



# PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

4:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Public Safety Committee will meet to hear an update on the city's implementation of the HEART proposal as part of an alternative public safety response.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Quinton Zondervan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dennis J. Carlone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE - NOVEMBER 17, 2021**

**TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Mr. Clerk:** I- t- and you have a quorum.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. I will call the Meeting to order-call this Meeting of the Public Safety Committee to order. The call of the Meeting is to receive an update on the City's implementation of the HEART Proposal as part of an Alter- Alternative Public Safety Response. Pursuant Chapter 20 of the Act of 2021 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, the City has authorized the use of remote participation at Meetings- Meetings of the City Council. To watch the Meeting, please tune in to Channel 22 or visit the Open Meeting Portal on the City's website. Today's Meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format. Members of the public may participate remotely or physically appear in the chamber to provide Public Comment. If you would like to provide Public Comment, please go to [cambridgema.gov/public-comment](http://cambridgema.gov/public-comment) to sign up. We will not allow any additional Public Comment sign up after 4:30 p.m. Mr. Clerk, please take a roll of the members present.

**Mr. Clerk:** Councillor Carlone.

**Dennis J. Carlone:** Present.

**Mr. Clerk:** Present. Vice Mayor Mallon.

**Alanna M. Mallon:** Present.

**Mr. Clerk:** Present. Councillor McGovern.

**Marc C. McGovern:** Present and audible.

**Mr. Clerk:** Present. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. Absent. Councillor Zondervan.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Present and audible.

**Mr. Clerk:** There are four members present.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** With that... thank you, Mr. Clerk. And with that, all of today's votes will be by roll call. Uh, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler did alert me that he would not be able to attend today. So, I'll make some brief opening remarks, and then we will have a presentation from the City. So, first, I would like to thank everyone for being here today. Um, we are starting a new chapter in a really important conversation that our City is having about providing true community safety, and providing alternatives to policing and the carceral systems operating our City that perpetuate injustice and oppression. It's a difficult conversation and very personal for many of us. I want to appeal to everyone present to please keep our focus on the subject and to avoid personalities as it says in Robert's Rules. My office has been working very closely with members of the community on the design of an alternative crisis response known as HEART for the past year or so. HEART stands for Holistic Emergency Alternative Response Team. We've had several working meetings in this Committee over the past year to learn from outside experts, dig into the details of a very complex subject, and ensure that the public remains involved as the HEART Proposal takes shape. I'm

very proud of the work we've done so far. It's not the way our Government usually works, but I believe it is the way our Government should work. With- as our Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley says, the people closest to the pain, closest to the power. In parallel, the City has been working on creating a new Department of Community Safety based on the recommendations of the City Manager's Task Force. And the City has been meeting with the HEART team to discuss how these proposals can complement each other. This hearing is the first time that we'll hear about both proposals, the ways in which they are similar, and ways in which they are different. This is an important step to begin our discussion on how the Committee and the Council will move forward on this very important topic. This will, of course, take some time, and we only have two hours tonight. The City's presentation will be about 45 minutes, and we have a lot of people signed up in Public Comment. We also want to have some time for clarifying questions on the City's presentation. Because of these time constraints, the HEART presenters have graciously agreed to present when we next convene- convene the Committee. I want to thank the HEART panel for all the time they spent preparing for this moment, and we all recognize the importance of hearing from them in full. My suggestion is that we recess this Meeting after Public Comment concludes, and I will work with the Committee, the Clerk, and the City Staff to find another time to continue this Meeting in the next few weeks so we can hear the HEART presentation, and then have a full discussion as a Committee on how to proceed. Since we do have a packed and very tight Agenda today, I'm going to ask members of the Committee to limit their questions to simple clarifying questions only after we've heard the City presentation, that we can hopefully get through Public Comment before 6 p.m. I'm also going to ask members of the public to try to avoid repeating things others have already said. If we keep things moving, we should be able to get through the City's presentation and Public Comment tonight. It's important to make sure that we hear from every member of the public, so I am going to keep things moving tonight. Again, thank you, and at this point I'll hand it over to the City Manager and staff to make that presentation.

**Louis A. DePasquale:** Tha- thank you, and good afternoon, everybody. I'm really pleased to be here, and looking forward to today's discussion. As you know, Cambridge Police Department is widely recognized as a leader in 21st century policing and procedural justice. Cambridge Police Department is at the forefront on ensuring policing is conducted fairly and equitably. And I believe that the dedication and performance of the men and women of our Cambridge Police Department deliver every day are second to none. And I'm in- extremely proud of the City's Department's work. And I am proud of our Police Commissioner, Commissioner Elow, who is in full support and actively engaged in the efforts to reimagine the role of policing in Cambridge and to create an Alternative Public Safety Response. I am joined by Commissioner Elow, ECC Director Christina Giacobbe, and Assistant City Manager for Human Services Ellen Semonoff. They are presenting to you and the public the City's Proposal for Alternative Public Safety Response and the creation of a new Department of Community Safety. I want to thank Councillor Simmons and Councillor McGovern for co-Chairing the City's Task Force to reimagine Public Safety. The Task Force released a series of

