

City of Richmond – Reimagining Public Safety Community Task Force
Meeting held in Person: Bermuda Room, Richmond Memorial Auditorium
403 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, CA 94804

Minutes*
Wednesday, July 12, 2023, 5:30 P.M.

**video recording and meeting transcript available*

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Small called the special meeting to order at 5:57 P.M.

B. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: S. Bischoff, M. Cantú, E. Chacon, D. Gosney, R. Joseph, K. Kilian-Lobos,
A. Lee,* M. Njissang, J. Pursell, B. Therriault, L. Whitmore, and Chair D. Small
*Arrived after Roll Call

ABSENT: H. Burks, L. Chacon, L. Murray, J. Schlemmer, T. Walker, and B.K.
Williams

STAFF PRESENT: Deputy City Manager-Community Services Director (Staff Liaison to the Task
Force) LaShonda White, Assistant Administrative Analyst Guadalupe Morales,
Associate Administrative Analyst Stephanie Ny, and City Attorney Alison
Flowers

C. AGENDA REVIEW AND ADOPTION

Chair Small advised that the agenda for the current meeting was the same agenda posted for the
meeting scheduled for June 28, 2023 that had been canceled due to a lack of quorum.

At the recommendation from Taskforce Member Bischoff to move Item 3, the draft report on the
Community Crisis Response Program (CCRP) under the Presentations, Discussions & Action Items
to the top of the list to ensure sufficient time for the Task Force to address the item, Chair Small
explained that Items 1 and 2 were also important for the Task Force to consider at this time. The
agenda was accepted as presented.

D. MEETING PROCEDURES

Guadalupe Morales, staff to the Task Force, identified the meeting procedures and the public's ability
to speak during the meeting. She announced that anyone may make an oral comment even if a written
one had previously been submitted; however, each speaker may raise their hand once to make one oral
public comment per each agenda item. She added that an announcement would identify the time to
make public comment for each item.

E. MINUTES APPROVAL

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1. APPROVE the Minutes of the May 24, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Reimagining Public Safety Community Task Force

Motion by Taskforce Member Bischoff, seconded by Taskforce Member Pursell to adopt the minutes of the May 24, 2023 meeting, as submitted, carried by the following Roll Call vote:

AYES: S. Bischoff, M. Cantú, E. Chacon, D. Gosney, R. Joseph, K. Kilian-Lobos, J. Pursell, B. Therriault, L. Whitmore, and Chair D. Small
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: M. Njissang
ABSENT: H. Burks, L. Chacon, A. Lee, L. Murray, J. Schlemmer, T. Walker, and B.K. Williams

F. CITY STAFF REPORTS

Staff Liaison LaShonda White announced that the Richmond Main Library as well as the Richmond City Recreation Complex were both now open on Saturdays. The Main Library was open from 12:00 to 5:00 P.M. and the Richmond Complex was open from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. on Saturdays. The City’s website was promoting activities and a list of upcoming events had been identified for both the Richmond Complex and the Richmond Main Library. She reported that Movie Night held in the Plaza would show *Encanto* on July 21 and there would be two more Movie Nights scheduled later in the summer. The Taste of Richmond had been scheduled for this upcoming Saturday in the Plaza with an entrance cost of \$25 and with food, beverages and entertainment available. She urged members of the public to join in all the activities. She also reported that there had been a Board and Commission Training this date hosted by the City Clerk’s office, the City Attorney’s office and the Mayor’s office where various topics had been discussed. The one-hour training had been recorded and for those unable to attend the training, a link was available to access that information

G. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No written comments were submitted or oral comments made by any member of the public.

H. PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND ACTION ITEMS

1. RECEIVE an Update About the Community Summit and Takeaways for Task Force Consideration from the Community Summit Planning Subgroup

Taskforce Member Pursell highlighted the Community Summit held at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School when three topics had been covered as one large group as opposed to the initially proposed individual breakout groups. The three topics were identified as Poverty Reduction, Youth Safety, Employment and Training, and Traffic Safety. For Poverty Reduction, Jessica Traveneia had facilitated the discussion of the concept of Universal Basic Income (UBI) and how it would be implemented in Richmond, how it would help individuals, and how it would make sure it would get to those who needed it with the understanding that not everyone would qualify.

