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community?"

As a result of that, I did request the Independent Police Review out of the Auditor's Office to take a look at our policies to see if there was something systemically that we were doing to create these disproportionalities outside of what we saw in front of us, meaning the calls for service and being reactive to what's there.

Now, when we do make an arrest, it doesn't necessarily always mean it's a bad thing, meaning that someone goes to jail and they remain in jail. It could also mean that they get services that they need, or after our interaction we make referrals to partner agencies or they may even be referred to our service coordination team to get housing.

Green: *Is part of the problem that residents are calling police because there's nobody else to call? I know on the police log it's like, "Unwanted person, unwanted person, suspicious person, suspicious person," and like you said, you have to respond to these calls. Is part of the problem that the city isn't providing another avenue for people to deal with the issues that they're seeing?*

Outlaw: Is it the city? Is it the county? Whose baby is it?

There needs to be a shared understanding of the services that are needed and who is responsible for providing these services.

You asked me a question, but I agree with you – in that PPB, we're at the forefront of the issue because we're first responders. We're 24/7. You call dispatch; you know we're going to come because aside from the fire department, we're the only ones that are available in that capacity.

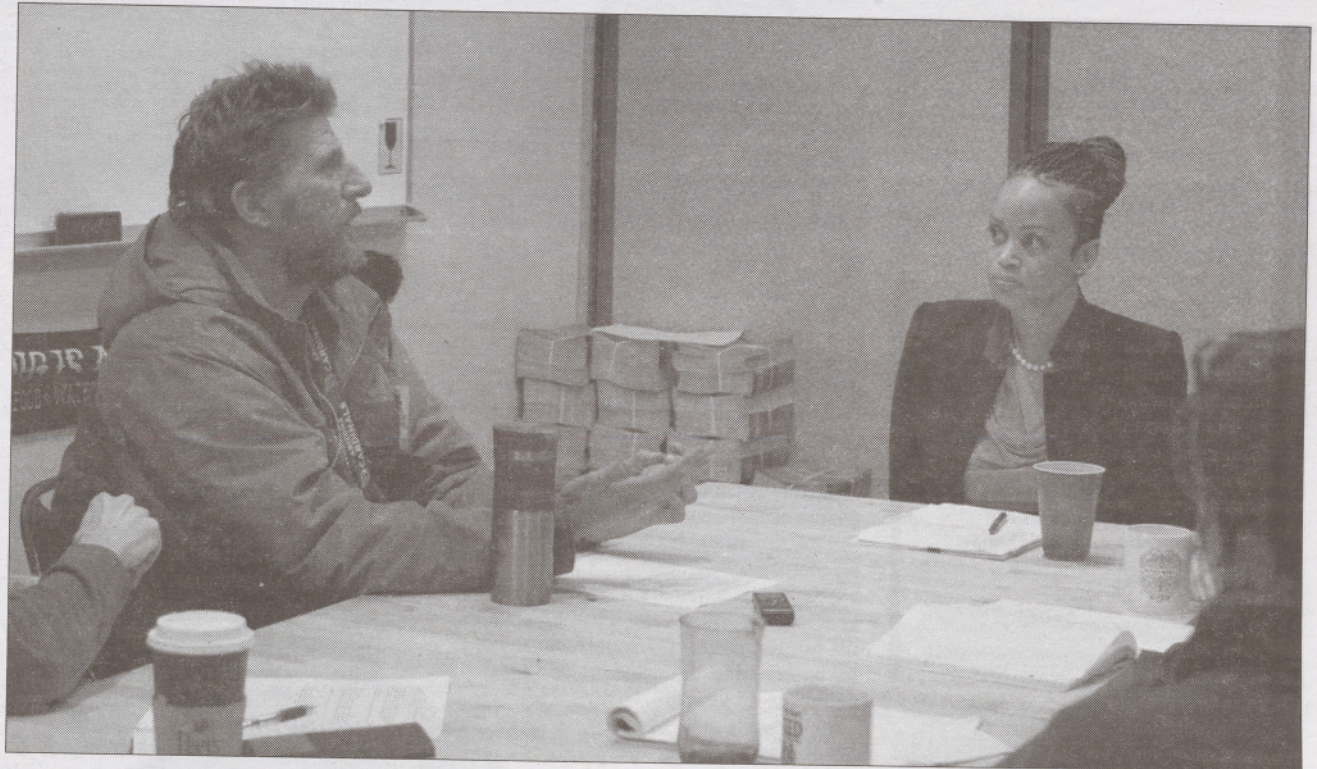
It would be awesome to have another entity of some sort available to respond to what these needs are. But when you have the vague details of "unwanted person, suspicious person," and there is a perceived nexus to a crime, we have to come to investigate.