recommendations in May. Its work has assisted the City in shaping many of the recommendations you will hear during our presentation. I want to thank the members of the Task Force for their dedication and thoughtful work. We know that we must look at policing differently. We also know that we can provide additional services that go over and above what we do today. I want to be clear that the City and the Police Department are in complete agreement on the need to create a new and separate Department of Community Safety and Alternative Public Safety Response Program. We believe that th- that approach we are recommending will allow us to continue supporting our most vulnerable population through interventions rooted in harm reduction and trauma-informed principles. By establishing a Department of Community Safety, we will be positioned to provide a civilian response that expands and reimagines services outside the criminal justice systems. For many months, City Staff and I have been in collaborative discussions with representatives from The Black Response on the HEART Proposal. We have been seeking ways to partner with them in this crucial work. Today, you will hear about our proposal to make an Alternative Public Safety Response a reality in Cambridge. I want to thank The Black Response team, and especially Stephanie, for its continued engagement since we started in June. Collaboration with outside partners is an essential aspect of this work and a key to the City's mission of creating a safe and healthy City for all Cambridge residents. As you listen to our presentation today, you will hear how we envision The Black Response/HEART Team as a key partner in providing this service. I look forward to discussion with the members of the City Council following our presentation. Thank you, and I will now turn it over to Ellen and Commissioner Elow, who will begin the presentation by speaking of our history and collaborations with community programs and Community Safety. Thank you.

**Christina Giacobbe:** Next slide.

**Ellen Semonoff:** Thank you, Mr. Manager. The City of Cambridge has been partnering with com-...

**Christina Giacobbe:** Next slide.

**Ellen Semonoff:** ... community-based non-profits in the delivery of services and has been funding innovative community-oriented programs that aim to strengthen the community, work collaboratively with community partners and with the communities we serve. The City, through our Department, often is in a position where we are both a program operator as well as a funder of community programs whose delivery may be of the same services or of complementary services. These partnerships allow for a breadth of services, and allow residents to be served by different providers, and by providers who may focus deeply in their neighborhoods or on a particular demographic group of residents. Next slide, please. In the last year, there has been a significant expansion of financial support and partnership with community providers in areas where services are often most appropriately delivered by community agencies. Let me just give you a few examples. Um, the funding and partnership with Friday Night Hype. The Council is very aware of this program. It serves middle school youth, with an emphasis on

BIPOC youth, who are served by committed adults, many of whom they know, and by community mentors. The focus is on building community and resiliency. Our funding and partnership with My Brother's Keeper for Summer Programs for the last two years. The City has partnered and funded this youth employment and life skills program for youth 15 to 19 that were recruited by My Brother's Keepers and other partners. This past summer, we funded The Black Response for an innovative youth program. We've also been funding recently housing navigators for community shelters so that those who are working most closely with our unhoused residents are known to them. And the shelters choose their own navigators to ensure that their unhoused members are familiar with the people serving them and are best served. We've been funding housing search and stabilization services with community agencies who have been working for a long time with our unhoused residents. Funding to keep the youth shelter open, partnership and funding in creating the outdoor showers in Harvard Square on Harvard property. And when that program needed to end, we worked with local shelter provider, um, to actually move the shower services, and the City funds them, indoors. It's actually operated by one shelter in another shelter space in a deep collaboration there. And finally, partnership and funding to expand home delivery of food to the residents of subsidized housing developments so that healthy food could be available on a regular basis, in addition to people being able to seek out services through the food pantries. Thank you very much.

**Christina Giacobbe:** Next slide.

**Christine Elow:** So, the Police Department, um, for the past decade, made a huge shift in our approaches to at-risk and vulnerable populations, specifically our youth, senior citizens, people who are unhoused, people struggling with mental illness and addiction... also, young people who have been involved in gun violence and survivors of domestic violence. And this is a list of the programs and initiatives that we have been involved in. Our approach is really to divert and deflect vulnerable populations in the City who are at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system. Our goal is to connect people to supports and services whenever possible to divert them away from the criminal justice system. Next slide. So, uh, really, for the past decade, we've been trying to look at policing differently, or to reimagine policing. And we also recognize that many people do not see the police as a resource or a place that they would go for- to- go to for help. Um, the new Community Safety Department that's being proposed today will really allow our City to reach more of our community members, improve coordination and service provision to our most vulnerable. And there's an opportunity for us to collaborate on cases. Uh, we see people at different levels of crisis. And working together with the Clinical Support Unit, our outreach officers, service providers. Um, in our new Public Safety Response, we can have a more complete wraparound approach, uh, to respond to people in crisis. Really, preventing people from going into crisis, intervene early when people are experiencing crisis. Um, we have demonstrated some successes in, uh, in our preventative work, uh, within the Police Department. We've increased our young div- uh, d- uh, young adult diversions by over, uh, 50%. We've had a 75%

reduction in juvenile arrests. Um, over the past three years, w- we have been able to refer 50 cases out of Criminal Court and into Community Court, which serves, um, our mental health and unhoused population. Uh, in our Community Service Unit, um, social workers manage over 100 cases a year and connect our most vulnerable to services and supports. Um, our... I'm sorry. Our, uh, Clinical Support Unit helps to advocate for vulnerable populations who have been marginalized by systems to improve their access to services and supports rather than to send them to jail. Um, and also, right now, we're in, uh, a review of a lot of our programs, partnering with, um, the Thought Partner Project, just looking at our program, seeing where we can improve, um, and add additional resources to serve people, uh, more extensively. Thank you.