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Taskforce Member Pursell described the discussion as informative showing the great initiative to facilitate and educate the community about what a UBI offered to be able to afford some essentials, to have more time for a career in Richmond, and to provide a better quality of life for households along with attempts to find solutions to ensure confidentiality.

Regarding Youth Safety, Employment and Training, Taskforce Member Pursell stated that Cynthia Hernandez of the City of Richmond's Employment and Training YouthWORKS, operating under the umbrella of Richmond Works, identified how the YouthWORKS program worked with businesses where youth were employed for six months prior to a business receiving reimbursement from the City, which offered a long stint for youth employees. He stated that discussion had been informative as well and the process was committed to meeting the needs of job seekers as well as employers. It also offered employment with wages and work where youth could have the opportunity of work to sustain themselves. Some of the issues that persisted was staff capacity and the need for more specialists and case managers to fulfill the needs for all the youth attempting to sign up for the program. He added that there was a lot of work and overhead to make sure that youth were learning the skills necessary to be successful at the jobs. There was also a need to provide more hours for the youth employment given the limited hours along with year round opportunities. He explained it was important for the community to understand that the program was successful, needed to expand, and worth the investment offering economic development and educational enrichment for those who lived in Richmond to make sure that they could remain in Richmond.

Taskforce Member Pursell stated with respect to Traffic Safety that Michelle Milam from the Richmond Police Department (RPD) shared some of her insights as well as giving some statistics as to the issues related to traffic safety and how steps were being taken to address those issues through traffic cameras and developing a culture of addressing traffic safety, with buy-in from the community to make sure the efforts were successful. There was a focus on addressing specific intersections in terms of enhancing sidewalks and bike lanes to make it safe for everyone as well as reaching out to other partners that contributed to traffic safety, such as PG&E to ensure safe working traffic lights.

Taskforce Member Pursell stated the Public Safety Summit had provided insight in those three key areas with great comments from the community as to their concerns. He explained that the notes from the sessions were in the process of being transcribed to identify some of the more substantial comments from the community to provide to the Task Force. Two topics had yet to be addressed and another summit would be required to address those topics, potentially through an on-line option. He also advised that a local Richmond-owned business had provided fantastic food for the event.

In response to Taskforce Member Gosney, Taskforce Member Pursell reported that about 40 members of the public had participated in the event along with some members of the City Council, staff from the Mayor's office, and other City officials and Task Force members and staff.

Staff Liaison LaShonda White thanked the coordinators and the Task Force for the concept of the Community Summit, and thanked Alison Flowers whose firm had contributed \$1,000 to offset the cost of the event. The City had paid for the rest.

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Ms. White reported she had learned this date that there were now four employment specialists supporting YouthWORKS at this time and she was pleased that staffing was being increased to provide more intensive case management of the young people to be able to offer the services and support that was needed.

Chair Small thanked the planning group and all members of the Task Force that had made the Community Summit a success, particularly since it was intended to be a way to move the goals of the Task Force forward, and since there was only one year remaining in the life of the Reimagining Public Safety Community Task Force before its sunset.

Chair Small added with respect to poverty reduction that it was great to talk about UBI but there were other ways to reduce poverty, particularly in a city like Richmond where almost half of its residents were renters, and ways to provide more stability in housing was good to reduce homelessness and to address issues related to poverty. She recommended a more in-depth discussion of this item at a future meeting. She also referred to a recent California survey of the unsheltered population that had identified the fact that almost half of those homeless were over the age of 50. She stated that was the target population of poor people to focus on and she looked forward to a discussion of some strategies to address that situation.

