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[00:00:07] Good afternoon, everyone. I'd like to welcome you to the safety and security meeting for today, January 30th. We have two items on our agenda today, and I'll go quickly because I know we're going to need time to get through both of the items. The first is we're going to have a conversation on the national opioid fentanyl crisis and Fairfax County's response and strategies.

[00:00:32] And following that, we will have a discussion on the proposed Department of Animal Sheltering and Control Services consolidation. So those are the two items we have today. And what I'd like to do is if I can turn over the program now to Ellen Volvo, who is the Fairfax County Opioid and Substance Abuse Task Force Coordinator here with the Fairfax County Falls Church Community Services Board.

[00:00:59] It's a little mouthful, but we're delighted to have her here. she will be able to introduce the members of the team that are going to be discussing this item, and then we'll have an opportunity for the board after their presentation to ask any questions. So with that, I'll turn it over to Ms. Fobel. Thank you.

[00:01:18] Thank you, and good afternoon. I'm just going to ask my colleagues to briefly introduce themselves, and then we'll get started. Good afternoon. I'm Lieutenant Kevin White. I'm assigned to the department's overdose investigations unit. Good afternoon.

[00:01:34] Abby May, Deputy Director for Clinical Operations for the Community Services Board. Good afternoon, Mike Axler, Director of Intervention and Prevention Services for Fairfax County Public Schools. Good afternoon, Stefan Maskell, Coordinator of Student Safety and Wellness for Fairfax County Public Schools.

[00:01:51] Thank you. And as board members know, oh, I need my clicker. Here we go. Thanks. Now we're ready. So as board members know, Fairfax County has had a focused effort in place to address the opioid epidemic for several years now.

[00:02:07] We're currently working under our third work plan, which has the primary goals that you see on the slide before you. This is a really large, cross-systems, multi-pronged effort with about 40 different programs and activities underway, spanning the categories that you see in the graphic on the right.

[00:02:24] There's a task force that leads up this work day-to-day that includes 15 different county agencies. We also have a Fairfax Prevention Coalition through which we engage with the public. The handout included with the meeting materials, this handout, it's an infographic that highlights several of these programs and their broad reach and impact.

[00:02:45] So turning our attention briefly to some local data, this is a screenshot from the Fairfax Health Department's opioid overdose dashboard. That blue line, that's not emergency department visits for nonfatal opioid overdoses.

[00:03:01] As you can see, the number of non-fatal opioid overdoses in 2023 is about 30% higher than what we saw in the prior year. So that's obviously a big concern. That orange line is fatal opioid overdoses.

[00:03:17] That data point comes from the office of the chief medical examiner. What you see on the slide is for the first half of the year, but just in the last couple days, the medical examiner released the third quarter of data. So now we know that from January through September of 2023, there were 89 fatal opioid overdoses in the Fairfax Health District.

[00:03:38] So, you know, clearly that's trending high. It's higher than the 2022 number. All of the prior years on that orange line, that's a full year total. So that's obviously a huge concern. When you look at the bottom half of that graphic, you can see historically that opioid overdoses are impacting people of all age groups.

[00:03:59] As board members are aware, in the last couple years, we've seen an increasing number of youth overdoses, which has been a major concern. Nearly all of the fatal opioid overdoses that we've seen in the last couple years have involved fentanyl.

[00:04:15] So I know probably most people in this room know what fentanyl is. I want to take a quick moment to touch on it because we do see in community outreach that more awareness around this is needed. So it's just, you know, fentanyl is a synthetic opioid. Even the tiniest amount that fits on the tip of a pencil can be deadly.

[00:04:34] We see it in all different substances in the illicit drug supply, cocaine, heroin. We're monitoring closely for fentanyl, xylacine combinations. And, of course, we see it a lot in these counterfeit pills. The counterfeit pills are made to resemble prescription pills, but majority of those counterfeit pills, the DEA reports, have a lethal dose of fentanyl.

[00:04:56] So a huge concern. And now I'll turn it over to Lieutenant White to talk a little more about that. Thank you, Ellen. I did just want to touch on what was mentioned there and that these pills, these counterfeit pills, they are pressed to resemble prescription drugs, as Ellen said. And I bring that up because it is what we are seeing most in Fairfax County. The fentanyl is primarily in the shape of these pills. It's what our investigations are finding, and it is what we are seeing most of.

[00:05:26] And you'll see in the graph up there that our Organized Crime and Narcotics Division has seized a significant higher number of pills and powder, fentanyl pills and powder, in 23 than we did in 22. And to give you some perspective, the DEA released their numbers recently in which they as well had an increase in their seizure of pills and continue to seize significant numbers of powder.

[00:05:52] With that increased availability, we have seen a decrease in the cost of these pills. And just a few years ago, you could purchase a counterfeit pill for about $30. And over the last couple of years, we've seen that number go down to under $10 per pill.

[00:06:12] So that increased availability, that decrease in the cost has contributed to the increase in nonfatal and fatal overdoses in this county. The Overdose Investigations Unit is tasked and assigned with investigating all fatal overdoses.

[00:06:30] We're also made aware and have visibility and get notifications for all non-fatal overdoses, and I'll explain why that's important in a moment. But getting back to our primary focus, which is to investigate the person or persons that are distributing these drugs, and as Ellen mentioned specifically and mostly fentanyl, Our goal is to develop a case and then prosecute and bring charges on that individual.

[00:06:59] Detectives work very hard. These are very complex cases to work. They're committed with collaboration with our federal partners at times. We are finding some success. And what I'd like to highlight is we have, over the past few years, found through our investigations with our DEA partners, we have had drug dealers sentenced.

[00:07:21] to 20 years, 22 years, 30 years in some instances. So we are finding some success. When we prosecute them and we bring these charges locally, we are finding that we're getting up to 12-year sentences as well. So the hard work will continue. I know I mentioned the nonfatal overdoses, and I want to touch on that for a couple of reasons. One is we want to get out and talk with these individuals who are experiencing these nonfatals. One, in our eyes, there's no information that's too small for them, for our detectives, anything that we can gain from them that will help us on our short-term, long-term investigations as a department, as a division, and in my unit, we think is valuable.

[00:08:00] The other side of that is we have found that we can be, the unit can be a starting point for the referral process for these individuals who are experiencing this. Through the task force, through Ellen's help, through the CSB, we have developed a system in which when we come in contact with somebody who has a non-fatal overdose, we can refer them to the county, county agencies, our partners, and get them on a path to recovery and treatment.

[00:08:30] And it's been working well, and we continue to make adjustments to improve that. Just want to touch on two more things, which is our outreach efforts. The unit did more than 30 events last year, many of which were hosted by you folks in the room. We feel it's very important for us to get out of the community, our faith-based community, the schools. I'll stand on the corner and talk to people if they're willing to listen. But we really want to speak to parents, give them tools, what we're learning, trends we're

seeing, things that we can help them identify if their kids are participating in this, if they're doing drugs. We want to get out there. One of the

[00:09:10] important things we feel should continue to be messaged is a safe reporting of overdoses. So Virginia State passed a few years ago a law that protects individuals who report an overdose, call 911. We as law enforcement are not entering that scene looking to arrest anybody. The law allows for that immunity. We want to make sure that we encourage people to call the police, call fire and EMS, get these individuals treated, and again, we can refer them. Lastly, training our detectives in an effort to ensure that we are working as a department on the same

[00:09:48] page. We reach out, we train at our academy, our new recruits. We train our school resources officers multiple times a year, crime prevention officers, community outreach officers. We go to roll call trainings to ensure that we are messaging what we are seeing to those that are out in the community. And we're also learning from them to ensure that we're on the same page and we're being as effective as we can. With that, I'll turn it back over to Ellen. Thank you. There is a lot of work underway across the county's opioid response to address these trends. Today, I'm going to be

[00:10:23] focusing on how we're using opioid settlement dollars to advance this work. So just two key points of background information. We have started to receive some settlement payments, and today I'm talking about how we're using those dollars, but there is still the potential to receive additional payments in the future, so potentially new projects that we could look at funding with these dollars. There are also different types of opioid settlement funds. I won't get into that level of detail, though there is a handout in the package today if you would like it.

[00:10:53] So in Fairfax, we've identified seven projects that are being funded with opioid settlement dollars. These were identified through a process held this past summer. All of the requests submitted, were funded, approved by the board back in November. And then there's also a regional project that we've talked with you about before that Fairfax is participating in. And so, in total, there's eight projects that in Fairfax were using opioid settlement funds to advance. And as you can see in this chart, half of those kind of address adults, 18 and above. The other half are

[00:11:28] more youth-focused. And all of these collectively advance work in each of the opioid response plan categories. Many of these projects involve cross-systems partnership and work with external organizations. And so just to run through them very briefly, that first project that's funding for a drug court coordinator to expand the drug court's capacity and create a track specifically for 18 to 25-year-olds. The next three projects on the list are specific to the jail-based medication for opioid use disorder program. One of those three projects is a study, and the other

[00:12:07] two are funds for behavioral health treatment and medical professional contract positions to enhance the treatment for that growing program. There's also some funding going to the schools for a youth substance use prevention campaign and an anti-stigma initiative.

[00:12:27] This work builds on some work already underway in the mental health arena. Healthy Minds Fairfax will also be using some of the dollars for community dialogue sessions to address the root causes of youth substance use and start identifying potential strategies.

