7 days a week including holidays. Phone and text lines are open 24/7.

For the Mobile Crisis Team, data was used to determine the time when most calls for service come in. It may be beneficial for funding to notate in a call log when the Mobile Crisis Unit would have been called after hours or overnight if they were available. **Scott** said that four or five years ago, there were lots of evaluations that occurred overnight. Now it is any time of the day. With COVID, alcohol abuse and addiction have spiked and overall, drugs have changed. There used to be a gradual decline in people who used methamphetamines, now it is much faster.

Tom stated that the need for the Mobile Crisis Team is a symptom of a greater problem in the community and we need to get back to the war on drugs. He is glad the Team is integrated into the police department, and it should be a permanent fixture. **Chief Madden** said it took time, but it has truly been integrated into the organization. It's part of the evolution of law enforcement, as the profession continues to change direction along with legislation. The recent 40 hours of de-escalation training changed officer perception on owning a situation until its resolved. On a 5150 call, if the subject is not a danger to others, you don't need to kick the door down or force someone to come out. A recent example is a subject that climbed the water tower. Officers made multiple offers of assistance and a drone was deployed to see if they subject had any weapons. After help was repeatedly declined and a threat assessment was completed, officers ultimately left the subject on the tower rather than trying to force them down. In the end, the subject came down safely, of their own free will, when it started to rain the next day. While the drone program is new and needs funding to expand, it has already proven to be successful in de-escalation.

Officers are being trained to slow things down, find ways to mitigate situations, let other professionals handle calls, use alternative strategies and tools, or walk away to avoid use of force in certain scenarios. The Mobile Crisis Team is an invaluable asset to the organization in accomplishing its mission.

CLOSING

Last year, PCAB was re-designed to be more internal, advisory in nature, and to take a deep dive into pertinent issues facing the police department. The Board selected a variety of topics to cover and has provided meaningful feedback. The next meeting will be a time to revisit those conversations and compile recommendations for the Chief of Police. A report will be assembled and members of PCAB will present it to the Chico City Council.