With respect to youth employment, Chair Small stated she had been obsessed with new technology and what that would mean to the next generation and she wanted to consider how to prepare the young people in the community to take advantage of all the opportunities presented by AI, and how to improve their level of literacy around technology and how to support them as well as how to influence those who developed the models to include information that would be useful to everyone. She added there was also a need to have a conversation with developers about including information that was useful to non-profits for those doing social profit work as opposed to non-profit work so that agencies, cities and others could make use of the available tools.

Speaking to traffic safety, Chair Small stated she had been looking around at other cities that had been taking on the issue about driving. She urged a slowdown and referred to ways that had been employed by cities around the world that had been successful using a combination of public education, advertising and other physical methods that had been discussed to slow traffic. She suggested the Task Force could be instrumental to encourage the City Council to develop a public education campaign around traffic safety that could help change the culture in the City.

Chair Small added that when reconvening in the fall, the Task Force could start looking at specific To Do items in addition to the CCRP before the Task Force sunset.

Taskforce Member Pursell thanked City staff for the funding and backend support of the Community Summit and stated it had been a great lift. As far as poverty reduction, there were other things talked about beyond UBI in that there was the Green New Deal and Blue New Deal, economic development and being able to encourage young people to be interested in some of the new programs that were being created either through Longshoremen or other union labor and trade work, which he encouraged since college was not right for everyone.

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No written comments were submitted or oral comments made by any member of the public.

2. DISCUSS and APPROVE the Task Force Meeting Schedule, Specifically Adjournment for the Months of July and August, with the Next Task Force Update Report to the City Council in October

Chair Small noted that since the current meeting was actually the meeting scheduled for June, there was a need to determine whether the Task Force wanted to meet at its regular time in July or adjourn during the months of July and August.

Taskforce Member Bischoff suggested the Task Force should consider the CCRP that had been on the agenda for consideration by the City Council at its July 11, 2023 meeting, but which had not be heard at that time, prior to adjourning for the summer so that the item could go back to the City Council at a September 2023 meeting after review by the Task Force.

Taskforce Member Therriault agreed and stated it made no sense for a draft report for the CCRP to be considered by the City Council prior to being considered by the Task Force. Anything other than that would mean there was no point to the Task Force.

Taskforce Member Pursell also agreed that the Task Force should consider the item first.

Chair Small noted that a number of Task Force members had made a formal request to the City Council to allow the Task Force to review the report prior to being considered by the City Council. She agreed that Task Force input was needed prior to City Council consideration of the report. Since the City Council was not meeting in August, she suggested it might be beneficial for the Task Force to meet in August to allow a specific focus and comprehensive review of the CCRP. She added that the report had only become available last week.

Taskforce Member Cantú clarified that the discussion at this point was whether or not to have a July or August meeting. She agreed with the need for the report to be reviewed by the Task Force in that the report had been created from the community, the Task Force had been created by the community, the original proposal had been created by the community, and Task Force members had been appointed to represent the community. As such, she agreed with the need to meet in August to engage the community to make a recommendation to the City Council on the CCRP.

Motion by Taskforce Member Joseph, seconded by Taskforce Member Lee that the Task Force hold a regular meeting in August to review the CCRP. Task Force Member Therriault offered a friendly amendment that the August meeting be solely dedicated to the CCRP with no other agenda items.

On the question, Chair Small offered a second friendly amendment that while the main item on the agenda for the August meeting should be the CCRP, she did not agree with the need that it be the only item on the agenda given the need to adjourn the July meeting and have the regular meeting in August as scheduled.

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Taskforce Member Therriault withdrew his first friendly amendment, and Task Force Members Joseph and Lee accepted the second friendly amendment to their motion and second.

Continuing the discussion on the question, Taskforce Member Whitmore stated that August was a month for family and vacations and the membership should be polled as to their availability in August. She noted, for instance, that she could not be present at an August meeting.

There was no further discussion, and Chair Small clarified the motion to adjourn the regular July meeting and hold the regularly scheduled meeting in August.