**Christina Giacobbe:** Next slide. So, I'm just going to, uh, review the Cambridge Alternative Public Safety Response Proposal and how we got here. Um, in June of 2020, the City Council passed a Policy Order requesting research into an unarmed Alternative Emergency Response Program for Cambridge. And in February, the City Manager convened a Task Force to develop a set of recommendations speaking to the Policy-stated goals. In May of 2021, the City Manager's Task Force published the report from the Public Safety Task Force outlining the recommendations. And in July, the City began finalizing its program proposal and outlined how key community partnerships would need to be incorporated. Next slide. The City Manager's Task Force, Chaired by Councillor Simmons and Councillor McGovern, developed recommendations through a lengthy process, hearing from many service providers, stakeholders, and reviewing alternative response programs from across the continent. The following slides outline some of the program models reviewed as part of this process. Next slide. Some of the programs most familiar with is CAHOOTS, probably one of the most long-standing, um, programs of this nature. Uh, we looked at Reach Out Response Network out of Toronto, Canada, Mobile Crisis Intervention Teams out of Canada, RIGHT Care out of Dallas, Texas, Expanded Mobile Crisis Teams out of Austin, Mobile Crisis Services in Nashville, Crisis Response Units out of Olympia, Washington, Familiar Faces out of Olympia, Washington... next slide. And some remaining, um, additional ones, Street Crisis Response Team out of San Francisco, MACRO out of Oakland, California. Wellness Winnie out of Denver, and, um, Department of Mental Health Consolidated 911 Centers out of Charleston, South Carolina, as well as various violence prevention programs, including CURE Violence Global, Public Health approach to gun violence. The recommendations by the Task Force, um, informed by these programs were used to develop the proposed Cambridge Department of Community Safety and Alternative Public Safety Response Program. The above programs reviewed do not use the dispatch model in which HEART proposes, and this is one of the major differences in our program proposal. Next slide. The City of Cambridge will be establishing a new Cambridge Department of Community Safety. This will be staffed with trained civilians to provide key community services and programs targeted at our most vulnerable populations. The new department would initially be focused on behavioral health crisis response services and violence prevention. However, the department will also support other key community services.

Providing behavioral health crisis response services through the Cambridge Alternative Public Safety Response Program, providing a program that will be integrated into Public Safety systems through ECC to ensure continuum of patient care, promote community violence prevention and intervention services, as well as collaborating with other community organizations to support key services.

Next slide. The Cambridge Response Program is an evidence-informed program that aims to provide a skilled and compassionate response to nonviolent calls involving behavioral health, substance use, and homelessness. The Cambridge Alternative Public Safety Response is rooted in harm reduction and trauma-informed care principles and is grounded in the belief that all people deserve respect, autonomy, dignity and opportunity. The target population for the program are unhoused individuals of all ages, individuals experiencing mental health crisis, addiction, substance use, and individuals at risk.

Next slide. The program will involve specialized field teams who will serve as the primary responders to calls received through Emergency Communications. The medical protocol currently being utilized by the ECC staff provides assurances that patient care will not be compromised. A lot of times, a call may come in as one thing, and it turns into something else. And having, um, skilled professionals who are able to pivot to the appropriate response really saves times and lives in the field. The field teams will then employ their training and lived experiences to provide immediate support to individuals in crisis. And some initial program staffing model includes six positions, which is a Director, a Program Coordinator, two Crisis Response Specialists, and Peer Support Specialists. And focusing just a minute on the Peer Support Specialists, those are individuals that have lived experiences or have experienced situations similar to the services that we're going to provide.

Next slide. The Cambridge Alternative Public Safety Response Program, again, will provide an alternative response model for nonviolent behavioral health crises. So, these are the calls that, um, typically, we might send an ambulance to, that now will be a alternative response model that will be sent. Um, they'll be coordinated through ECC, and they'll consist of the specialized civilian field teams, including one Crisis Response Specialist and a Peer Support Specialist that will go out together as the primary response to these calls, employing their training and lived experiences. They'll also provide immediate support to individuals in crisis.

Next slide. So, how does this work? So, initially, an individual experiencing or witnessing a crisis calls 911. Emergency Telecommunication Dispatcher answers the phone and identifies that this is a call appropriate for a- uh, Cambridge Alternative Response. They will then r- uh, dispatch a response team to the scene. And this will be done instead of Police, Fire, or traditional EMS.