[00:12:43] And then there's a significant investment in building capacity within the community services board for youth medication for opioid use disorder treatment. um this is um involves about seven and a

half behavioral health professional positions they're estimated to be able to serve 150 youth annually so that's a really big increase in capacity for that evidence-based really effective treatment and now i'll turn it over to abby to talk a little more about that regional project as board members are aware the fairfax csb partnered with four

[00:13:18] Northern Virginia Regional Community Services Boards to apply for an OAA grant to stand up a youth detox in residential treatment services, and we were awarded funding for that. This is tremendously important because of the fact that we have no youth detox facilities in our area and having to send youth out of state for this really critical service. The CSB have been exploring different ways to access this funding and to use the funding and engaging community partners in the discussions when we did receive no initial responsive proposals to our RFP that we issued

[00:13:52] last year. However, a couple vendors did come forward late last fall to express some interest and we're confident in re-releasing the RFP that we'll have some responsive proposals. OAA has been a great partner in collaborating with us through these challenges. There are some administrative steps that we need to take to access the FY24 funding as well as the renewed funding for fy25 and that will be coming up in an upcoming board item and now i'll turn it over to stefan and mike for fairfax county public schools great thank you as a reminder um governor youngkin

[00:14:31] issued executive order 28 on november 1st 2023 requiring school divisions to notify all parents within the division within 24 hours of a school connected overdose while ensuring student privacy to comply with this executive order and to maximize transparent communication with our community our superintendent intends to send a community notification anytime there is a suspected overdose involving an FCPS student, whether the overdose occurs in the school building or in the community, and this would include both fatal and non-fatal overdoses. FCPS is going to rely on our safety and security office to verify the overdose with the police department to the extent possible before

[00:15:08] sending out a community notification. However, there are legal restrictions on the FCPD for sharing student information related to incidents that occur outside of school which may hinder our ability to verify off-campus incidents. Our communications office has updated their standard operating procedures to include providing a preview of the notifications to the FCPD public affairs office to ensure mutual awareness and consistent messaging and finally our division council is working to provide guidance on how to safeguard student privacy when sending these community notifications as this can be a challenge when the school is identified and if there were multiple witnesses to the incident. So we continue to work to navigate this balance between transparency

[00:15:46] and maintaining student privacy. Thank you. We did want to include that brief update on the school overdose notifications because it is a sort of new change in this landscape. And so just wanted to provide some additional context for you all today. With that, I just want to note that this slide deck does include four additional slides with resources. We're not going to talk through them today but wanted you to have them because there is tremendous community interest in this topic and need for resources the links that you see on this screen are also good compilations of

[00:16:21] resources in particular that second one is an opa news center article that could be tailored for newsletters or you know we have pictures in there of what we're seeing locally and so good starting points for for you all but also for our community members and so with that we'll turn it over to you for questions. Okay, let me thank you for the presentation and the information. Very somber information here,

unfortunately, in terms of the situation with fentanyl, and we know this is continuing to be a problem. So in my own community,

[00:16:56] Lieutenant White was a part of an event that we did about a week ago, and over 100 folks were in attendance, and it was really focused on dealing with, how do I say this, elementary school students who are using opioids. And it's bad to think about our adults and think about our high school and middle school, but to imagine that this is now even moving into our elementary schools as well.

[00:17:26] So this is a significant and very pressing issue. So let me ask this. I mean, I guess we've got to figure out kind of methodologies and ways to reach out to the community and I appreciate the focus on trying to do events and really getting out and it's not white I could see the presence there and I could see the engagement there and just very much appreciate that but I know we've got a large county we we we really have to figure out what are the ways that we're going to be able to have

[00:17:59] people learn about these dangers. And the fact, as Dr. Reed's video so clearly shows with a mother and father who lost their son about a year ago, how difficult it is to know that your child is even using. And then the fact that I think he died after taking the drug just twice. So it just tells you the risk and severity and seriousness of it. So the question I want to ask is, so

[00:18:31] how do we get the word out to our communities and to our residents about this problem? And then how do we frame it so that this discussion can happen even at those younger, earlier years? That's a great question. And first of all, CFFCPS, do you want to talk a little bit about some of the work you already have underway. Sure. So in FCPS, we try to approach substance misuse using a multi-tiered system of support, an MTSS framework. And so at tier

[00:19:08] one universally, we try and focus on what are the factors that might motivate substance misuse and how do we address them from a preventative and education framework. So we provide education and prevention activities, K-12, by increasing awareness of substances as part of our health and PE curriculum, developmentally tailored to the level of the students, discussing healthy behavioral alternatives providing information on how to access supportive resources and services and across all grade level students learn and practice skills for responsible decision-making for substance refusal conflict resolution and effective communication which are foundational skills the students will need for substance misuse refusal as well as across a host of other potential risk factors in addition to the student facing supports

[00:19:48] all FCPS teachers receive professional learning that addresses building a foundation of social and emotional learning and high leverage practices to build strong relationships with students and positive classroom cultures that aim to prevent substance misuse by creating safe environments and positive cultures for students, mitigating risk factors that can make students vulnerable to engaging in dangerous behavior and boosting protective factors and increasing student engagement, which we know from our youth survey showed it to correlate negatively with substance misuse.

[00:20:15] I'll turn it over to Stefan to add any more detail on the curricular piece. Sure. I think the other piece that many of you are already aware of, but if you're not, born out of the opioid task force is our substance abuse prevention program where we have substance abuse prevention specialists physically based in our high schools and while they're based in our high schools they support not just that high school but all the schools in that pyramid elementary through through high school as michael already

spoke to they also operate out of a three tier system of approach or system of support tier one is any work that they do that has the ability

[00:20:51] to reach large groups of the population for that specific school or that pyramid. So you can think of PTA, parent evenings. You can think of when the health and PE teacher is conducting a lesson on the topic of substance use, they can then push into that classroom and provide some supplemental information.

[00:21:09] Tier 2 is where we're working with any youth and their family that have been identified for substance use risk. These students typically will come to us in one of two ways, either through the discipline route or the non-discipline route. So the non-discipline route would be the student who has been vaping, right? Or maybe they're smoking marijuana and they want to stop and they just don't know how, so they come on down. But they haven't gotten caught at school yet, right? Or it could be the mother or the father who, you know, they're in their child's bedroom and they find some marijuana, they find some pills, and they contact the school wanting to know what type of support is available. The discipline route would be the student who does get caught in the bathroom vaping or does get caught at a football game with

[00:21:48] some pills or some alcohol on them, right? But when we work with those students, it's really about trying to determine their level of involvement with the substance, and then it's about trying to determine what's the best intervention for this student.

[00:22:03] Now I will say, regardless of the substance that brought that student to us, let's say it was marijuana, or let's say it's alcohol, because of the prevalence of opioids right now, given the crisis, we always provide education around opioids, regardless of what the initial substance was. At that Tier 3 level, this is where we're working with students that have needs that go beyond what we can support in schools. And so this is where we really lean on our relationship with the CSB, and we look to expedite the process of enrolling that student in some of their more in-depth therapy options. Okay. Now, I appreciate that additional information. And then the last

[00:22:41] point I'll make is I appreciate slide number nine that talks about the youth residential treatment the facility and would just lift this up as being kind of a necessary and important thing for us to do I've had a couple of residents expressed to me that they couldn't send their kid to say North Carolina like the option is we don't provide the service here so you're gonna have to send your child outside this area and the option being so far they were like I can't I can't do that and And for us to be able to identify a facility that we can have access here is going to be great.

[00:23:19] Can I just ask one quick question on it? Is there a number of beds that might be associated with this? Is there a thought about that now, or is that still not a good term? We're looking at a 16-bed facility. Okay, 16 beds. All right, perfect. Thank you. So let me open it up to my colleagues.

[00:23:36] I'll start with the chairman, and I'll work down the rail. Thank you, Supervisor Lush. Just a couple things. I want to follow up on where Supervisor Lush just left on page nine. You know, I understand the challenge with the RFP, but winter, early spring is kind of a, I'm looking at the award in FY25, and we know that's a ways away.

[00:23:56] We've been talking about this for a while. Is that the most expeditious route we can take at this point? Because, you know, there are real challenges at the ground level every day that goes by that we don't

have this facility up and running. I share that perspective as well.

[00:24:14] We've been trying to move this forward as quickly as we can. It was really disappointing when that initial RFP yielded no responsive proposals for youth. So we're cautiously optimistic that there was new interest from the vendor community, and we're moving forward as expeditiously as we can.

[00:24:31] To clarify, we do already have the FY24 funds awarded to us. The board item that's coming to you all is to just formally accept those funds. And then in the spring, we'll be just asking OAA for the FY25 funds as well.

[00:24:47] But we're looking to carry over the FY24 funds into next year, and we think that timing will align well with this hopefully more fruitful RFP process. Yeah, I mean, I just want to encourage every level of creativity, even if it means we have two phases of this or something, if we can get something going faster and then expand it.

[00:25:08] I don't know what the challenge is with the providers, if it's the capacity of them to be able to provide this service because of the size of it or what it is. I'm just, and we don't need to discuss that here other than to say whatever creative leverage we can do to maybe rethink the scope of it, if that's what's necessary to get something established, I think would help as soon as possible.

[00:25:30] Just a question on page six, because it says in here that tech does are notified of every overdose that comes to the attention of FCPD, and you mentioned something, and I think this is oftentimes overlooked, which is the prosecutorial element of this or the law enforcement element of this.

[00:25:48] I'm assuming when there's an EMS call, if we have to administer a drug to reverse the effects of fentanyl, that those people that are in that situation, I'm assuming, are required to get transported to the hospital once that happens. And do we have, how are we making sure that people in the community who are users trust us to be able to have the conversations with us?

