

City of Salisbury
DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
December 13, 2018

Committee Members Present

Timothy Meagher, Chairperson
Gregory Tyler
Michael Dyer
Barbara Bell
Amy Crouse
Stephen Bullock
Dr. Katherine Jones

Committee Members Absent

Laurie S. Andrews

In Attendance

Chief John Tull, Salisbury Fire Department Fire Chief
David Phippin, Salisbury Fire Department Firefighter/Paramedic
Julia Glanz, City Administrator
Jack Heath, City Council President
Laura Baasland, Mayor's Office Administrative Associate
Nancy Talbott, City Grants Coordinator
Virginia Bender

The Disability Advisory Committee met at 3:00p.m. in Conference Room #306 of the GOB.

The Disability Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 3:00p.m. by Mr. Meagher, Chairperson.

Introductions and Welcome

Mr. Meagher introduced himself and then asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves. The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) welcomed Salisbury Fire Department Chief John Tull and Salisbury Fire Department Firefighter/Paramedic David Phippin for open discussion between the DAC and Salisbury Fire Department (SFD).

Discussions with SFD

1. Salisbury/Wicomico Integrated Firstcare Team

Chief Tull began the discussion by introducing the Salisbury/Wicomico Integrated Firstcare Team (SWIFT), the "brainchild" of Mr. Phippin, and explained that SWIFT is modeled after other counties' programs and has partners within Maryland (such as Queen Anne's County). SWIFT is a Mobile Integrated Healthcare program and is also partnered with Peninsula Regional Medical Center (PRMC) and the Wicomico County Health Department. SWIFT works with nurse practitioners to provide in-home healthcare. Mr. Phippin explained that the program targets chronic users of 911, and gets referrals from the Salisbury Police Department (SPD) as well as Crisis Intervention. SWIFT provides

home assessments, medication reconciliation, home safety inspections, and referrals. The program follows their patients weekly for a month, and then attempts to “graduate” them out by a six month period. The SWIFT program has been responsible for a twenty percent (20%) reduction in emergency room visits for enrolled members, and a 911 use reduction of thirty percent (30%). Chief Tull mentioned that some people use 911 as a means to simply get someone to come to them and to have someone to talk to. SWIFT enrollees are quite excited to know that Mr. Phippin and his team are visiting, and the program helps avoid calls to 911 for people who simply need to see doctors or get transport to the hospital. Additionally, the program has built and repaired wheelchair ramps, and rebuilt a motorized scooter to provide accessibility to a patient in need. SWIFT works with PRMC to secure medical beds to have readily available. Mr. Meagher inquired about the demographics of the SWIFT program, and Mr. Phippin approximated that seventy percent (70%) of the enrollees are elderly, low-income patients, but that the other thirty percent (30%) of the program is comprised of patients from “across the board.” SWIFT serves the entire Salisbury Fire Department (SFD) district, and is funded by grants from the Maryland Rural Health Commission. The City of Salisbury is working on legislation to have SWIFT funded through Medicare/Medicaid. There is no charge to patients who utilize SWIFT or their insurance.

2. *SFD Staff Training*

Following the meeting agenda, Chief Tull moved to the next prepared question for the SFD, which inquired about staff training. Chief Tull explained that the SFD staff receives a lot of training, both annual and daily. The SFD intake training includes diversity training, sexual harassment training, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance training, and more. Annual “refresher” training includes diversity training and sexual harassment training. The SFD is also working every day to diversify the department, which has been comprised predominantly of white males. In order to diversify recruitment, the SFD recently broadcast an entire segment in Spanish, and has featured segments on the television shows DelmarvaNow and DelmarvaLife. The SFD is gearing up to put together a marketing vehicle to move throughout the fire district that will include different languages on it. The SFD is making attempts to recruit from a wider variety of groups to be more inclusive of the district that the SFD represents.

3. *Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)*

Chief Tull explained that the SFD has a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), which provides basic training, and discusses with staff specifics about the job and life of fire service. The call volume of the SFD and the work environment can be challenging, and the SFD addresses this by meeting with the families of new hire to discuss what the job entails, and the SFD acknowledges that they need to be better about following up with these families after the initial intake discussions. The SFD CIT is comprised of 4-5 members who are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of distress, how to deal with crises, etc. Chief Tull mentioned that in general, firefighters tend to find it difficult to open up about their feelings, which can be problematic after a crisis or particularly challenging shift. The CIT has debriefings with affected personnel after a crisis, and monitors them over the next twenty four (24) to forty eight (48) hours. The CIT monitors personnel’s sleeping and eating habit, coping mechanisms, and also watches for substance abuse. If

the crisis and its aftermath is severe enough, the SFD CIT will call in a team from Wicomico County and PRMC to provide additional assistance. The County and PRMC CITs are highly trained and knowledgeable about all appropriate referrals. Chief Tull provided an example of a time that the SFD CIT was utilized after a SFD Firefighter/Paramedic was killed while deployed in Afghanistan. The SFD CIT is also used after deaths of children, which are particularly difficult for SFD staff. Another example of the CIT in action is the program following up with a new SFD employee who experienced five (5) deaths in a row during five (5) consecutive shifts; the CIT is continuing to follow up with the employee's family, as well.