Next slide. The response will include the Alternative Response Team members, um, again, using their combined knowledge and lived experiences to assess the situation, work with the individual in crisis, and decide what happens next. That's a collaborative process with the individual experiencing the crisis and the individuals who are responding with those lived experiences and expertise. If additional emergency services are needed for support or safety, field teams are integrated into Emergency Communications to get additional help. Also, if additional aftercare is needed, or immediate aftercare on scene, uh, the team



would work with community partners such as HEART to respond. The support piece of the Alternative Response Program includes the team using their knowledge of community resources to connect those individuals in crisis with the digital additional services. We envision HEART playing a key role in the delivery of mutual aid services, aftercare, conflict resolution, coordination of resources, case management, among others. The City hopes to have HEART involved in the response and support model that we're proposing today. Next slide. Collaboration. The City has had additional discussions with several community resources regarding some of these key services that are needed, um, including The Black Response and the HEART Proposal, the Thought Partner Project, ROCA, HUB, and Yablo Consulting. Partnerships with community-based organizations like these are essential in pursuit of creating a network of meaningful support for our community and an alternative response model that will serve our communities. Next slide. Although the Cambridge Alternative Public Safety Response Program seeks to provide these immediate crisis response(sic), this is only one component of the alternative response system. Collaboration with outside partners is an essential piece of this puzzle and is integral to the City's mission of creating a safe and healthy City for all Cambridge residents. We hope that The Black Response and HEART Proposal will be a key partner in providing these services. Next slide. The City, as the City Manager has mentioned, um, have been working with The Black Response. Um, in June of 2021, The Black Response provided a presentation to City Officials regarding the HEART Proposal. And in July of 2021, the City Manager provided follow-up communication on the intent to partner with The Black Response on key areas, um, that were also outlined in the HEART Proposal, and needs that were identified through the City Manager's Task Force, as well. In September of 2021, the City met again with The Black Response regarding the follow-up conversations on the HEART Proposal, and follow-up conversations for the communication sent by the City Manager about the intent to partner with The Black Response on those key services. In October, the City provided an overview and understanding of the program needs and areas of agreement with the HEART Proposal. This process included outlining all of the areas that were identified in the City Manager's Task Force Recommendations Report, as well as the recommendations made in the HEART Proposal, and where there was symmetry and interest in identifying needs that, um, we were all in agreement of. And then, also, the City's program proposal, um, and how we saw The Black Response and the HEART Proposal partnering with us to provide those key services. Um, we continue to have smaller group discussions with The Black Response and City personnel, which continued through, um, this month and are ongoing. Next slide. The City identified these key services to be addressed in initiating a partnership with The Black Response and implementing the HEART Proposal to provide support to the Alternative Public Safety Response Program. These areas, we felt, were key services that are needed to support a crisis response system. So, provision of mutual aid services. Going out into specific areas where individuals are congregating, providing first-aid, or- or different food, or different services that would help individuals. Uh, the development of a database for

coordination among service providers is key. Having a unified database that has service providers with specific needs and resources is key. Provision of community-based skill building trainings. Provision of aftercare, proactive community cohesion resources. After a crisis response, that aftercare, that... after that immediate response, what's the follow-up? What's the aftercare? How can we make sure that people don't fall through the cracks, that they're getting the wraparound services that they need? Providing conflict resolution resources. A lot of times, there's conflict within different communities, um, and different individuals, our unhoused population, providing resources in that area, as well as providing provision of violence interruption, street teams to reduce any violence in our community. Um, additionally, programs specifically for young men of color, including wraparound and aftercare services. These are the key areas where we felt HEART/Black Response would be able to provide these services in collaboration with the City. Next slide. As we take steps to move ahead, it's important for the City to work within an established network to provide these crisis services and additional violence prevention efforts. The Department of Community Safety and Alternative Public Safety Response Program will provide services through a model that's unmatched. We're committed to providing additional support as the program evolves and will work with other organizations, including The Black Response and HEART, to provide additional complimentary services in the future while enhancing accountability and trust within the community. The City will continue to have discussions in hopes to have a strong partnership with The Black Response and the HEART Proposal to provide key services as outlined in this presentation and in our Communication that was sent in July. Next slide. The City has made a commitment to fund a new Department of Community Safety that will oversee the Alternative Public Safety Response Program and community-based services provide- providers that will provide additional support in the key areas identified. Additionally, future support through, um, or future support through grant-funded or contracted services. We hope that The Black Response will be a major player in the delivery of such services. With this recommendation, we believe we've heard from residents, the City Council, stakeholders, and are proud to present a proposal to address the needs in the community that will support our most vulnerable population. Through this process in developing the proposal, the City will make a recommendation to the City Council for a budget of approximately \$3 million to support the new Department of Community Safety and Alternative Public Safety Response Program. This funding will include supporting the six personnel that I identified, as well as non-contractual items to initiate the program. Included in this budget is one to \$1 to 1.5 million for contracted services with community partners. So, the City is willing to partner with community partners that are able to provide these key community services, and that would be through a contract process. And again, part of the \$3 million budget proposal, uh, \$1 to 1.5 million is allocated for that. The City Manager is committed to incorporating the funding for the continuation of the program, as well as expansion of these key services in the City Manager's submitted FY23 budget to the City Council.