[00:26:14] And do we do that outside of what comes to the attention of FCPD? Because obviously there could be CSB people, there could be school administrators, there could be EMS personnel. They may interface with a lot of people without necessarily coming into direct connection with FCPD. So help me understand that spectrum and what we're doing to encourage people to come forward and be able to help us at least identify perhaps where the some of the suppliers and some of the other issues are.

[00:26:43] That's a good question. And, you know, I think it's also worth noting that a person could experience an overdose, be revived by Narcan and make the choice to not, you know, pursue any assistance. And then that doesn't come to the attention of any of these systems. But the way that we kind of collectively look at non-fatal opioid overdoses is informed by some data that the CDC puts out that talks about how a non-fatal opioid overdose is an opportunity to help someone on the path of a recovery, right? And so we look at every one of those touch points

[00:27:22] as an opportunity to help someone. So fire and rescue, you know, so you're not required to be transported to the hospital. We see in this population that most people are. And so we do work with the emergency departments on trying to improve collaboration. They are fire and rescue themselves. They have a fairly unique leave behind Narcan program where they provide Narcan for future use to that individual and bystanders on the scene. And there's kind of similar harm reduction efforts in place at all different kind of points. And that's important because it does

[00:27:57] send the message to the community that we're here to help you. We want you to work with us. We want you to work with our peer support specialists. I should also note that Fire and Rescue and the Police Department, both of them refer individuals encountered for non-fatal opioid overdoses to the CSB for follow-up. Okay, so if it's an EMS response, you're not required to be transported.

[00:28:19] Obviously, community administered, Narcan, something like that, where there wouldn't even be a call. But if we are called, Fire and Rescue is the call to respond, you still have the option as the patient to refuse transport, even though we may not know whether or not the length of the Narcan will outlive the effects of the original dose. That's correct. But as we monitor that data fairly closely, a majority of people, you know, agree to be transported. Okay. And then two other real quick things. One, the supply issue is the biggest thing we're fighting against here. I mean,

[00:28:56] the price point issue that you discussed, I mean, this now has become available widespread to kids in Fairfax County at that price point. And so are we getting the kind of support from our federal and state partners to address the flow of the supply coming into Fairfax County? I know we play a big role in that. We do an amazing job with it, but it's constantly fighting an uphill battle. And I don't need details here for obvious reasons, but we feel like we're getting the support from our state and federal partners in law enforcement in stopping the flow to begin with.

[00:29:30] The short answer is yes, and, you know, we at Fairfax have fostered some strong relationships with our DEA partners and our federal partners. So from my perspective, from our perspective, we work very closely with one another.

[00:29:48] It is a very difficult challenge, obviously, that we're experiencing, but I will say that on the ground and, you know, the DEA has been a strong partner of ours as well as other federal partners.

[00:30:03] Okay. And then my last question is for FCPS because we discussed some of the other substance challenges that our young people are facing and the vaping one comes up a lot as kind of a gateway for a lot of our young people to experiment.

[00:30:19] substance abuse. And I know that the schools had looked at some various things they were going to do, including detectors in some of the schools. And I guess my question is, is what are we not doing enough of, in your mind, in our schools to address some of the gateway elements that might be easier to solve from a prevention standpoint? I mean, there's not a school I go into where the kids aren't complaining about not being able to use the restrooms because they're overtaken by vaping. And so what else, what are we doing, FCPS, on that front to address those gateway elements?

[00:30:55] I appreciated your answer earlier about what we do with those kids in terms of educating them on fentanyl, but what I'm trying to understand is what we do before it gets to that stage, and are we using every tool, including technology, that we possibly can to help with that? It's a great question, and I'll say something that I've always said since I have had the privilege of working in this role, right, is that when it comes to the work of prevention, it's very difficult to grasp the attention and the ears of people that need to hear it, right, until there's a crisis and it

[00:31:35] lands on their doorstep. And then everybody wants to know, well, what's going on and what are we supposed to be doing and how could this ever happen? When we talk about what else can be done, I think more needs to be done in terms of how do we get this message of education around whatever the substance is right now it's fentanyl before it was vaping years ago it was it was it was marijuana right but

how do we get this information um in in front of our parents so that so that they have time to to read it educate themselves on it process it and then turn around and have conversations with with their kids on it i think that that's a significant gap um and our parents

[00:32:13] are very busy right we we have jobs some of them have have multiple jobs they have multiple kids everybody has a lot of stuff going on. But if I were to pinpoint one specific area that I believe would be very beneficial would be to find better ways to garner the attention of parents in our communities. Yeah, I mean, I don't disagree with that. I think you mentioned some of the challenges associated with that. And I just hope we're doing everything we can within our buildings to build the safest environment for all kids because what I hear about the vaping piece is still alive and

[00:32:49] well. And I know that a lot of these kids, that's how they get their start. And there are things we can be doing to detect those, I think, more aggressively earlier. One of them is educating parents, but others is use of some of the technology and other things. And at some point, I would love to get an update on what has happened with, I guess there were some pilot programs with detection devices on that because this is a real problem in our schools, and it is summarily dismissed as vaping is no big deal. Well, if vaping is your pathway into this, it is a big deal,

[00:33:27] and I just want us to make sure we don't lose sight of that. But I, you know, closing, just appreciate all the work that's being done because I would put our efforts up against anyone in this country in terms of what we're doing. That doesn't mean this isn't a massive challenge, but appreciate all the attention and effort that all of you are putting into it.

[00:33:45] Okay, thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will now start at the other end, so go ahead, Mr. Bierman. Yeah, just a brief comment. What you just said I think is really in some ways the key here.

[00:34:01] Having attended one of the events that you've put on, which are very, very good, this one was at Herndon Middle School, the tough thing is looking around and seeing how many empty seats there are and knowing that the population of that middle school has a lot of parents who couldn't be there that night for a lot of reasons.

[00:34:20] To me, sort of added on to the point about teaching kids about these dangers of these is really education for the parents. I learned a lot that night that even I didn't know that is to me really important. And so I know that you're already working on those programs, but please continue and thank you for your work.

[00:34:44] Appreciate it. Thank you, Supervisor Bierman. Mr. Jimenez. I have a lot to say on this. It all begins with trust, trust in our community.

[00:34:59] And if we're going to work on this issue, this fentanyl issue, it begins with trust, whether that's with parents, teachers, community leaders, mentors. We've got to find a way to get young people to trust, and until we do, we're going to continue to have a problem. And finding that trust can take many different forms. I recently had the privilege and honor of doing a ride-along with Chief Davis and our former Mason Captain Patrick Bruch on that night. We went around the community, and toward the end, we actually stopped, and there

[00:35:35] were six arrests for fentanyl just that night. It honestly is something different than talking about it, than being actually up there, up in person, seeing what the police do, seeing what their job takes, you know, having to wear gloves so they don't get it in their eyes, you know, dealing with not only the

circumstance in front of them, but the community around them. You know, there were parents trying to walk their kids into the building where this arrest happened.

[00:36:03] There were, you know, elderly people trying to bring in their groceries around. This is happening. So clearly, very concerning. It's impacted Mason. In Mason, we've had our own fatalities, unfortunately, due to fentanyl, young people.

[00:36:22] It's absolutely devastating to the community, and it's not going away. This is an issue that will not go away, and we need to make sure that as a community, we're working on this. I'm going to say a couple more comments, and then I'll pass it on. Thank you.

[00:36:39] Again, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm saddened and furious about this national crisis that has hit our communities. Thank you to all of you sitting in front of me for the work you do on this. Thank you for prioritizing it, and thank you to law enforcement and all public safety.

[00:36:56] We all need to be working on this epidemic. Recently, Justice High School had an event in which we brought in parents and community to talk about this. It was very well attended, which gave me a lot of hope because the community does understand that this is impacting all of their students. It's not a specific group. It's not a specific clique. You know, it's impacting everyone and it can happen so quickly. You know, it's students, young people don't understand

[00:37:27] just how serious just taking, you know, one hit of fentanyl can be. It can be deadly. And so we all need to be working on this but i do i want to go back to this idea of trust whether it's a faith-based community whether it's our school board whether it's our teachers we need to build trust in our community so that we can work together to help educate and educate is a huge part of this my office is trying to educate through social media we've got forms we have all of these resources that we're using because of the police department because of the county because of everything you're putting out there and i think that the more you put out there the

[00:38:06] more that supervisors' offices can put out there, whether it's on their website or within their own offices. We need to find different ways as well to educate the public. So thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Jimenez. Supervisor Palchuk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you all for your report and your work on this. And Ellen, I know you've been doing excellent work on this for many years now. My question, I guess a little bit related to that, but going back to slide 8 and funding pieces and the programs that we're funding, I'm really happy to see this and just have a couple of questions and comments. Number one, on that first

[00:38:41] item, you know, really happy to see the support for the drug court. I know our drug, mental health and veteran stockets have been very successful. And so both here and if we can help expand, I believe there's not enough capacity for the others either. I hope that's something that if we're not already looking at, that can come to our board because it's been extremely successful and our judges I think have done an excellent job leading that and showing that. And then when it comes to the sort of a two-part question is, one, these look like great positions and things we need.

[00:39:18] Are you confident that we can hire for them? I know that's a challenge. And on the flip side, thinking about the building trust, I'm wondering, you know, the Healthy Minds Fairfax and those community dialogue sessions, because like, I mean, we can send out as many things we want from our

[00:39:34] But I think students and families hearing from each other, whether it's through peer, group support, family support, I know there are many different models, and ensuring that those community conversations have the time and the funding and the buy-in to help ensure that we realize, you know, how the community's most impacted on the ground, how the kids and the parents can help us really tackle this together, because all of us here are not going to be able to solve it.

[00:40:05] without them really at the table. So I guess as I said, can we hire for the positions we're posting, and can we do a little bit more on the community sessions and whether that's support groups, peer support groups, or other ways to really get the community more engaged and involved?

