

Exeter Police Stakeholders Committee (EPSC) Meeting February 9,  
2021, at 3:00 pm, via Zoom

**Minutes**

Attendance: Committee Members- Katie Adams, Elliott Berkowitz, Matt Carbone, Emily Heath, Tanisha Johnson, Harry King, Anne Surman, Darius Thompson. Select Board Reps. -Daryl Brown and Molly Cowan. Exeter Police Department (EPD)- Detective Bruce Page, Chief Stephan Poulin, Sergeant Devin West, Dispatcher Supervisor Jessica Shupe, EPD Staff- Colby Krafton and Ashly Gioia. Bob Glowacky and Garrett Pray, IT Tech/EXTV, and Guest Speaker - Dennis Walker, Director, Seacoast Mental Health Center. Not in Attendance: Alexis Simpson

1. Chair Anne Surman called the meeting to order and read a statement in substance: As Chair of the EPSC, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 this public body is authorized to meet electronically. Public notice of this meeting was posted, during January 22, 2021, on the town website and on the bulletin board of the town offices at 10 Front Street. As provided in that public notice, the public may access the meeting online and via phone. Please note that all votes taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote. Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting and who that person is (son, daughter, spouse, etc...), which is required under the Right-to-Know law.
2. Chair Surman discussed the Committee's current efforts distributing the Citizen's Survey to members of the Exeter community. Chair Surman encouraged members to continue promoting the voluntary survey through various formats.
3. MOTION: Emily Heath moved to accept the minutes from the January 26th meeting as written. Darius Thompson seconded. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

4. Chief Poulin discussed the Citizen's Survey and stated that currently approximately 130 people had responded during the first few days of the roll-out. Chief Poulin encouraged the continued participation of responding to the survey and encouraged those under the age of 25 to respond as well.

5. The Committee continued to discuss items concerning Goal #2: Providing Effective Police Services. During the meeting, Chief Poulin introduced Sergeant Devin West and Director Dennis Walker, Seacoast Mental Health Center, to discuss EPD's involvement, training and use of the One Mind Program concerning the assessment of public contacts experiencing mental health issues.

6. Sergeant West stated that the EPD was the first police department in the State of New Hampshire that has successfully met the certification requirements outlined under the One Mind Program. Specifically, the EPD successfully collaborated with the Seacoast Mental Health Center and trained 20% of EPD's employees with an 8 hour block of instruction involving Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), and some additional employees with 40 hours of more formalized training involving classroom, role playing practical exercises, and group discussions. The EPD's One Mind Program certification process successfully took place within the required 12-36 month time period.

7. Sergeant West discussed the EPD's use of the Columbia Suicide Rating Scale as a proper tool for everyone involved to be "speaking the same language;" meaning in substance, they are all using the same metrics to assess and analyze individuals involved in a mental health crisis from the EPD's Dispatchers, responding officers, and the subsequent healthcare professionals who are involved with the same incident.

8. The program has the full support of Chief Poulin. EPD is committed to the training of additional employees as the EPD's training budget allows. Chief Poulin wants to have at least one person, on duty per shift, which has been trained as the more advanced "crisis intervention team" CIT. This training also includes the EPD's Dispatchers, who are the initial points of contact dealing with mental health calls for service from the public as they come in through the EPD Communications Center.

9. Sergeant West and Chief Poulin further stated that during the past year alone, there have been over 121 mental health related calls for service to the EPD. The EPD is currently tracking these specific calls for service more closely with a separate Dispatch log entry per incident. According to Chief Poulin, the EPD averages approximately two mental health related calls for service, per week. Chief Poulin suspects that the Covid19 pandemic has exacerbated traditional circumstances that cause mental health related distress such as job loss, chronic illness, and depression.

10. Director Dennis Walker, Seacoast Mental Health Center, talked with the group and recognized EPD's proactive approach and success in obtaining first in the State of New Hampshire's certification of the One Mind Program. Director Walker is impressed with EPD's response to mental health related calls for service and appreciates the foundation build with his organization and EPD. Director Walker intends to use the current relationship and experience as a template for involving other law enforcement organizations operating within the service area of the Seacoast Mental Health Center. Director Walker emphasized points discussed by Sergeant West and Chief Poulin concerning the utilization of the Columbia Suicide Rating Scale, emphasizing "speaking the same language" concept, initially described by Sergeant West.

11. Various questions were asked by participants in the Zoom meeting concerning the One Mind Program, training, and getting other Police Departments in New Hampshire actively involved in similar training. Chief Poulin and Sergeant West answered these inquiries in more detail. Both described better outcomes in dealing with mental health related calls, specifically with improving levels of communication between all involved. A couple of successful examples of using the Columbia Suicide Rating Scale were explained as well as examples of "speaking one language" when information was successfully passed from EPD's initial points of contact onto the healthcare providers at the Exeter Hospital. It was also mentioned that ongoing feedback and assessment of the protocols have been made based on the EPD's experiences. These lessons learned are being codified in EPD's current practices, policies, and procedures. It was discussed the EPD had an ongoing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

with the Seacoast Mental Health Center that outlines the responsibilities of those involved in the One Mind Program.

12. It was further discussed that Chief Poulin and Director Walker would share their successes with others in the Seacoast area (law enforcement) and to include the Rockingham County Sherriff's Office. It was discussed that Director Scippa, New Hampshire Police Standard and Training Council, has implemented specific blocks of instruction outlining proper police response to mental health related calls for service at the State's training academy. It is the hope of committee members to have as many learn from the EPD's participation in the One Mind Program, so that it spreads to neighboring police departments. Chief Poulin described that the program was initially brought to his attention by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). Chief Poulin accepted the request to share EPD's involvement with the program with the public on Exeter TV when practicable.

13. Director Walker further discussed the Health Information Privacy responsibilities of the healthcare workers, the Seacoast Mental Health Center, and the exceptions that they work under concerning exigency, the preservation of life, and having EPD respond to individuals in crisis. Because of these privacy requirements, the measure of success for EPD's involvement in the One Mind Program will be when those in crisis are successfully passed along by EPD to healthcare providers at the Exeter Hospital and the Seacoast Mental Health Center. Director Walker provided the committee and the public with a telephone number for the Seacoast Mental Health Center, (603)772-2710. This telephone number is answered 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

14. There was no correspondence to read in this meeting.

15. MOTION: Emily Heath moved to adjourn. Darius Thompson seconded. By a unanimous vote done via roll call, the meeting was adjourned at about 4:05 pm. [Note: Harry King's internet Zoom connection inadvertently disconnected him from the meeting prior to his vote being cast to adjourn the meeting.]

Respectfully Submitted, Matthew Carbone for Alexis Simpson, Secretary