In the meantime, on a very short-term basis, we have placed a sworn resource at the (911) dispatch center to assist with triaging some of these calls, to help dispatchers determine whether or not this really is a call for PPB or this is a call that needs to be referred to services of some other kind with a nexus to mental health needs or some other things.

We just started it (in November), so I don't have the ability to report out on how effective it's been, but the whole purpose of that is to see if there are other ways on the front end, we could figure out ways to get the right people in the right places at the right time.

Green: *Can you give us a couple of examples of the types of calls that your bureau has been getting a lot of that you would like to divert somewhere else?*

Outlaw: Calls without a criminal nexus would be a good start. On its surface, you might get someone posted outside of a business, right? And it might detract potential customers from coming inside a business, or someone might have been sitting on the sidewalk in front of someone's home, not really bothering anybody. Clearly they're in need of services, but if there is a perception by that resident that there's a



Street Roots vendor Sean Sheffield speaks with Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw at the Street Roots office in Old Town. PHOTO BY CELESTE NOCHE

need for them to be in fear, they'll call the police. When we respond, if we learn that this person really isn't doing anything or committing any crimes, they are just present, but they need services of some sort. Is there another way to ascertain that without us having to respond to make that determination?

Street Roots reporter John

Emshwiller: *How would it work then, if you get a call like that and your sworn personnel say, "Well, this is not really a police call"? Who do you then send it to, to get out there in any kind of timely fashion?*

Outlaw: Well that's the key – you asked "timely fashion."

I share with folks, even our new officers that come in, I say look, policing is changing, folks, and we're adapting and we're learning, but the nature of our calls are becoming far more complex, and we're taking longer in our calls. Once officers get there, we're training them to identify partner agencies to refer them to. And that can take time, either to get responses back or to find availability for whatever it is they're looking for, to abate whatever that issue is that we were called for in the first place. If there is no crime there, they'll make a police report and document in the report basically that this is in need of a referral, and then our behavioral health unit folks will come out after and follow-up with folks and try to identify services.

Street Roots vendor Sean Sheffield: *Behavioral health services – why aren't they doing a ride-along with police, because*

especially when you talk about mental-health situations, the uniform, a lot of times, triggers that response of freaking out or whatever, that a lot of times escalates to something more serious. Where I'm from – I'm from Phoenix, Ariz., and we actually had behavioral health service people ride along with police. If it was more of a mental-health thing, the police didn't react; they stayed in the car and let the

behavioral health service person interact with it. That de-escalated a lot of things because they weren't talking to a cop; they were talking to what they perceived as a doctor or a nurse or something along those lines. Is that something that could be used, maybe in the future?

Outlaw: When I first got here, I learned that the way the behavioral health response team was set up, it's with an officer and a clinician – a lot of the response was after the fact; it was follow-up.

Where I come from, it was exactly what you're talking about: It was a clinician and an officer, but they responded to

actual calls. When they heard the call come out, they would take those calls, and the impact, for the most part, was exactly what you just described.

We are moving towards a more hybrid model so that we can have both, and we're not just follow-up.

The issue for us is getting enough clinicians that are willing to do that.

In the short term, our officers all receive crisis intervention training, and then we also have a cadre of officers that had enhanced training that goes beyond the regular training, and we've been working very

diligently in the last year to make sure that the ECIT (Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team) officers are dispatched to more of these calls. And we've been able to increase those numbers by working with the dispatch center.

Sheffield: *The police response when it comes to a homeless individual – an example would be, police are responding to a domestic disturbance in a housing situation: There is one maybe two cop cars that show up. But I've seen myself a couple arguing and there are five or six cop cars, and like eight or 10 cops around two people – who are homeless, or maybe not even homeless but a couple having an argument out in the street. Is that police procedure, or is that just something police have done in the past that they are still enforcing today?*

Outlaw: That's a really good question. It's a fair question, and unfortunately I don't have a definite response to that because the answer is: It depends. Our response is dictated by what we know and what we don't know.

There's no cookie cutter. We train to ensure the safety of everyone involved. If you have something out in the middle of the street: What time of day is it? How many people are around? Are there bystanders? Are there other people that can be impacted by what's going on here? If that's the case, if it's a busy street, if there's a lot going on, if it's a main thoroughfare, we might have more officers there to contain the situation and allow the primary responding officers to work directly with those who are involved. But I understand, optically, it can look like you got this little altercation in the middle of the street with two people, and you've got 16 officers here. But they might be there to be handling other things on the perimeter. Now, I would become concerned if you're saying you got two people in a dispute and you have 16 officers standing around these

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Danielle Outlaw
Portland police chief