[00:40:22] So I'd say we're already making progress on hiring for those positions, so steps in a good direction for that, so I feel like the recruitment process has gotten better. And so I am very hopeful that we'll be able to establish those teams, and in particular with the Youth Medicated Assisted Treatment Program.

[00:40:38] We've already are working on offers for managers and supervisors and making progress there. I think the engagement with the community and hearing from the youth directly on what are some of the root causes and what are some of the reasons why the youth that are not using are not using.

[00:40:54] You know, and what can we do? What are the risk factors? What are the protective factors? What can we learn from them directly? So I think that's really getting at that conversation directly with the youth and engaging them in that discussion. There is already, through Healthy Minds Fairfax, a youth advisory council, and that we're hoping to help to engage them in this conversation and be able to engage community members to have these dialogues.

[00:41:17] MS. I guess if we can need to or can expand that, it's not very expensive, and if there's a parent council, family council, the more we can put funds to something that's very cost-effective, and I think research has some very impactful, please let us know. I'm sure we'd be happy to give more support there.

[00:41:34] MS. Thank you. Thank you, Abby. Thank you, Supervisor Palchuk, Supervisor Stork. Well, thank you all very much, and I absolutely deeply appreciate not only as a supervisor in a district which has significant challenges with this, but as a parent who's had a child who's had significant challenges with substance use and abuse and still does.

[00:41:53] I think, in my mind, our justice system can play an important role in this process. I do believe that there are options of when you lock somebody up, you give them a chance. The sheriff has really, I think, come through with her program to support that. But we do not have enough treatment programs still.

[00:42:09] And I think that behooves us, all of us, to encourage and support that we're possible. And again, I'm particularly focused on evidence-based programs. But I know that we have a couple different treatment drugs that are out there. And I didn't bring information with me about, I know one of them more recent, that it's less addictive.

[00:42:28] but it is an option that can help people at least adapt or adjust and manage their life and ultimately get them to a place that maybe they can choose to do the harder thing, which is to fully get off the opioids and get on with the life that they want for themselves.

[00:42:45] But again, my thanks to all of you. No specific questions, and just keep up the great work, and all of us have a lot more to do. Thank you, Supervisor Stork, Supervisor Walkinshaw. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate everyone's incredible work on this. Every time we get these updates, I kind of feel like we're fighting to keep the lid on a crisis from completely exploding.

[00:43:08] And we're kind of keeping the lid on it, but we want to do better than that. And, you know, those of us who spend a lot of time at Vaco with folks from other jurisdictions around the Commonwealth who have had their communities just completely devastated and hollowed out by this crisis know how serious it is and how bad it can be.

[00:43:32] And it's a testament to the work that you all are doing that we aren't at that point, but we still clearly have a lot of work to do. A question on slide three, just I wonder, and if we don't have it today, that's all right, but can we put these numbers and trends in context regionally, So especially the 22 to 23 increase that we're seeing, is that consistent across our region?

[00:44:01] You can answer that now or get that information to us. And then I just want to reiterate what Chairman McKay said about the youth medication-assisted treatment. And I know you all are as frustrated as anyone about the challenge there and encourage us.

[00:44:18] And I'm sure you already have, but I'll say it again. If there's a different solution or creative solution or half a loaf that we can get now and come back for the rest of the loaf later, I think probably this board would be very, very open to it.

[00:44:34] And I guess one question I have along those lines is our existing office-based opioid treatment program at CSB is the answer that it cannot be repurposed to serve youth because serving youth is so much different and requires additional layers of support?

[00:44:57] or is it that that system is at capacity, and if we put youth into that system, we would be bumping others who need access to it? So we're already serving youth through our current Medicated Assisted Treatment Program that we have for adults, and we have a youth component as a part of that.

[00:45:16] But these efforts are going to expand that capacity so we can take even more. And then we do have a partnership with George Mason University where we're able to bridge individuals that can't get into our services right away, where they can start medicated-assisted therapy through the George Mason partners, Mason & Partners.

[00:45:34] Okay, because I'm looking at the who can receive AMC services, and it says be age 18 or older. That's for the adult side, but we also have a... Ah, got it, okay. It just doesn't say... If I were a parent, not to criticize the website, if I were looking at this website, if i were a parent there's nothing here that tells me uh my child could access this the service here in fact i might have misread it but but others might as well it suggests otherwise so so we might want to we'll follow up on that look at that okay thank you thank you supervisor walkinshaw

[00:46:11] supervisor harry yeah i'm not going to redo what you guys talked about the residential facility that residential youth facilities are absolutely one of our biggest needs um you know to go back to your point, you know, it's getting the parents engaged and how to get the parents engaged. Back in 2018, I think I held a town hall that I had a great panel of about eight people. You were there, I think, eight people. We had like 10 people in the audience. I recognized nine of them as people that deal in the fentanyl world. And we had one scared parent who just realized that she had a

[00:46:51] problem. And one of our SROs kind of gave me the best kind of parallel to the whole opioid thing. And he said, well, it's like trying to hold a town hall on fire extinguishers and the latest and greatest fire extinguisher and getting people to come to that.

[00:47:09] Because nobody believes our house is going to burn down. Absolutely nobody. There might be one or two or people that are around the fire extinguish industry. It is really, really hard to get people, parents, to pay attention to this. And they should. They need to because people are dying.

[00:47:26] And where I'm going today, I want to thank Superintendent Reed, certainly, for making this a priority and talking to the parents of Caden Foster and holding the number of town halls they have, the chief for making this a priority within the police department, the sheriff certainly, and everybody else that's made, because it needs to be a priority because people are dying.

[00:47:47] What I always say, and that's why I think what Governor Youngkin did, actually on the notifications, a good thing. People need to know this is happening. And as you said, unless there's a crisis, nobody shows up. And we had a lot of people from Centerville attend the one on the fosters because they know them and they know the issue.

[00:48:09] The one thought I'll leave, we just need to keep doing it. I did a town hall earlier. I'm probably going to do a town hall in the next month or so. One of the suggestions I'd give all of us at this table, and I make a point of this, every community meeting I go to, I bring up fentanyl.

[00:48:28] Because you have to go to them. We have to go into our church. I know you're doing this already because we've had this conversation. We need to go into our churches, and we need to go out to where people are and educate them there because they're not going to come see us until it's too late. So that's my two cents on it.

[00:48:44] I'm going to keep working. Thanks for all the great work you guys do. Thank you, Supervisor Herity. Oh, no other questions. So let me thank the panel for their participation. Thank you for presentations. Thank you for the question and answers, and thank you for the hard work that you're undertaking to help us solve this very, very vexing problem.

[00:49:06] And remember, we're here to help you, too. So as it relates to promoting and talking about services and talking about events and programs, we can be a force multiplier for that. Thank you very much. So our next program, once we get the transition of members, will be the proposed Department of Animal Sheltering, DAS, and Control Services Consolidation.

[00:49:35] So we'll have the staff come on up, which I think will include Chief Davis, Deputy Chief Blakely, and Risa Currier, the director for the Department of Animal Sheltering.

[00:50:22] So why don't we get ready, guys? We're going to start the next presentation, so let me, I guess I'll introduce Chief Davis. Is that who I should be introducing here first, or is it Mr. Arnold? Tom Arnold, Deputy County Executive.

[00:50:40] Thank you, sir. I'll kick things off for us here this afternoon, so good afternoon, and thanks for your time today. I think today's presentation is going to be a joint presentation between the police department and the Department of Animal Sheltering to discuss the proposed consolidation of animal services within Fairfax County.

[00:50:57] As many of you were part of or aware of the 2016 organizational report, the subsequent organizational redesign that came of that, as we bring this topic to you, we're cognizant of that fact and wouldn't be before if we didn't think that the environment's changed, that it's worth coming back for a discussion for the proposed changes.

[00:51:17] I think when I look across the public safety agencies within Fairfax County, I think probably what makes me most proud of being in this role is when 20 years ago or so when you come into the public safety profession we normally focus on the emergency response and the service delivery we provide when our community members are in a time of need and as we've seen and we shift we have to give credit to the public health arena as well as the health and human services agencies really where the key is and where the win is when we can interrupt that and focus on providing services at the level of the community within the home before they need to require services.

[00:51:53] And so at the crux of it, I think the presentation today will really focus on where we believe there's another opportunity within public safety to shift our focus to a community-based model that continues to prioritize the safety of our animal population as well as our communities at the same way that it does today.

[00:52:10] So with that, I'll turn it over to Chief Davis to kick things off. Thank you, Mr. Arnold, and good afternoon to everyone. I first want to say that I've never met an animal protection police officer, and many of them are behind me, that I wasn't immediately impressed with.

[00:52:28] They're smart, they're compassionate, they're empathetic, they have real vigor for what they do, they believe in what they do, and they do a great job. So this conversation this afternoon is not about them individually or their performance on behalf of Fairfax County.

[00:52:47] It's about the right structure to go into the future. And as we consider bringing together animal sheltering and animal control, there are two different things. And in this football season, I equate an offense into defense having two different head coaches.

[00:53:07] So uniting animal sheltering and animal control under a singular structure is certainly something that's consistent with what I've been exposed to and what exists elsewhere. It doesn't mean it's necessarily better, but this conversation that we're having this afternoon is one that I took on when I got here almost three years ago.

[00:53:31] So this conversation has been going on for quite some time. It's about structure. What's the right structure to unite? And if we head into the direction of uniting animal sheltering and animal control under a singular rooftop or unity chain of command, all of us will strictly monitor and constantly evaluate the effectiveness of it and make necessary adjustments. But I thank you for hearing this, and I'll turn it over to Deputy Chief Bob Blakely.