4. *About the SFD*

The SFD is a fire and emergency medical services (EMS) organization all in one. All SFD members are cross trained for both fire and EMS, and all members ride on both fire and EMS units frequently. The SFD purposefully makes an effort to avoid any member being assigned to either fire or EMS to intentionally diversify each member's skill set. As a result, the SFD is an exceptionally synchronized team. All SFD stations have a bunk room/dormitory for staff to rest during their shift. The SFD runs fourteen thousand (14,000) calls per year for service, and averages thirty five (35) service calls per day, split between three (3) EMS and two (2) fire units.

5. *How the SFD Addresses the Needs of Salisbury's Disabled Community*

The SFD has limited supplies of flashing smoke alarms to provide to citizens who are hearing impaired, and the SFD works with building code and ADA requirements to make sure facilities comply with all regulations. The Fire Marshal works with property owners to ensure they get what they need from a life safety point of view. 911 has TTY capabilities, and in February 2019, Wicomico County will become the third 911 center in the State of Maryland to implement the ability to text 911 directly. TTY benefits elderly persons who don't text the most, and will still be used, but the ability to text 911 will make emergency services drastically more accessible. The SFD has somewhat limited capabilities when it comes to communication; the SFD has only one person on staff fluent in American Sign Language (ASL). Some SFD members are fluent in Spanish, and the SFD collaborates with the Salisbury Police Department (SPD), who also has some bilingual staff members. Many SFD providers utilize Google Translate. The 911 center has access to Language Link—a group of interpreters available around the clock that offer two hundred forty (240) different languages, and the link stays open during the entire duration of patient contact. The SFD partners with the Fire and Burn Safety Coalition to have bed shaker alarms installed to wake persons with hearing impairment in the event of an emergency.

6. *Concerns of the SFD*

The SFD identifies transportation as a significant issue to the disabled community. They provide taxi vouchers, but taxis aren't always good enough. The SFD is working with Shore Transit, but has experienced some issues. The SFD would like to know about any resources that the DAC knows of. The SFD greatly appreciates smoke alarm donations, especially the flashing ones, as anyone who comes to the SFD in need of smoke detector

is provided one. The SFD partners with the State Fire Marshal's Office through Delmarva Power to provide alarms.

7. *The SFD and Citizens with Mobility Issues*

Citizens with mobility issues are a concern as it pertains to life safety issues; finding them at their location can be difficult. The SFD encourages mobility-challenged persons to shelter in place, and shut bedroom doors when they sleep at night to better protect against fire. The SFD EMS units have incorporated better systems to help move patients around; structures now have larger load capacities to help lift patients, and are power lifted. The Parsonsburg Volunteer Fire Department has a bariatric stretcher that the SFD can utilize if need be. The SFD makes notes in reporting software of locations of patients with mobility issues, and these notes go directly to the 911 center and are recorded in the computer aided design (CAD) system so that first responders know right where to find patients. "Tot Finder" window signs are frowned upon by the SFD, and in general, because they identify where in the home children are located, making them potential targets, and stickers get left behind which results in first responders entering the room to rescue children who aren't actually there. The SFD members receive three-sixty (360) training to analyze all four sides of a building in order to find people who are trapped and/or sheltering in place. Chief Tull clarified that patients can proactively self-report location information by notifying the SFD through email or in person, and the SFD will relay the information to 911 center to have it entered into CAD under that address. But Chief Tull urged patients to update the SFD if their residency status changes, so that first responders don't end up looking for a patient who isn't really there.

8. *SFD Employees*

The SFD does not employ anyone with a disability at this time, but they work with other agencies that may employ people who are disabled. The SFD works with people who have dyslexia, speech impediments, etc., and provides readers for examination purposes. All SFD job descriptions discuss reasonable accommodations.

9. *Community Feedback*

The SFD hasn't really received any negative feedback regarding their patient interactions other than raised voices and other minor things. The SFD gets more positive feedback than anything, and has a wonderful relationship with their community. The SFD is known to go the extra mile for the patients, such as tucking people in bed at night and fetching them a glass of water.