No written comments were submitted or oral comments made by any member of the public.

On the motion by Taskforce Member Joseph, seconded by Taskforce Member Lee to adjourn the regular July meeting and hold the regularly scheduled meeting on August 23, 2023, carried by the following Roll Call vote:

AYES: S. Bischoff, M. Cantú, E. Chacon, D. Gosney, R. Joseph, K. Kilian-Lobos, A. Lee, M. Njissang, J. Pursell, B. Therriault, L. Whitmore, and Chair D. Small
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: H. Burks, L. Chacon, L. Murray, J. Schlemmer, T. Walker, and B.K. Williams

3. RECEIVE and DISCUSS the Draft Report on the Community Crisis Response Program

Anne Jenks, Urban Strategies Council, explained that the draft report on the CCRP had been included on the agenda for the City Council’s July 11, 2023 meeting, although the intent was to submit the information back to the City Council in September when she would submit the feedback from the Task Force, which would consider the item at its August meeting.

David Harris, President and CEO of the Urban Strategies Council, presented a slide program and noted that much of the initial information related to the proposed CCRP had previously been submitted to the Task Force. He identified the major aspects to their work and reported that a survey had been distributed to over 422 respondents who had completed the survey. The survey had been produced in five languages to reflect the diversity of the community and nine focus groups had been held in the community along with numerous stakeholder interviews. The draft report had identified the full list of all those involved along with the topics raised in the community to seek public support for the program.

Mr. Harris stated that based on their research and feedback, five options had been identified; placing the program with a non-profit organization outside the City of Richmond, putting the program in the City in an existing department or a new department, a hybrid that involved starting with a non-profit and moving it into the City, and another hybrid working in partnership with Contra Costa County’s A3 Program, with the proposed pilot program to run from 18 months to two years.

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Mr. Harris identified the descriptions of the options, noted the key factors that would impact the Task Force's decision and the Urban Strategies Council recommendations along with the speed to implement, the cost, the sustainability of the long-term existence of the program and the degree of community support. He identified the rating methodology and the ratings of each option, referred to the projected budget for a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week program that required seven teams of two workers; one being the community crises responder and the other being the emergency medical technician. Also included in the report was the rationale for the 14 full-time workers and a schedule along with estimated salaries in line with the City of Richmond's payroll schedules. The cost range and differences in cost of the various options had also been included in the report. The cost range for a 12-month program was identified as \$1.87 million in a non-profit and \$2.38 million in the City of Richmond.

Mr. Harris strongly recommended the implementation of the CCRP and the creation of a Community Advisory Board to provide a degree of accountability and transparency to the community, and to get feedback to use in the program evaluation and continuous learning along with the website and the City's implementation of a public education campaign regarding the new program.

Taskforce Member Cantú noted that the original proposal did not have an overreliance on EMTs and had instead created a community medical partner and she asked why EMTs had been recommended instead of trained medical workers.

In response, Mr. Harris stated that recommendation was consistent with aligning the model with the design of other programs around the country. He suggested the idea of a community medical technical worker would be an acceptable alternative given the greater degree to be able to hire individuals from the community.

Taskforce Member Cantú also asked about 911 versus 311 calls and asked how that would work, and Ms. Jenks noted that the original Task Force proposal had encouraged people to call 311 to get the alternative emergency response. What Urban Strategies Council had seen consistently and heard from organizations that developed hotlines was that it was incredibly difficult to get people to use another number and the successful programs were those diverting existing phone calls which used 911 and the non-urgency line to an alternative response. She commented that those most disconnected from services were those most relying on 911, and emergency calls that could be responded to by an alternative emergency response system were in the 911 system and to some extent in the non-emergency numbers, which was why it made sense to use 911.