[00:54:04] Good afternoon, Deputy Chief Bob Blakely. I oversee operations in the police department, And I, too, want to open up with the fact that the Animal Protection Police, many of whom are in this room, are certainly a group of individuals to be very proud of.

[00:54:24] The FCPD is extremely proud of the standards that we hold and the work that we perform. And we can't say that loud enough. When I look back at the conversation as the chief and the deputy county exec mentioned, really the conversations been had all the way back to 2015, which was when really an

organizational review was conducted over animal sheltering and animal control at the time because they both fell under the police department.

[00:54:53] And some decisions came out of that, which moved the shelter into its own agency. But as I read through that report, when we started or renewed this conversation more recently, I couldn't help but ignore some big takeaways there.

[00:55:09] Number one, it focused on the widening cultural gap between sheltering personnel and animal control officers, as it referred to them back then. And as you all know, post-2015 and the law enforcement profession around the nation, Law enforcement has tried and tried as hard as we can to get out of the business of non-law enforcement functions.

[00:55:32] Make no mistake about it, our Animal Protection Police is a police unit. Their mission is enforcing the laws. And they have amazing compassion and empathy with animals and pet owners. And they do all of the things we want them to do.

[00:55:48] just like our CIT officers who have extra training and take special care when dealing with people in that capacity. But they are a law enforcement unit. And that report also tied into something that we kind of point to right away, which is some of the organizational challenges that exist between the offense and the defense, as the chief put it, lie in that goal conflict. And I know that Director Courier is going to talk a little bit about the proposal and how this delivery of services can be more tailored and more unified in its approach from the onset, from the animal

[00:56:27] control portion of that. But the goal conflict between a law enforcement mission and a sheltering and caretaking mission can cause some organizational strife. And I use a couple examples to kind of drive the point home. But, you know, police officers, when we deal with things like, you know, a dog, say, if we're talking about a dog who has not been properly cared for, you know, the law enforcement mind says I have to gather evidence, seize evidence, meaning the animal, protect the animal, certainly. And we write a case report,

[00:57:06] we talk to prosecutors, and we begin preparing this case for prosecution in court. I believe a service-oriented model with a non-law enforcement first line of defense, if you will, would take on a different approach at the onset. Rather than collecting evidence and seizing evidence and preparing a criminal case with identifying a need or a gap in services and helping somebody with those services who can. Law enforcement would be negligent in their duties

[00:57:40] if they ignored a violation of law or a failure to investigate what they believe could be a criminal case, even if it's not prosecuted. So that's a goal conflict that does cause a little bit of a distraction between what are we supposed to do and what should we do. I also want to focus on another point that the report brought up in 2016, which is even more true today, which is it does mention that there's a significant amount of time needed for training and retraining all of

[00:58:15] our police officers to maintain a law enforcement certification. So all of today's animal protection police go through the full six-month police academy and then up to three months of field training afterwards to learn how to be police officers who answer 911 calls for service just like every other police officer in the county. Those officers are required to receive their 40 hours of annual in-service, go to the firearms range, attend domestic violence, lethality assessment program training, and all of the things

that our police officers are required to do, even though they will never use it and they're prohibited by policy from using it.

[00:58:53] But to maintain a certification, they're required to do those things today, and they always have been as police officers. I know Reese is going to talk a little bit about national trends and public safety trends, so I'm going to move over that particular point and talk a little bit about the consolidated model that you'll hear a little bit more about. First and foremost, the most important thing as we started down this road is how will any change impact the community, the animal community,

[00:59:28] our residents, and the answer is very little to none. The animal control officer model under Virginia law is capable of performing all of the duties and responsibilities that today's animal protection police can perform. Now, there's some legal hurdles, if you will, which I can briefly describe and happy to answer detailed questions on. But a good for instance would be, and to clarify, an animal control officer can enforce all of Virginia's animal control laws as it pertains to domesticated animals running at large and rabies vaccinations and county ordinances pertaining to all of these things.

[01:00:07] They can write summonses. They can prepare search warrants, although they can't swear them out. They can prepare arrest warrant documentation, but they can't serve the arrest warrant. Really, that's our model today. So if an animal protection police officer today discovered what was called in as a dogfighting enterprise and were to arrive on scene and believe that, in fact, there was a dogfighting enterprise going on, they would immediately call their supervisor, who would immediately call for FCPD detectives to come down and investigate the potential organized crime component of that. And we would

[01:00:44] assist and oftentimes take lead. Our special investigations unit worked a puppy mill case most recently because of the complexities involved in the financial crime aspect of that piece. But we do it together, just like our co-responder officers work with the mental health clinicians, just like we've worked successfully in juvenile diversion programs and so many others that I can give an example.

[01:01:10] So this isn't a divorce in the relationship between FCPD and our animal control. It's an alignment under DAS where FCPD will always be a partner, as we are to all county agencies in the pursuit of justice.

[01:01:31] lastly uh the last slide i'll cover and turn it over to uh resa is a little bit about what we're talking about in calls for service and and how they would be impacted so that's just this slide here shows the general number of calls for service that come into the department of public safety communications on an annual basis for animal related calls calls that would be handled by today's animal protection police and this proposal nothing would change with that our residents would still call the Department of Public Safety Communications, either through the non-emergency number or 911, and they would still dispatch animal control officers to respond to the scenes

[01:02:11] of these events. And in the very few cases that police were needed to assist, police would then be added to that call, just as we are today. An example, a dog attacking a person in any place in our county. Police are dispatched and respond priority. And animal control officers and animal Protection Police would be dispatched just the same to come and assist and follow up and perform their role.

[01:02:36] So the things that we do today would very much be what we do tomorrow. Where the change happens is where Risa's going to pick up here, which is when animals that are in PD custody come to the point of the shelter and what happens beyond that point.

[01:02:52] So I'll turn the presentation over to Director Currier to finish this. Good afternoon, Chairman Les, Chairman McKay, and members of the board.

[01:03:09] Thank you for the opportunity to share our proposal to enhance animal services in Fairfax County. Before I discuss our proposal, I'd like to share a few highlights from our work last year. In 2023, we experienced more than a 25% increase in animals coming into our care over the previous year.

[01:03:31] Many of the animals that came through our doors have complex medical and behavioral needs that required additional resources and specialized care. Despite these challenges, the Fairfax County Animal Shelter has never turned an animal away in need, and our commitment to providing the highest quality of care has not wavered.

[01:03:51] Last year, we opened our second campus in Lorton. We grew our volunteer and foster team, and we partnered with new community organizations throughout the county to address the most difficult issues facing animals and the people who love them.

[01:04:08] And we increased our live release rate to 93%, touching the lives of nearly 7,000 animals in our community. Fairfax County is presented with a challenge and an opportunity.

[01:04:26] The Fairfax County Animal Shelter continues to operate over capacity, even with two shelters and additional staff. The influx of animals coming into the shelter isn't a problem that we can address alone. You can see from the chart, or maybe you can't see, sorry about that, that nearly 40% of the animals entering the shelter are brought in by the Animal Protection Police Unit.

[01:04:52] The Animal Protection Police serves as the public face to our community of our animal services. They're the boots on the ground, but their mission is narrow. They're focused primarily on enforcement. Dogs and cats do not surrender themselves to the shelter.

[01:05:10] Data shows that nearly 75% of animals come into the shelter for human reasons, ranging from a lack of access to veterinary care and lack of pet-friendly housing. Because we have two separate agencies with two different missions providing animal services, we're missing key opportunities to connect our residents with the services from the shelter that could support families staying together with their pets.

[01:05:38] We're missing opportunities to reunite stray animals with their owners in the field from lack of utilizing technology and best practices such as microchip scanners. And we're missing the opportunity to prevent the unnecessary impoundment of animals.

[01:05:55] Having these two services divided has been fraught with challenges for decades, and I understand the board has some fatigue in hearing about these challenges. So I appreciate the vision and leadership of the Deputy County Executive, Tom Arnold, and also the partnership of Chief Davis and Deputy Chief Davis in developing solutions to these longstanding challenges that position our animal services for excellence now into the future.

[01:06:25] I also want to note the attendance of Supervisor Michael Fry, who has been excellent counsel in developing this proposal over the last few years. My presentation will address the following benefits of uniting animal care and control.

[01:06:42] First, animal services is a highly specialized and technical field. Creating one department focused on providing these services ensures we're embracing industry best practices. Second, the model enhances the health and safety of our community.

[01:07:00] And third, the model is in direct alignment with One Fairfax and our county's equity goals. Oh, perfect. To my first point, the animal welfare industry has made great strides in the last decade in how we serve families with pets.

[01:07:17] Based on my experience working in a leadership position at the Humane Society of the United States, I had the opportunity to interface with high-performing animal care and control agencies throughout the country. And a commonality is that jurisdictions nationwide recognize that the public is best protected and served by a consolidated approach to animal services that engenders compliance through a tiered enforcement model and is based on community engagement. The consolidated approach to animal services has worked successfully for decades in all of our neighboring jurisdictions, including

[01:07:55] the City of Alexandria, Arlington County, Prince William County, Loudoun County, the District of Columbia, Montgomery County, and most major metropolitan areas nationwide. The proposal to unify services will enable us to embrace a coordinated regional approach to animal welfare because we will be in alignment with the practices of all of our neighboring jurisdictions.

