

Minutes

Youth and Family Affairs Committee

Tuesday, May 4, 2021 - 5:30 p.m.

Videoconference and Teleconference: Zoom

Members Present: Onreka Johnson, Jeff Elbert, Rick Lowe, Brenda Myers, Dianne Owens, Lisa Shaw, Ernie Sherman, Willie Smith, Woogie Burgess (Administrative Assistant).

Members Absent: Robert Gorrell

Guests Present:

Kim McConnell, Amanda Nunez, William White

Agenda

I. Call to Order, establish quorum and ensure public notice requirements have been met.

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Committee Chair Onreka Johnson. It was acknowledged that all required posting notifications had been made and confirmed that a quorum was present by videoconference and teleconference, as required by the Oklahoma Open Meetings Act, 25 O.S. 2011, Section 304, as amended by Section 3, Chapter 81, O.S.L. 2019 (25 O.S. Supp. 2019, Section 304, 307.1 and 311), Senate Bill No. 661 (2020).

II. Consider acceptance of the minutes from the April 20, 2021 Committee meeting.

ACTION: Brenda Myers moved to approve the April 20, 2021 Committee meeting minutes; seconded by Dianne Owens, and by roll call vote, unanimously approved by all members present (as noted above).

III. Business

A. Application due date. The Committee discussed whether to reconsider the release date of the project proposal/funding application pending receipt of proposal from Search Institute of America for training.

ACTION: Lisa Shaw moved to reconsider funding application deadline date previously set at May 31, and to delay setting deadline and distribution of application pending further review; seconded by Jeff Elbert, and by roll call vote, unanimously approved by all present (as noted above).

B. Report by Woogie Burgess and Rick Lowe regarding discussion with Search Institute of America staff. SIA will begin work on preparing a proposal for the Committee to consider, and that we hope to have it before the next meeting. Rick noted that SIA had worked with different communities around the globe on these types of projects. They also provided us with references to other communities. Rick spoke with community leaders in Williamson County Texas, who had started in the late nineties where we are now. They used the Developmental Assets, and had accomplished a significant amount of impact. Mayor Booker asked what had happened in the last 20 years, and what progress has been made. Rick Lowe gave a summary of what he had learned, and directed members to georgetownproject.org.

C. Presentations by Committee members and their guests/experts regarding past programs that have had measurable impact in addressing crime diversion in the youth population.

Rick Lowe: Youth gang intervention program, 2008 – 2010. Background was gangs and gang violence. Grant was \$100,000 a year for three years. Partners were City of Lawton, Comanche County, Lawton Public Schools, Marie Detty, the Faith Community. The County was the one to pursue the grant, and the Juvenile Bureau was the lead agency. The Grant was received, and launched in 2008. Five core strategies were addressed: Community mobilization, suppression, social intervention, opportunities for vision, and organizational change and development. The steering committee, composed of members from each of the partners, led the development of the program and the direction. The City led the suppression effort with its gang unit. The grant paid some overtime for the police department, some overtime for probation officers. The District Attorney's office partnered with the US Attorney's office in Oklahoma City to have Federal prosecution started on adults who were influencing kids and gang activity. Federal cases were filed on them. Social intervention is where the group invested the most. Street outreach was the game changer. Marie Detty had the contract with the grant. Opportunities for vision: there was counseling, mentoring, in-school advocacy, employment, kept kids in school. The last strategy, the organizational change and development, meant we were all going to change how we did business, to better serve our kids. Assistant City Manager chaired the Committee, Rick moved from becoming Director of the Juvenile Bureau to working collaboratively with contractors and sharing funds. Private sector partners gave huge donations to Marie Detty to assist. The results: from 2008 – 2010 during the grant, there were over 1,000 shots fired in the City of Lawton. When the grant ended the number was down to about 796. Shooting victims in 2006 was 180. In 2010 the number was 44. Homicides in 2007 was 12. 4 were gang related. In 2010 there were 2 homicides, and 1 was gang related. Overall, the violent juvenile crime rate dropped 26 percent for those three years. DMC (disproportionate minority contacts) – our minority populations are disproportionately represented at every stage of the juvenile justice process. That was not specifically targeted for reduction by the grant committee, but the statistic was in fact cut in half. About 45 kids a month were served on the street outreach program. Judge Shaw asked how the street outreach individuals were contacted. Dianne Owens indicated they were Marie Detty employees.

Dianne Owens – continued the discussion of the gang intervention program. She indicated that additional grants were pursued that allowed the program Rick discussed to continue through 2014. After 2010, the program focused more on prevention. Funding was able to be used to provide support to allow the young people to succeed, including purchasing needed school supplies. It included recreational opportunities in the summertime, including purchasing water park passes, movie tickets, etc. They helped the kids get fast food jobs and other employment to help keep them occupied and out of trouble. They held talent shows, basketball tournaments, gang intervention conference with speakers and former gang members. Outcomes were very strong. Assessments were done at the beginning of the program and at the end. With the new program being proposed, the group plans to begin focusing on how to help the youth with interview skills, how to develop resumes, computer skills,

Brenda Myers – also talked about the gang intervention program. She said that program was probably the best program she believes the bureau has been involve in. She also noted that in the area of things that do not work: OJA is pushing to not detain young people at all. They prefer to push electronic monitoring. She has some concerns, because she said the JDC in Comanche County had tried that, and kids would cut their monitors off, or wear their monitors to the burglary. She said we now have a lot more kids in this county walking around with loaded weapons on them. She said that in recent weeks, incidents at local apartment complexes had several juveniles pointing weapons at each other. She said the gang intervention program was just a huge program that made a difference, and we need it back. She said there are other

programs, smaller, that also make an impact, like Teen Court, the Choices program, Workforce of Oklahoma.

Guest Willie Smith commented on the value of street outreach workers, and how significant a loss it was in the City when that program ended.

Mayor Booker asked if there was an estimate of what it would cost to get the program back in operation. Dianne indicated that with two employees, full time counselors, it would cost approximately \$97,000 a year to operate. Marie Detty has done a lot of research on grant opportunities, and filed for several, actually hired a grant writer, but funds for these types of programs were hard to acquire, and the grants were not successful. The grants were awarded to larger cities with much higher crime rates. Mayor Booker indicated we can ask ASCOG to write grants for us to assist.

IV. Other Topics – general questions, input

Woogie Burgess asked whether other members would like to be on the agenda to present, or knew of other organizations, and asked them to contact her. Amanda Nunez asked if others, not on the Committee, could present, and she indicated that we would be happy to hear from everyone who could provide information. Mayor Booker indicated that Woogie should talk to the City Attorney to be sure we followed the City rules on Conflicts of Interest, and she indicated she would discuss it with John Ratliff.

Woogie asked whether the Committee was ready to move forward with meeting in person, and whether to award the young lady who won the logo contest at an in person meeting. The group generally asked for one more meeting by Zoom, and then consider meeting in person.

V. New Business

Jeff Elbert talked about the new social media platform. He has met with Chris Tina Chen and Onreka Johnson, and they are developing a rollout plan to ensure a good target demographic. He said we would need to consider in the future that this effort will take a few people to get the work done. We may need to consider expenditures as well. He wants to interview committee members starting in June. Woogie talked about involving others on a Technical Committee. Amanda Nunez offered to assist on the social media team.

There being no further business, Chair Johnson declared the meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.