**Louis A. DePasquale:** So, in closing, I just want to, again, thank everybody for getting us where we're at today. The Council, the residents, all the groups, the Public Safety Committees. There will be no City who will be providing services like this anywhere that we can see in Massachusetts. As we are currently with our Police Department, we'll be a leader in taking a look at how we can provide services better and differently. And I just want to thank everybody because there's been a full commitment of recognition as this is where we need to go. This is how we're going to do it. And we will make it work financially with a supplemental appropriation as soon as we finalize this shortly. And then, while the budget process begins putting a budget together that's represented here into the FY23 budget that we would submit to the Council. So, again, a lot of work. I just want to thank everybody, and especially thank the Council for their leadership in this matter.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Thank you. That was, uh, a really good presentation. Really appreciate that. Um, so, we'll have a round of clarifying questions from Committee members. Um, I can't see everybody's hands. So, um, folks- folks can just call out to me on the microphone. And again, just want to ask that we keep it to one or two, uh, clarifying questions. We have, uh, a large number of people signed up for Public Comment.

**Mr. Clerk:** Councillor Zondervan...

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Um...

**Mr. Clerk:** I believe Councillor Carlone raised his hand.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. I can see Councillor Carlone now in the Zoom. So, I'll recognize Councillor Carlone.

**Dennis J. Carlone:** Uh, thank you, uh, Chair Zondervan. Um, f- you compared, um, this proposed program... and, uh, and, uh, uh, it- it seems, highly analyzed all the other r- uh, the major programs that are out there. So, on the budget of \$3 million... and is that purely an introductory budget of initiating this, or is this, in your mind, serve the needs that you've been discussing with all the groups?

**Louis A. DePasquale:** That- that's a great question. I think this is an initial startup that we feel very comfortable can provide the service. I think as soon as the FY23 budget comes, there could be even additions made quickly. Uh, I've been, you know, in real discussion with, uh, Commissioner Christine Elow and Ellen that this is our first attempt. We've never put a budget similar to this together. Uh, so, I think i- it sends a message that we are committed. It gives us the right startup, but I would assume this would be a growing process as we need to meet what we need to do. And, you know, whatever that turns out, then we would adjust the budget. But this was just... with a lot of thought process, Christina really did all the work. I don't know if she wants to- has anything to add, but this was our best guess to say, we can provide this service. This is what it looks like, and obviously, it will grow as we continue. But Christina really has been- put an incredible amount of work on this. I'll turn it over to her.

**Christina Giacobbe:** Thank you, um, City Manager. And I'll just add, uh, most of the programs that we looked at also, that was taken under consideration. Um, and we're well within the range of their budget that they are currently operating under, whether they started a couple of years ago or several years ago. Um, but as we add key services to our program, I would imagine, uh, the budget would increase. You know, increasing the violence in- intervention programs and things of that nature will- will cause, um, our- increase in the budget.

**Dennis J. Carlone:** Uh, so, if I could... did you want to add something?

**Louis A. DePasquale:** I- I just wanted to also say, just before we went too far, that also, with the people at the table... we have the people in the back who can answer questions. We have Lee Gianetti, David Kale and Nancy Glowa, who are all here, and all have played a role. This has really been a team effort on the City side. So, sorry, but I just wanted to...

**Dennis J. Carlone:** S- s-...

**Louis A. DePasquale:** ... bring that out there.

**Dennis J. Carlone:** So, I can inf- is this correct, uh, through you, Mr. Chair, that I can infer that even the early budget was in discussion with the initial petition writers of The Black Response and- and the HEART Program? Uh, the services element of this was i- i- in response to the initial discussions?

**Louis A. DePasquale:** Y- go ahead.

**Christina Giacobbe:** Um, I would say for the \$1 to 1.5 million, um, we estimated based on the need and other program models around the country, um, to come up with that budget for those specific services that would be provided through contract or grant funding, um, is- about the \$1, 1.5 million.

**Dennis J. Carlone:** Uh, okay. So, let me... and my last question is, uh, c- compared to our need, and I would say the 116,000 people in the City, compared to Oakland, compared to Denver. Uh, the other programs that you looked into w- were in the ballpark for starting such a program. It feels right numbers wise?

**Christina Giacobbe:** Yes.

**Dennis J. Carlone:** Thank you.

**Louis A. DePasquale:** Uh, I- I...

**Dennis J. Carlone:** Very succinct. (laughs)

**Louis A. DePasquale:** Uh, no, no. I think we have put a lot of time into doing that. And I think, when we talk about the outside work... this is going to grow, the services that the outside vendors provide to us, as we're g- as we're growing. So, this is a startup of a partnership that... we may find items that are not even in this presentation. Uh, I want to say... (laughs) Christina ad- uh, do- we say, oh, we need to get a service here, and then that's where we would use that money. So, this is really a start of looking at what everybody's done and how we would move

forward. But this is by no means- th- this is it in terms of what we're looking at going outside. As we learn more about this and all get better at it together, there may be a service that's not even on here that we say, let's find out someone who can do that in cooperation with us. I don't know if the Commissioner wants to add anything, as well.