[01:08:25] The National Animal Care and Control Association, which is recognized as the premier certification Agency for Animal Control Officers, recently stated, NACA believes that by unifying animal sheltering and animal control under the same leadership, agencies can foster a more comprehensive and impactful approach to animal welfare, achieve more positive outcomes, and make a lasting impact to the lives of animals and the people who care for them. The full NACA statement recommending a unified approach to animal services was provided to each of you as a reference.

[01:09:04] Jurisdictions that have recently moved to a consolidated model report significant benefits, including increased compliance rates, decreased shelter intake, and a trusting community. As an example, in 2019, the city of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, fully transitioned from sworn police officers enforcing animal protection laws to a consolidated model with animal control officers operating under the shelter leadership. Charlotte Mecklenburg Animal Services serves 1.2

[01:09:37] million residents. They respond to 26,000 calls annually, and they cited the following advantages of the transition. Easier recruitment of animal control officers, alleviation of police shortages, cost savings, increased efficiencies, higher conviction rates for serious crimes against animals and a stronger relationships with their community. Second, the safety of our community is

[01:10:12] always our top priority. Most emergency calls for animal services are requests for assistance with injured, ill, or orphaned or stray animals. These requests for assistance are more appropriately handled by an animal control officer. Animal control officers or ACOs have the power to fully enforce state and local codes, as Deputy Chief Blakely mentioned. So they can do all of the things, investigate animal bites, enforce rabies control, investigate cruelty and neglect. Their

[01:10:48] scope of authority is almost identical to the Animal Protection Police. ACOs in our neighboring jurisdiction and around the country successfully lead complex cruelty investigations. They obtain search warrants. They seize animals. They appear in court. And they effectively partner with local, state, and federal governments to ensure that they can protect communities, hold those who harm animals accountable, and ensure justice. Wildlife management is a top priority under our proposal. Northern Virginia is experiencing a 40 percent decline in licensed wildlife rehabilitators.

[01:11:28] Yet, many of our calls for service are for injured, ill, or orphan wildlife, and we depend on these rehabilitators. Under our proposed model, we will continue to prioritize the placement of wildlife with a licensed rehabilitator, and we're also going to invest in the growth of our county's support for wildlife rehabilitation to increase the sustainability of this kind of critical service.

[01:11:55] We will also work with the Humane Society of the United States Wild Neighbors Program, the Wildlife Center of Virginia, and the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources to ensure our officers are embracing industry best practices for capture, rescue, rehabilitation, and euthanasia of wildlife, understanding the intersectionality of community, pet, and wildlife health and well-being. Under this proposal, we will oversee the county's deer management program and ensure continuity in the program's mission of protecting the health and safety of humans, conserving

[01:12:32] biodiversity and maintaining healthy herds. My final point is this proposed approach is in alignment with the One Fairfax policy.

[01:12:48] Our recommendation for a harmonized animal services will ensure consideration is given to the impact of systemic poverty and structural inequality on pet ownership. Fairfax County police officers do an outstanding job building positive relationships with our community, but we understand and acknowledge that having sworn law enforcement serve as the face of our county's animal services acts as a barrier to accessing our services for some of our residents.

[01:13:21] Researchers at the University of Denver have found that an emphasis on enforcement and punishment in animal control services has disproportionately negative impacts on low-income communities, particularly people of color, resulting in higher confiscation, relinquishment, euthanasia rates, and extended lengths of stay in animal shelters. Our Fairfax County Human Social Services colleagues address similar welfare concerns through the provision of

[01:13:55] resources such as education, food, housing support that are provided by social workers as opposed to law enforcement officers. Research from human social services systems demonstrates that models that focus on supportive interventions are more effective at creating positive and sustained outcomes than punitive approaches. This type of proactive safety net approach to animal services is successfully utilized by animal control officers in all of our neighboring

[01:14:32] jurisdictions and throughout the country with reports of better outcomes for pets in historically underserved communities. Under our proposed approach, ACOs will connect pet owners with a range of shelter services including free pet food and supplies, the Pet Haven program for victims of domestic abuse, free and low-cost veterinary care, and many more. We believe the cost savings from fewer enforcement-related impoundments will help offset the cost of new services we hope to

[01:15:08] offer. It is important to note that this proposed model does not replace enforcement for animal cruelty and neglect. Instead, our proposal encourages consideration of a diverse range of solutions, addressing the root cause of animal welfare issues while keeping the animal with their family before the consideration of punitive measures. This is a critical and necessary shift as so many Fairfax County families are struggling to access and afford basic services for their pets.

[01:15:47] Finally, and most importantly, we have worked to develop a proposed organizational structure that positions us for success at present and into the future by creating stability, increased opportunity, and upward mobility for ACOs. The chief ACO will replace the APP captain, which is a rotational assignment.

In my two-year tenure, there have been four captains, which has resulted in frustration of operations for APP and the animal shelter. The chief ACO

[01:16:26] will provide consistency and lead the ACOs in embracing industry best practices. The new organizational structure will create opportunities for specialization, advanced training, and growth for all officers and staff. Quickly, just transitioning to what the next steps would be.

[01:16:49] Obviously, this will be in the county executive's advertised budget coming out in February and then through the budget process is where the board would make the decision of whether you would agree to permit us to continue on with this reorganization. If you would allow that or approve that, then we would begin the transition, which would, of course, involve the conversations with the Animal Protection Police Officer staff.

[01:17:09] As we know and has been mentioned, that's the single biggest priority at this point would be with the approval. This would be working with the staff to ensure a transition of where they would go from whether they went to the police department, stayed as an animal control officer, or took another avenue.

[01:17:25] we would then hire the chief animal control officer and begin building the transition team with the expectation that this transition would take probably 18 to 24 months to ensure that we we get it right and we do not see a lack of a lack of services or any any issues with safety with regard to the transition so with that that concludes our presentation okay thank you very much one more thing Tom we just wanted to finally share oh sure the heart of our work is the animals and and of course the families that love them and here's

[01:18:02] just a few highlights oh there we go perfect thank you very much for that

[01:18:53] presentation and I want to also acknowledge the way that Chief Davis started the meeting, and I think also started by Deputy Chief Blakely, to acknowledge the hard work of the APPOs and their service here, and that's exceptional.

[01:19:11] And I'll also make the point that I think some have described it as a gold standard, and that the decision that we are pursuing here is more of a decision to bring both the animal sheltering and animal control into one place, just to unify it, to make it housed in one facility, and I know that the expectation is in doing that we're going to have a combination of things, and I think you alluded to some of the cost savings.

[01:19:42] It might be helpful if you could just talk a little bit about that in terms of what you anticipate, because I don't think we got a lot of discussion on the cost savings, and then second, you talked about some expanded services, and I know of the services that you have provided in the community as it relates to you know pet food and supplies and also veterinary services those are exceptional because we've seen hundreds and hundreds of people wait in the cold wait in long lines for those services and we know that they're needed so help me understand cost and then help me understand expanded services i can cover the cost part of

[01:20:19] it that's largely through the personnel savings cost associated with what the salaries of a civilian ACO would be versus an APPO and then of course the the training aspect given that it's a training time is not required to go to the law enforcement Academy and director courier can cover the services yeah so animal control officers still go through a required training through the Commonwealth of Virginia

that is required through ACOs but yes they wouldn't be going through the police academy any longer. So in terms of expansion of services, you know, we see in our neighboring

[01:20:55] jurisdictions that their animal control officers successfully connect residents because they are out already in the community and they are responding to calls with residents in need. And so they are able to connect the services of the shelter with those residents.

[01:21:14] And so that alleviates on occasion the need to impound the animal, which we are finding, you know, impoundment and caring for the animal in a shelter environment is very expensive versus providing services, whether it's free or low-cost veterinary care or pet food or whatever supportive services that we need to provide in the home environment.

[01:21:37] And same with the diversion programs. You know, we're finding the incarceration of humans, again, very expensive, just like having animals in an institutional environment. So providing those services at the offset and many residents just having that access to the education and knowledge and the services, you can remedy the issue before it progresses into something that requires enforcement.

[01:22:02] Okay, that's helpful. And then just so I'm clear on this, I'm assuming that even though they're not going to the academy, they're still going to be getting some of those specialized trainings that we have been, you know, asking our current police officers to receive. So ICAT, ABLE, and maybe even others, just out of curiosity.

[01:22:20] So, Mr. Chairman, certainly a lot of the training that we've undertaken in the last couple plus years is transferable to a lot of other tentacles associated with law enforcement and animal control officers will be one of those.

[01:22:36] Okay, that's perfect. And then just for clarification, there's one thing that I thought was kind of interesting when I was looking through your materials is you talked about the number of animals that come from the Richmond Highway corridor, and it's three times the number of any other place in the county.

[01:22:55] So that's kind of stark and specific. So just thinking, can you help me understand why that is occurring? And then what are we doing, I guess, to try to get that number down? Meaning making sure that we don't have so many coming from one geography in Fairfax County.

