



Charlotte City Council
Housing, Safety & Community Committee
Summary
April 1, 2024

COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

1. Policy Topic Referral: Community Safety Framework (Discussion)
2. A Home For All Update (Discussion)

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Committee Members Present:	Victoria Watlington (virtual), LaWana Mayfield (CMGC), Dimple Ajmera (CMGC), Tiawana Brown (virtual), Renee’ Johnson (CMGC)
Council Members Absent:	n/a
Other Council Members Present:	Malcom Graham (CMGC)
Staff Resources:	Reenie Askew, City Manager’s Office Shawn Heath, City Manager’s Office Rebecca Hefner, Housing & Neighborhood Services Raquishela Stewart, Housing & Neighborhood Services Apyrl Alexander, UNC Charlotte Violence Prevention Center
Guests:	Kathryn Firmin-Sellers, United Way
Meeting Duration:	4:00 – 5:30 PM
Video available online:	https://youtu.be/qgePs0y6FdY?t=21740

MEETING MATERIALS

All meeting materials are available online at <https://charlottenc.legistar.com>

1. Presentation: Policy Referral: Youth Crime
2. Presentation: A Home For All – Understanding the work to-date

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

City Council member Watlington called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Policy Referral: Community Safety Framework – Youth Crime

Raquishela Stewart reviewed the policy referral and timeline, follow-up insights from available data, what’s working in other cities, categories of evidence-based programs including examples of local examples, and initial insights from program analysis. Youth engagement is currently underway.

For context on the timeline, Shawn Heath shared that staff had a choice to make early-on when the referral was made, to either provide incremental updates to Committee each month as staff undertook the work of the referral, or to wait and unveil everything in 90-days (May~) as originally committed. Staff chose to update Committee monthly, with May being the earliest that recommendations could be available. While the FY 2025 budget recommendations will be presented on May 6, the same day as the next Committee meeting, this does not preclude the city from entertaining opportunities to fund recommendations in FY 2025.

Dr. Apyrl Alexander shared core themes for best practices, themes from the evidence, and questions to ask for creating a roadmap for best practices when developing recommendations.

Rebecca Hefner shared that not every program that the city is currently engaged in is designed with an outcome related to recidivism. Some programs are in place for other reasons, such as workforce development or positive youth development. As such, not every program will have performance metrics related to recidivism, but they will have metrics on what they are designed to do. Even programs not specifically designed as diversion or intervention can have prevention built into them, but it has to be through the best practices, and if a recommendation to infuse programs through that lens is considered and approved, we will be able to track those measures.

Mr. Heath shared that staff is continuing to have conversations about a juvenile detention center with community stakeholders. He stressed that this is not a detention-first strategy; diversion programming and other intervention and rehabilitation programming is important. In cases where it is deemed in the best interest of the community and the juvenile to detain, having a detention center in Charlotte-Mecklenburg as opposed to far away is important to help reduce issues for the family, legal representation, hearings at the courthouse, etc.

Highlights of what City Council members shared included:

- Understand the outcomes of benchmarked programs from other cities to help prioritize next steps.
- Take into account the correlation between brain injury and criminal justice.
- Consider the quote: “It’s easier to build strong children instead of repair broken men.”
- Goal should include breaking generational cycles, and inequity in our city.
- Consider how to layer in the Centers for Disease Control’s study regarding social norms.
- Hear from and listen to young people on what they would like to see and tie it to our goals, including where we are already funding.
- Identify where the existing programs are located/offered, what youth are being missed and where.
- Program performance measures will be helpful to know what to prioritize (data around how programs have contributed to a reduction in recidivism rates if applicable, etc.).
- Implement performance metrics / data collection requirements for existing programs.
- For the specific policy referral, prioritizing short-term measures for programs for a specific population to help reduce crime now is important; longer-term measures can be included about prevention.
- Seek ways to fund and build capacity in organizations that are active “on the ground” and really impacting change in the community, and don’t just fund the same organizations over and over again.
- Recognize and address that trauma has been caused by government actions.
- Committee members should be mindful of finding ways to fund youth recommendations when considering the FY 2025 budget proposal.

The Committee will receive initial draft recommendations at the next meeting.

A Home For All Update

Shawn Heath reminded the Committee that the city has been actively involved in the A Home For All (AHFA) initiative since its inception in 2021. The AHFA pillars align with a number of housing-related Council priorities, including the most recent emergency response pillar that is consistent and relevant to much of the community feedback received about what the city, county and other stakeholders can do to help our unhoused population during the recent recriminalization of certain ordinances. The city has been working side-by-side with Mecklenburg County related to the AHFA strategies and tactics, as well as with many eco-system partners. AHFA was always contemplated as a community-wide effort, allowing everyone to achieve leverage that they would not be able to achieve on their own. United Way serves as the quarterback agency (convening / coordination) to keep community partners focused and to drive the work.

Kathryn Firmin-Sellers shared an overview of the background, implementation priorities (pillars), progress-to-date on various specific initiatives, and the FY25 work plan/funding. United Way has not yet had any conversations about management fees nor have they taken any management fee from the city for any work done to-date. If the work is carried forward they want to have the conversation and come to a mutual agreement with the city. All of the planning work will have been done this year, and to avoid any gap in implementation the anticipated funding need are presented for FY25. The private sector is waiting to see what the city and county will do, and United Way will struggle on the private-sector fundraising side - the ability to leverage private sector support – until strong city and county alignment is demonstrated. Most funding will go to partner agencies that are doing the work not directly to United Way, and in any instances where United Way would receive funds there would be a competitive process to determine the service provider with city representation involved in that decision-making.

Mr. Heath shared the anticipated FY25 AHFA \$12.3 million city funding opportunity. Any funds the city considers would be separate and in addition to the city's financial partner requests, such as what the city provides to Crisis Assistance Ministries. The information is presented for information-only with no action requested.

Highlights of what City Council members shared included:

- Difficulty introducing a new model with line items to review in a short period of time.
- Leveraging County dollars to stretch city dollars further is ideal.
- United Way coordinating and leading the fundraising efforts is helpful.
- Performance-driven and metric-driven results for funding partners should be included, to align with city goals.
- Concern about line items and how it fits into the work of current city-supported community partners, and respective roles and responsibilities.
- This is a new way to solve an old problem. When tent city occurred, the community came together – city, county and private-sector – to have a wholistic approach to homelessness. We went through a process, did the work and produced a report, then handed it over to United Way to coordinate and organize the work. This is what the city wanted – to be more engaged in homelessness in our community and have one organization centering the work for us so we won't be tripping over ourselves – and this is what collaboration and cooperation looks like working with the county that has a wide variety of services to help homelessness. We are continuing a process and we knew it came with a price tag from the beginning. We've been on the journey for three years, and this is the right journey to be on.

The Committee asked for the opportunity to review and discuss AHFA at a future meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will occur May 6, 2024.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:40 pm.