**Christine Elow:** I would just say our vision is a phased-in approach. This is not going to be seven days a week, 24 hours a day. It's, uh, it's going to be less than that. And as the program grows, uh, I- I imagine the budget will grow with it.

**Dennis J. Carlone:** All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Thank you, Councillor. I will recognize Councillor McGovern.

**Mr. Clerk:** Uh, s- uh, Mr. Chair, uh, just through you, the Vice Mayor also raised her hand, just so that she's in your queue.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Oh, my apologies. Did- did she want to go first?

**Marc C. McGovern:** Yeah, I can yiel- I'll yield. That's fine.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Vice Mayor.

**Alanna M. Mallon:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, I had a couple of questions just to build off of, um, what Councillor Carlone was speaking about in terms of a phased-in approach. I was looking at the two Crisis Response Specialists and the two Peer Support Specialists and wondering how we were going to be providing 24 hours a day, seven days a week. So, could you talk a little bit about what that phase-in approach looks like and when we're looking at, uh, a possible implementation date?

**Christine Elow:** So, I'll speak to the, uh, 24 hour coverage. So, our initial proposal, um, for providing this crisis service would be two teams. And the two teams would work, um, 12:00 to 8:00 on four days, and, uh, 8:00 a.m. to midnight on three days. And the reasoning behind that was based on our data analysis of these nonviolent type calls and calls that are appropriate for this type of response. We looked at the volume of the highest periods of when those calls occur and, remarkably, they cu- occur between 12:00 and 8:00, which is a little unusual. Um, but so, building a two team, um, of crisis responders that would work, um, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Saturday. We'd have 12:00 to 8:00 covered. And then Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, it would be 8:00 a.m. to midnight. So, you'd have some overlap on- on some of those days. And we feel that this will give us enough coverage to support the initial calls that we envision being handled by this response program, and then building on- on that. Once people know the services are available, our calls are going to increase, and we'll have to adjust our schedule and hire additional staffing at that point. But hopefully, we'll have that information prior to the submittal of the fiscal '23 budget, and I'll leave the implementation date up to the City Manager.

**Louis A. DePasquale:** Uh, and I will add though, Christina working with the Police Depel- Department- I mean, the Personnel Department, all the job descriptions are now in place. That was- one of the first things we had to start with was, when we post these positions, what are we asking for? So, we've met with a lot of people. We've gotten a lot of ideas. We got Public Health Department involved, Dr. Sayah. And obviously, now with our new Public Health Commissioner starting... I mentioned- I was on the interview team. And during the process, this- this is something I would like the Public Health Department to be involved with until... and the new individual was very supportive of that idea, and actually is doing some of that work where he's coming from. So, w- getting that piece done was a key piece. So, I think we're in a good position to have these hearings and come up with a recommendation to say, if this is what the Council feels is something they want to do, we're ready to go. So, we're almost to that place.

**Christine Elow:** Yeah. And I just wanted to clarify, uh, I was saying it was not going to be 24 hours a day, seven days a week. So, sorry if that was misunderstood.

**Alanna M. Mallon:** Uh, thank you. Mr. Chair, through you. I didn't misunderstand. I just- when I was looking at the presentation, I thought to myself, how could that be? Um, so thank you for providing. And, uh, sorry, I'm not sure I heard the implementation date. You just said as soon as p- as soon as we're ready to go on this?

**Louis A. DePasquale:** Well, I think we want to, you know, continue the Meetings with the Council, make sure this is something the Council thinks is the way we should be going. And then, we would just have a few last minute tweaks here and there. But we would come up with an- a recommendation for an appropriation based on these positions, probably- realistically starting... It's going to take a while to find the people, but... it- it's December now, but probably put salaries in as early as late January through June 30th. And then, like I said, we w- at that time, we would also be putting together the FY23 budget. And if we've learned anything in that short period of time, we would address that in '23, as well. But I think, based on all the work everybody's done here, we're pretty pleased and ready to go.

**Alanna M. Mallon:** Uh, thank you. I have one more clarifying question. Mr. Chair, through you. I know a big sticking point for a lot of members of the community is an alternative phone number to 911. That- this is something that many, many, many residents would prefer to have another number in addition to 911. Is that an option that's still on the table that would still go to a member of ECC or a member of the Department of Community Safety to do that triage work? I- I just know that this is a... huge sticking point for so many people for you.

**Louis A. DePasquale:** Uh, i- it's...

**Alanna M. Mallon:** ... huge sticking point for so many people.

**Louis A. DePasquale:** Through you, it's a great question. We have spent a lot of time. I'm going to turn it over to Christina, who has really led a lot of discussion on that question.