[01:23:13] Well, animals coming from the Richmond Highway Corridor, as you noted, you know, we do see elevated numbers. And they're coming from a variety of reasons. astrays we're finding that um once animals come from richmond highway astrays it's often a challenge to to reconnect them um their reunition their the rate of reuniting um families is is um lower than in some other areas of the county and maybe that's because of lack of access to transportation to come all the way to the shelter and retrieve that animal and that's why we are

[01:23:47] proposing stronger programs like those offered in our neighboring jurisdictions focus on return to home in the field. So you'd be utilizing identifiers such as pet collars, identifications, microchip scanners to try to focus on reuniting that animal before bringing it to the shelter so you reduce the number of animals coming from areas where people really focus on public transportation and may not be able to retrieve their animal. We also see that there's greater need. There's areas of that community where they may not be able to access some of the

[01:24:23] services that they need to have their pet. And so we, as you know, we've really increased our focus, but we can do so much more. Yes. Thank you very much. So with that, let me start with my colleagues on this end. Oh, sorry, Mr. Chairman. Sorry, sorry, Mr. thank you um first i i want to start by thanking you for the presentation and i want to thank supervisor fry for being involved in this because there are a few people in the room who have been on this roller coaster for a lot of years and i will just say that the uncertainty and the back

[01:24:57] and forth on this um hasn't served anyone well and so we need to make a decision cement it uh and move on uh because it has not been it has not been the healthiest situation as a result of that i also want to thank you for making this a part of the budget process because that allows us to not only get this presentation but also to hear from the community and to be able to make the most informed decision that we can and hopefully a final decision so that we're not back at this table having the same conversation again and one of us is sitting where Mike Fry is sitting now thinking, I can't believe we're having this

[01:25:35] conversation again. And so that is important. That fatigue piece that was acknowledged, it's real. And so I appreciate that. And you've given us a lot of good information here to consider. Two questions that I have specifically deal with, one, you mentioned the salary piece and that that was savings generated from the delta between today's positions and requirements under today's regime and what they would be if we made this change in the future.

[01:26:07] And I guess I'm trying to reconcile that with the commitment to the current members. So for a period of time here, we're going to have two tiers if we were to move forward with this. And I just want to make sure we've given thought through how those different tiers of, in essence, People doing the same thing but getting different salaries are going to work together.

[01:26:26] And then the second question directly related to that is what do you foresee or what has the data shown in other jurisdictions? Mecklenburg maybe is an example that was used where this transition has happened in terms of ability to recruit.

[01:26:42] In other words, are there more people out there looking to get involved in animal control that have specialty based on that, don't want to be police officers, or is the inverse true? and how will this affect our long-term recruiting strategies? Sure, and that's a great point.

[01:26:58] When we initially looked at this, we thought that the full implementation, when we would have a 100% civilian-based model that didn't involve any of the APPOs transitioning over, would be around $1 million for the personnel cost. But to the chairman's point, depending on the number of animal protection police officers that would ladder all over, that cost savings would shrink until, through attrition, they were gone through retirement.

[01:27:23] But I think that, you know, when we look at that, we would not know that final answer until we pulled the current workforce when they left. From a retirement standpoint, they'd be able to stay in their retirement system that they're in or transfer over.

[01:27:38] As far as the recruitment and retention, I think this, and I'd let Risa speak to this, but I think largely what our view of this would be similar to a previous conversation when we talked about firing EMS and the idea that if we were able to hire single-role EMS providers, would that help because not everybody wants to be a firefighter and an EMT?

[01:27:54] I think that holds true here where you have a population of a workforce that would like to serve the animal control area, but they don't necessarily want to be a sworn law enforcement officer. So from the reports that we have from Charlotte, Mecklenburg, and others, they've seen increased ability in recruitment and higher numbers because there are less barriers to access.

[01:28:14] So, Risa, anything that you would add? yes um so when we met with charlotte city of charlotte mecklenburg county um they did say that um it was the recruiting process was easier for animal control officers and um during that transitionary period they had i think a third um of the of the police officers that were serving in that capacity transition to animal control officer positions and then they also had several members of the shelter staff advanced into the animal control officer position and that is

[01:28:51] something that we are very much interested in. We have members of our staff that have tried and applied to be animal protection police officers and for various reasons weren't able to meet that standard but have been exemplary staff for us and serve the community with excellence and it would be a wonderful career opportunity for them. Okay. I think that's important. And then if you have these two tiers of employees operationally, I think we just need to be cognizant of the challenges that that might present. You have people in essence doing the

[01:29:27] same job, have the same scope of responsibilities, but getting a different compensation package. And so I think we need to give some thought as a part of this transition if we have people in that position because we don't want to lose a single dedicated county employee period but particularly in this space because it is so specialized and these folks do have significant training beyond the scope of an animal patrol officer per se that we give some thought to what responsibilities those folks might have within the transition to justify that delta I mean for me the justification is we don't want to lose talented people but operationally day-to-day within the department

[01:30:06] And I just want to make sure we went down this path, that we weren't building in a built-in level of animosity and two-tier feeling within the personnel. You're completely right. I think that's where we would want to leverage the skill set and education and experience that they bring to be able to help build that new program.

[01:30:25] But, I mean, at the end of the day, there will be two people working together that potentially have differences in salaries. And I think part of the onboarding process with the civilian animal control model would be the reiteration of that and the culture that we create. I think it's something to be mindful of, and nothing I can say here today can promise that, but we would ensure, and that's a very valid point, that that would have to be addressed.

[01:30:44] Thank you, and appreciate all the information here. I mean, a lot here, detailed, precise, and important for us to know as we consider this decision. So thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Supervisor Smith? Thank you. I appreciate the presentation.

[01:31:00] I just want to ask a couple more questions about the wildlife piece, because we didn't really talk about that much. And the county's deer management program is really very important. So could you give a little more detail how this would really work in the transition? Good afternoon, Supervisor Smith.

[01:31:19] So currently, and actually in the 2015-2016 reports, they kind of tackled the same thing. Where would the wildlife management program belong? And they considered three different options. And one was leaving it in the police department, and one was leaving it inside of animal protection.

[01:31:41] I believe, you know, the way that that model turned out was that the animal protection police would be in the FCPD, so maintaining wildlife management in FCPD made a lot of sense. In this model, moving all functions into the Department of Animal Services or Sheltering Services would make it a little bit more complicated to have a wildlife biologist or naturalist positions within the police department doing herd management and things that are totally not law enforcement related. But what we do agree on is that those services have to be hand in hand. So in this

[01:32:21] transition, part of building a transition team, if we get to that point, we'll be talking about how do we implement that effectively? So there's currently an APP sergeant who runs the day-to-day functionality of like the managed hunt programs, for instance. So would that be a sworn position within the police department that liaises with DAS and the wildlife biology program to determine the answers to these questions? But I think the goal of this would be to not change the program at all and put the function to the correct positions exactly where they need to be to ensure

[01:32:57] that there's no deviation from the mission that it's currently operating on. I appreciate that, especially the piece we want to make sure that the people doing the archery are qualified to be out there, right? Right, and a little law enforcement oversight goes a long way in that area.

[01:33:14] And so there's those other pieces that get involved with it. If there's wildlife, it has to be euthanized out in the field, and how would those pieces work in this situation? Yeah, and we did research that point. We're unfamiliar or unaware of any legal obstruction that prevents civilian ACOs from performing euthanasia, just like today's APP.

[01:33:39] In fact, 20-some years ago, as a young police officer, I worked animal control overtime, and I attended a state-based class at the shelter and was certified to deliver euthanasia in the field and performed it after a one-day class.

[01:33:58] I'm sure that something is very similar, just as veterinary technicians and other folks have the ability to deliver that. And I know the county attorneys represented here as well. Those were some of the conversations we had. Field-based chemical euthanasia versus field-based firearms euthanasia.

[01:34:18] So I'm addressing more of the chemical-based. I don't have an answer for the firearm component yet, although that's certainly been part of our conversation as well. Okay. And so then there would be training if ACOs were taking care of wildlife in general.

[01:34:35] Yes, exactly. Our industry colleagues in Arlington are really setting the bar very high for the work they're doing with wildlife as animal control officers, and they are creating a wildlife rescue and rehabilitation center that they are supporting and work very much with providing guidance to state officials and others. And the chief animal control officer for Arlington is now in Canada right now presenting on their innovative methods to serve the community with wildlife. So we have

[01:35:10] a lot of partners that we can learn from. And of course, state agencies and the Virginia Wildlife Center and others that we will rely on to ensure that we're meeting industry standards and observing best practices in our field. Thank you. I think those are all important pieces we need answers too and you know especially i remember had that rabid raccoon in my backyard so we do need those things taken care of too thank you okay thank you supervisor smith so for the remaining time we're going to go till about uh 3 15 so what that means is uh i'll have to have each of you state your

[01:35:45] question and comment and we might have to provide the answers later mr harry supervisor harry well Well, with that introduction, I've kind of been brief everywhere else. I think I need a couple of seconds on this one because I do think in bottom line up front, we're stepping back from the gold standard.

[01:36:03] I'm going to start with the chief's disclosure that none of my comments here is a reflection on the great work the people at the shelter do and the volunteers. In fact, I dropped a tent off for the friends because at South County, they were out in the middle of the parking lot with no tent over their heads. So they do great work.

[01:36:20] I'm disappointed that the APPOs aren't at the table and represented in the conversation. My first question, and I'm going to go quick, is I looked at the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, VDACS, as it's known.

[01:36:35] They're reporting. That's the official place where we report shelters. Do you want to hand those down? Their numbers are a little different than the numbers presented in Chart 6. Chart 6 has, and I'll just pick wildlife, there's other discrepancies.

[01:36:52] but the big one is wildlife because it says six. And if you look at what's reported in VDACs, the number is 1,200. So I think we're going to need to – I can get that answer back later, but there's a big disprequency between the numbers reported there and what's reported in VDACs for 2023.

[01:37:09] So I don't know where, again, where that came from. Let me go to Deputy Chief Blakely's comment because I think you hit it on the head. This has been organizational strife. It's been organizational strife for years. It's worked pretty well under Dr. Diveny.

[01:37:27] She did a good job. I know she met with the second lieutenants and the APPOs every Tuesday for their roll calls. Has that been going on since our new director? Do we know? Well, Supervisor Herod, I would just say that organizational strife or cultural differences or the widening cultural gap is definitely not the reason that the proposal has come together.