Ms. Jenks added that there had been a series of questions about A3 and the integration with CCRP, which could be discussed in more depth in August. They had met with A3 and it would not always be possible to say that would be how things would play out but what was clear was that the County had stated clearly it would never expand much beyond mental health calls and mental health crises. Depending on how to define it, she stated there remained a significant pool of low level emergency calls that might have a mental component but had not been identified as such, and there remained an opportunity to work together without creating an overlap.

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Taskforce Member Joseph expressed concern that the survey did not identify what Richmond looked like and he referred to the scoring system and asked how that had been done.

Mr. Harris stated in terms of representation that there were a certain number of responses from surveys and when the numbers were identified the focus groups would be organized in outreach activities to talk to those who might have been less represented. They had done an over sample with the Latino community and in all of the other discussions they had gotten indication of some idea of what residents would support. He noted it was clear from the numbers for the County partnership that many residents felt that the County was not responsive to the City of Richmond and its needs, which is what the scores had been based on.

Taskforce Member Pursell did not see measurements of the economic status of those who had responded and asked if that had been factored into the study as to whether those most impacted had responded, and Ms. Jenks stated that housing data had been considered to identify whether residents were a tenant or an owner and the housing situation information had been included in the appendices. It was also noted that the entire survey was in the appendix and that data could be aggregated.

Taskforce Member Therriault verified the assumptions used for an average 80 percent of non-public safety benefits, although he suggested it was actually better than that. He asked if there was a breakdown for the rating and whether individual questions could be sent to Urban Strategies Council or staff prior to the next meeting for clarification. Staff confirmed that was currently being done and the website had already uploaded the draft report, the PowerPoint presentation and the staff report to the City Council, and a comment box would be created to compile questions and provide responses.

Taskforce Member Bischoff asked with respect to demographics the methodology used to determine who had been included in the survey, to which Mr. Harris stated the survey had been open to the public and Urban Strategies Council had worked with community partners to make the survey available to those they served. There was not a specifically targeted group.

Ms. Jenks added that they had looked at all the available demographic data for Richmond and had made sure that the survey focused on outreach in terms of languages. Urban Strategies Council had watched responses coming in, and while it could not be perfectly representative, for instance women responded to surveys more than men, they were comfortable that they were hitting the mark in terms of the demographics as much as possible.

Taskforce Member Bischoff suggested that process had targeted a specific group of people as opposed to the general public, although Mr. Harris stated that the general public had been put on the City's website and there were a couple of ways they had conducted public outreach regarding the survey.

When doing a survey, Mr. Harris explained that they were always looking at the numbers coming in and course correcting when they saw those numbers. Based on the numbers, when one group appeared to be underrepresented they had to figure out a way to get more responses from those groups and call on partners or those who had direct relationships with those groups, such as through the neighborhood councils or through other specific groups.

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Mr. Harris explained that people of lower income or working class or those of color did not always have access to the survey because they were working or did not have access to technology. He added that every survey was competing for the time and attention of everyone and they had to meet people where they were at to see the numbers that they wanted to see.

Taskforce Member Bischoff noted that one of his biggest issues was the issue of transportation for those who needed it as part of the process. He wanted to make sure that all the critical questions were submitted to staff to allow a comprehensive discussion at the next Task Force meeting.

Chair Small urged everyone to thoroughly read the report to become familiar with all the information in the report and to compare the report from the Task Force with the proposal that had been submitted to the City to help inform the questions at the August meeting, with the goal to then make specific recommendations to the City Council.

It was recommended that the questions submitted to staff be used to prepare a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the website.

The following items on the agenda were not discussed by the Task Force.

- 4. DISCUSS and APPROVE Assignments to City Council Monthly Reports for October, November, and December 2023 as well as the Process for Substitutes**
- 5. DISCUSS a General Outreach Plan to Increase Public Awareness of and Participation in Task Force Meetings and APPROVE Recommendations**

I. ACTION ITEM RECAP

J. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 P.M. to the next meeting on Wednesday, August 23, 2023 in the Bermuda Room, Richmond Memorial Auditorium, 403 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, CA 94804.