**Christina Giacobbe:** So, thank you. So, um, with 988 coming out and being implemented- required to be implemented, I believe, by July of 2022. Um, it's my understanding from conversations at the state level with the State 911 Department that the Department of Public Health is taking on the lead role with 988. And the way that they envision 988 working in the Commonwealth of Mass- and this is all just initial conversations that are as of Monday... um, is that they would create crisis center- call centers that would take these 988 calls, similar to the 211 that the state uses for various, um, you know, for Covid, that they would h- they would hire people to, um, manage those call centers and take those calls. And the State 911 Department, who operates all of the p- uh, municipal, uh, PSAPs throughout the Commonwealth, have been working with them closely to make sure that there's integration in the 911 system so that, in the event that there is a call, somebody is in crisis, that there's automatic transfers that can happen to get additional resources to the scene because patient care is still a concern. But, um, it's my understanding that before, uh, by July 2022 that additional number will be, um, established for this purpose. I think during the Task Force, and I know through the, um, working groups and subcommittees within the City Manager's Task Force that there was a lot of discussion about that. And you start posting all these different numbers for different places to call, and sometimes people get lost in those. So, hoping that 988 will fulfill that need. But we're certainly open to, um, having an a- uh, alternate number that's just a business line that somebody could call and would- the phone would get answered, and we'd be able to support them.

**Alanna M. Mallon:** Okay, thank you. And, uh, just one quick last question around the physical location of where this Department of Community Safety would sit within the City. Has that been thought about? I know space is at a premium. Um, and I- there's a- a big need for this to not sit within the actual, physical Police Department on 6th Street. So, just- just speak to that point, just quickly.

**Louis A. DePasquale:** So, at- at this point, it would not be in the... it could be in the Robert Healy building, but it would not be in the Police Department. The ECC Department is also in the Healy Building, and those are some of the areas we're looking at. But it clearly will not be part of the Cambridge Police Department. Uh, but we are looking at other alternative spaces, as well. But- we don't have an exact space, but we understand that point. But again, if we have to use the Healy Building, it would clearly be not in the Police Department section of the Healy Building. But if we can find another alternative, we understand the message and are taking a look at that as well. So, thank you. It's important.

**Alanna M. Mallon:** Thank you. I think the- the optics of that are- are really important. So, I would encourage us to try to figure out a different space, even though... um, I mean, I think of the- 6th Street as the Police Station, even though

ECC is there, and th- there may be other departments there. I don't know, but it is the Robert Healy Public Safety Building. Um, so, I'll yield back at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you to all of you for presenting.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Thank you, Vice Mayor. We'll go to Councillor McGovern.

**Marc C. McGovern:** Thank you. Mr. Chair, through you. Um, thank you for the- for the presentation. Um, I- I do want to... um, the- the- the City Manager, uh, thanked, um, Councillor Simmons and I for, uh, Chairing the Task Force. I just also want to thank all the participants, uh, of that Task Force, um, who gave a lot of their time, uh, and energy, um, uh, to be part of that. Um, I- I s- had very similar questions, um, to the Vice Mayor. I- I think, um, you know, I- when I saw the presentation itself, I was a- a little concerned about the, um, uh, staff numbers, um, and- and thinking that th- they seemed, uh, they seemed a little bit low, uh, to me, um, considering that you're going to want to, you know, certainly send at least two people, uh, to any call. Um, no one should go alone. And so, I- I- I- I worry that, um, I worried about those numbers. And- and- and if the plan is to expand, um, I hope we- we look at that and- and do that sooner than later. I'd rather have more people available, um, than trying to stretch fewer people. Um, you never know when a crisis is going to pop up, and so we don't want to be in a position where we have two people out on a call, and another call comes in, and we can't, uh, we can't respond. Um, and I- I agree, also, with the location. I- I th- I think it needs to be outside of- of the Healy Building. Uh, again, I- I think that the point of this is to, you know, create a system that, uh, sits outside of the- of the Police Department. Um, and I think those optics are important. Um, i- in terms of questions... uh, through you, Mr. Chair. Um, I know that- that- and- and- just to... Uh, I- I believe that- that this was mentioned, but just to make sure that we're clear and to clarify, y- you s- Mr. Manager, you see this not as something to do instead of the HEART Proposal, but something to do in collaboration or partnership with the HEART Proposal, um, as opposed to a- an either/or decision.

**Louis A. DePasquale:** Uh, I- I would say, though you, uh, that the difficulty here is... and I don't want to speak for the HEART Proposal, but there are two areas that we see- that are different than what they're asking. Uh, they want to be the first response to the site. We are not proposing that. We are proposing that they would assist us. And they want to be the dispatch of those individuals to the site. We're saying we're going to be the site. Other than those two areas, we are in alignment with all the other issues that the HEART has addressed, and we would like them to be a partner with us in addressing with them. The structure is different. Our structure is being run through the City. Their structure would be- be more paid by the City, but run through them. So, I think we- we've tried to come up with a compromise that says, this gives us the best of both worlds. It gets us where we think we need to be. But you've put a lot of work. You're a valuable asset to the City. And in all these other areas, we'd like to figure out a way that you can grow with us and be a partner with us to provide these services because I think it would be a great team effort. So, that's our point of view. I think they might feel like the other two areas are still- we, uh, far apart on.