10. *SFD Outreach Programs and Recruitment Efforts*

Mrs. Glanz mentioned two programs that the SFD is running that will have long-term payback benefits: one is Junior Fire Camp, a free one-week summer camp for third through fifth graders, and the other is the Cadet Program. This year's Junior Fire Camp had fourteen (14) children enrolled, and was advertised on all social media. The SFD keeps in touch with all of the children from the Junior Fire Camp, and those children are invited to SFD events, such as their Christmas dinner. The SFD will be reaching out to children in grades sixth through eighth in the next year, who can become Cadets once they have reached ninth grade. The idea is that children are recruited to join the SFD

from as young as age eight (8). Chief Tull detailed that Fire Prevention Week has become Fire Prevention Month—the SFD visits every school in the district with their program Blazing the Trail of Literacy, a program in which firefighters read to children, and then the children go home and continue reading, and the child who reads for the greatest number of minutes gets a prize from the SFD. The third place winner get a gift card to Barnes & Noble, the second place winner gets a fully-stocked school backpack, and the first place winner gets to be Chief for a Day.

Duties of the City Staff Liaison and DAC Meeting Schedule

The DAC identified that the City Staff Liaison is responsible for creating the meeting agenda, recording meeting minutes, and managing the committee's roster. The DAC requested that the liaison be more timely about updating the website with meeting dates and times and uploading minutes going forward. Mr. Meagher recognized Ms. Talbott for her service to the DAC and thanked her, and Mrs. Baasland explained that she will be the City Staff Liaison serving the DAC from now on. The DAC decided that quarterly meeting still make sense, and the second Tuesday of each quarter at 3p.m. still works best for all members. 2019 meetings will be held in March, June, September, and December.

DAC Committee Identity and Purpose

Mrs. Baasland communicated that she and the City Clerk, Kim Nichols, have had difficulty finding the resolution that established the DAC and locating the DAC's bylaws. Mr. Meagher explained that he has a copy of the resolution that established this committee and the charter, but that the committee has no bylaws. The DAC decided that this should be addressed and bylaws should be created, and plans to work on this at the next DAC meeting in March 2019. Dr. Jones clarified that the role of the DAC is to advise and provide council, and inquired as to whether or not the DAC has worked with the City of Salisbury on a project to benefit the disabled community. Dr. Jones asked if the DAC would entertain such an idea, or if the DAC wishes to remain purely advisory. The DAC has had input with the City from the planning and zoning perspective, and the DAC wants the internal City departments to know that the DAC exists, which is why the DAC met with directors from each City department, concluding with the SFD during the beginning of this very meeting. From a funding perspective, knowing that the DAC exists is a big issue. Dr. Jones also asked if the DAC been involved with grant writing, and Ms. Talbott responded that she (the Grants Coordinator) has attended meetings, but the DAC has not applied for grants specifically.

Gotcha Bike Sharing Program Overview

Mrs. Glanz gave a brief overview of the new bike sharing program coming to Salisbury, Gotcha. This program will impact our community, specifically the visually impaired, who have been known to be affected by bikes and scooters left laying around the streets and sidewalks. Mrs. Glanz explained that Gotcha will be bringing one hundred (100) bikes to Salisbury (some of which will be e-bikes), one hundred (100) scooters, and some quasi-car vehicles. The Gotcha program does not utilize official docking stations, but provides central hubs. E-bikes will have charging packs on them, and staff will be responsible for ensuring that the e-bikes get back to the central hubs. This program will help to address transportation issues that the City is facing, but raises a few concerns as well. The City will be adding more bike lanes to help support the

program. Mrs. Glanz will find out if the Gotcha vehicles are wheelchair accessible, and if a car seat can be installed in them.

Final Meeting Business

Mr. Meagher mentioned that he was recently re-appointed to the DAC, and that since he has begun a new term, his position as Chairperson has expired and the DAC needs to elect a new Chair. The DAC unanimously nominated Mr. Meagher to continue as Chairperson. On a motion by Mrs. Crouse and seconded by Mr. Tyler, Mr. Meagher was unanimously re-elected as Chairperson of the DAC on a 7-0 vote.

The next DAC meeting will be held on Thursday, March 14, 2019 at 3p.m. in conference room 306 of the GOB, and will address DAC bylaws.

On a motion by Mrs. Bell, seconded by Mrs. Crouse, and approved by unanimous vote in favor, the DAC meeting was adjourned at 4:25p.m.

Minutes Recorded By:



Laura Baasland, Mayor's Office Administrative Associate



Date Approved