[01:37:51] So I think as we sat down and worked together to collaborate on the best way to deliver animal services to the county, as it came in, the proposal you see. And that cultural gap exists in many areas. And I think to our CIT and our co-responder program, you know, it existed and we found ways to overcome it.

[01:38:12] In fact, really do great at it by our co-responder program. Yep. So that wouldn't be the reason. We can solve personnel issues and other related issues, but this is definitely the best model. Communication goes a long way to solving problems, so I would appreciate an answer to whether those meetings have been happening since Director Divinity left or whether they haven't been.

[01:38:37] Supervisor, I can answer that for you. They have not been. And I can assure the board I'm respectful of your position, and I appreciate what you have to say. this presentation is about director courier or her lack of or or her action um this is a proactive approach to looking at how we can provide better services and respectfully i would ask that you don't make this personal towards i'm not you have and you did it when we had a present we had a powerpoint presentation with you and you attacked her personally on that this has nothing to do with the great work that the apppo do nor the leadership at the animal shelter this is about service

[01:39:14] delivery so i would appreciate if you do not make direct attacks towards her okay i'm not trying to make direct attacks i'm asking whether communication is happening that's all i'm asking and that could have been from you too so i mean i'm not attacking her i'm attacking this process because has anybody in this process talked to the wildlife biologist and sat down with them and walked through we have we can respond to that okay all right good good i'm glad i'm glad can we can all right i'll keep I'll keep on my questions.

[01:39:44] Have we talked to our partners in Vienna, Fairfax City, Fort Belvoir that regularly use APP service, APPS, and what has their response been? I know you've seen the letters on the state level where this model is considered the gold standard from both Michelle Welsh, the Director of the Animal Unit, Senior Assistant Attorney General.

[01:40:08] Have we talked to our state partners as to what kind of support they get from our APPOs and whether we'll be able to continue that support in the new model? You know, I've talked to a few of our officers, and I don't ever want to speak for our officers, but many of the officers that I've talked to really don't like this because they don't want to deal with animal issues.

[01:40:39] So I think we need a little bit on here on the impact that we see, true impact, looking at the true numbers on our officers that are already, as we know, strained. And I'm not going to say a number because I'm afraid I'll hear a different number, whatever number I say.

[01:40:59] So I can get into facts if you want to. Continue your questions. And I think, you know, I think in conclusion, I think communication goes a long way. I think a lot of what we want to do under the equity lens can be done with an APPO model.

[01:41:22] And I think if you talk to the APPOs, which I have, and ask them, they're willing to go out into the community and do all these things. Yes, they have badges on, but that may be another way that we get out into the community and do community policing. I mean, it's an opportunity to do community policing.

[01:41:40] They're out to help. And we need to, as you know, that's a priority, and we need to do more of it. But I think we're stepping back from a gold standard. I think we've got a lot of work. The last one is I met with three wildlife rehabilitators.

[01:41:55] I met with them all, but they're all very nervous about this, and the whole wildlife area seems to have come together a little late on this, and I think we really need to talk to the wildlife rehabilitator community because they've got some pretty serious concerns, and I'll leave it at that.

[01:42:13] Supervisor Herity, Supervisor Alcorn. Thank you. two quick questions. First of all, slide 10 in the transition. I just want to make sure I understand APPO pay and retirement will be unaffected by the change. So basically anybody who's currently an APPO would not have a change. Pay, retirement, other benefits as well? Yes, sir. So in the collective bargaining process, when we first were talking about these conversations, we worked with county staff to really navigate option A, B, C, D, and E. And what we collectively came to was no current or every current APPO, if this were to be allowed to proceed, would have the option

[01:42:50] of staying with FCPD and becoming a gray shirt police officer with their current certification or becoming an ACO under DAS. And the county in the effects bargaining process would work with the SSPBA to walk through what that looks like. But the bottom line is no current employee who decided to go to the ACO program would suffer a loss in benefits that they currently have from retirement to salary, et cetera.

Okay. To rank? Thank you. Well, rank is dependent on a few factors, so that's not certain. Okay. Thank you. And then my other quick question, the slide,

[01:43:28] APP annual calls for service, search, and arrest. If you have the number for how many violations were issued that did not lead to arrest, and you can provide that later. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Alcorn. Supervisor Walkinshaw.

[01:43:44] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Deputy Chief Blakely, you made a statement that jumped out at me. You said the APPOs are prohibited. You went through some of the trainings that our officers go through, lab, CIT, et cetera, and you said APPOs are prohibited by policy from doing the things that those trainings would train them to do. Can you talk through that? Because I think that, I don't know that that's well understood. Yes. So Supervisor Walkinshaw, we have always kept that division separate from the police department. So we do not ask our, if an APPO

[01:44:22] is three blocks away from a robbery that is dispatched, they certainly can be a set of eyes, but we would never ask them to go to the scene, make contact with the victim and begin broadcasting lookouts or track down offenders. APPOs by policy are not allowed to conduct traffic stops if they observe minor traffic offenses. We very much have tried to kind of put that wall up to where they perform animal services rather than on the front line of police service missions. So they are fully capable under the law as a sworn police officer, but by policy and by mission,

[01:44:58] we have them very focused on performing the animal protection policing duties only. Okay, and for Director Currier, there was a previous communication where you referred to a role of humane investigators.

[01:45:17] I guess that would be an ACO that had maybe a higher level of training to investigate more serious instances of cruelty or neglect. That wasn't referenced in the presentation today, but either maybe if there's time, can you describe that with the chairman's approval or get that to us?

[01:45:36] I'm okay with either. We're way over, so if you're okay, Mr. That's fine, yeah. Mr. Walkinshaw, we'll have that sent to you if that's fine. Yep. Mr. Currier, thank you. Absolutely. Thank you very much, Supervisor Walkinshaw, Supervisor Stewart. In the interest of time, I have a number of questions that I will send to you all, and you can respond that way.

[01:45:54] But I'm obviously deeply incurred, deeply concerned, and very much focused on how do we resolve this, address this. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, on that point, if we are submitting questions, any of us, So let's handle this like a budget Q&A and make sure that we're all seeing those questions and we're all getting those answers, because obviously some people have already made up their mind here.

[01:46:18] Some of us haven't, and I'd like to make sure we're all seeing all the same information. Thank you very much, Supervisor Stork. Supervisor Palczyk, please. Thank you. Just one additional question, because we appreciate that, focused on service delivery and if the changes made, uh, holding the court officers without harm. If you could describe for us following up the difference procedurally between what happens now in calls, um, that go into the office, um, and I guess there are probably instances of whether or not a summons happens

[01:46:55] and whether or not a police, an additional police officer has to be called and what the difference would be moving to the new model so so if you look at a routine call and oh i'm sorry oh we're going to respond and write okay that's okay go ahead we'll send all the responses from here and the

questions will go to tom arnold yes are you writing them down by the way yes yeah okay just making sure i just thought about that for a second all right just making sure you got them okay thank you any more supervisor palchak thank you very much supervisor jimenez we'll put this

[01:47:33] in writing, but I just want to know what outreach efforts aside from the website will be made to inform the community of these potential changes. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Jimenez. And Supervisor Beerman, please. Sorry. That's my name.

[01:47:50] So a couple quick comments and follow-up questions. One thing that I think is really interesting about this discussion, I know Deputy Chief Blakely, you said that it's not all about the widening cultural gap is the reason that we're doing this but on page three of the 2016 uh animal services division organizational review uh the first second paragraph starts with recent years have seen a widening cultural divide between animal control and the animal shelter same issue at least as we framed it roughly eight years ago um so the question is sort of what has changed um and i'll

[01:48:30] note that that's how Deputy County Executive Tom Arnold started, Mr. Arnold, you know Arnold, started this entire discussion was things that had changed. And the first thing that changed was we're focusing on the widening cultural gap, which doesn't seem to actually be a change.

[01:48:49] In organizational challenges and goal conflicts seem to be in this old document as well. So it seems like we're back almost at square one to some degree, and I think we need to be careful about that. I also will say as a general question, I do think that there is a, speaking of widening gaps, between the individual animal police protection officers right now, their perception of how often they are put in risky situations versus the perception in this document.

[01:49:24] know, I think their question is it's not just about custodial arrests. It's not just about cases involving search warrants. Any one of these animal cruelty cases could involve putting themselves in a position of risk. So a question that I'd like to understand a little bit better is how often non-animal protection police officers are called into animal protection police officer things so in other words if the if the point is then a consolidated model uh you know animal protection police officers at one point are already pulling in fcpd in general my question is how often is that happening and how often would that change because i think that's really

[01:50:03] important for understanding the actual pricing of this uh of this change i will only end since i was a little a little tough on in one direction i'll go tough in the other i guess uh deputy chief Blakely, I think you also hit the nail on the head that we are in the business these days of trying to get law enforcement out of the non-law enforcement business to the degree we can.

[01:50:25] And the question that does arise goes in the opposite direction. At one point on one of your slides here, you say that most of the calls involve minor code violations or wouldn't necessarily involve that risk. So I do want to hear more about that. But the final point is simply, Director Currier, your spoken statement in some ways was better than your PowerPoint.

[01:50:53] There were references to a University of Denver study, for instance, talking about why you believe that the non-law enforcement model has better outcomes. I didn't see that sent around. Would love to have that sent around so that we can continue to make this question.

[01:51:09] And I spoke as fast as possible. Thank you very much, Supervisor Bierman. So to the staff for the presentation here this afternoon, thank you all for your time and attention, and we will continue this

through the budget process, as the Chairman said.

[01:51:26] There will be opportunities for public comments, and there will be opportunities for us to address these issues in that process. So with that, our meeting of security and public safety is adjourned. Thank you.