**Marc C. McGovern:** Um, and I do want to thank, also, the- y- the folks from, uh, The Black Response and the HEART team. I- I've been part of, um, as has Councillor Nolan, who I know... she's not on the Public Safety Committee. I'm not sure if she's in the Sullivan Chamber, uh, for the Meeting, but, um, and, uh, part of a lot of those- a lot of those meetings and discussions. And- and I think everyone is, you know, trying to figure out, um, what's a- what's a very- a- a new thing, you know,? This is- this is different. Um, and so, that's- it's not easy- uh, different for us. Other places have done it, but it- it is- it is something that is, um, you know, takes a lot of conversation. Um, the Task Force had recommended- and- and, uh, the Task Force had recommended that a, um, sort of mental health, social worker, you know, somebody with some clinical experience. It doesn't necessarily have to be a quote/unquote professional, but someone with clinical experience be in the 911 Department to help triage those calls so that you have someone with... uh, one of the things we heard from, I think it was the folks out of Toronto, was that they were actually able to decrease the number of responses to calls by having someone with- who had mental health experience in their 911 system, or whatever it is there, um, to triage some of those calls and actually provide information to people, talk people, you know, down from a crisis. And they actually reduced the number of interactions between the Police Department, um, and folks with mental health crisis, and they found that as a benefit because it limited those interactions. Um, would you be thinking of bringing on... in terms of who decides wh- what team to dispatch, are you planning that those are going to be sort of the folks that typically work in- in E- ECC, or are you going to- talking about bringing on someone who, um, maybe is more specialized and, sort of, y- not just mental health calls, but sort of the types of calls that we're talking about. And maybe there's some synergy there that can happen with folks from HEART where if we- if the- if the City does not want to turn over that dispatch option, maybe there's some partnership that can happen there where, um, there's some collaboration in- in terms of who dispatches those types of calls. Long question. I hope that makes sense.

**Christina Giacobbe:** Please let me know if I don't get everything. Um, so, initially, um, so currently, the Emergency Telecommunications dispatchers triage the calls using a medical protocol called Priority Dispatch. And part- that protocol has been in place for over 30 years, and it's tested. It's approved by the State 911 Department, which- there's only three that are approved to be utilized in the Commonwealth. And there is specific calls to these non-violent site calls, suicide calls. So, they get training annually, um, on, um, the protocol, but also continuing education, foundations of mental health, CIT, trauma-informed, um, care training. Um, and in addition to that scenario-based training, we work closely with the, uh, EMD Steering Committee, which is comprised of, uh, EMS providers, Fire, and, uh, the Medical Director for the Mount Auburn. Um, and we feel really strongly that they do a great job. My staff does a great job triaging those calls. Um, most recently, we just had a, um, a call where we got a transfer from the suicide, um, suicide line, and the- they didn't know where the caller was. They thought it was in Cambridge. So, our staff immediately pinged the cell phone- got on the call with the caller, pinged the cell phone, was able to determine that the individual

was in Lakeville, called the, uh, Police Department down there, got resources there, was able to get that person, um, the help that they needed. And so, I do feel that we- we can do a good job, um, triaging, and have done that, and we'll continue to do that. I think we are considering a, um, social worker- licensed social worker to help in the center. Uh, certainly for those calls where if it's a first-party caller, that- somebody could easily transfer the call to this licensed social worker that would be able to de-escalate, provide resources, and so forth. We're currently talking with... um, it's not in the initial budget because we're still in conversations with, um, uh, Cha- uh, Charleston, South Carolina, who has, um, integrated a s- licensed social worker in the 911 Center, but it's connected to their Department of Mental Health, which- there's a lot of advantages of having the connectivity because you have the, um, information to be able to determine if the individual has care plans in place, and so forth. So, just trying to figure out what the best model might be, but we're certainly considering that for sure.

**Louis A. DePasquale:** Okay. And I think the Commissioner wants to add something, as well.

**Christine Elow:** Uh, just really quickly, you know, our ultimate goal with everything that we do is to reduce people going into crisis, and to provide that, you know, preventative early intervention care. So, I just wanted to say that that's the ultimate goal with all of our approaches. S- thank you.

**Marc C. McGovern:** Um, and then, um, just finally, uh, through you, Mr. Chair, um, you know, I really hope that, uh, uh, you know, I really hope that we- we get this done, and- both with HEART, um, in supporting, you know, the- the HEART Proposal, but also looking, you know, this proposal, uh, as well. I don't see these things as mutually exclusive. There's lots of models around the country. Um, somewhere the City Government, and the- the nonprofit, or the other- and the community entity work really closely somewhere. They don't work closely at all. Um, but I think an im- an important point that, um, I think- maybe it was the Commissioner wh- who- who mentioned... and a- again, I've- I've been in these situations professionally, um, that sometimes things start out one way, and they- and they- and they become something very different very quickly. Um, and if you look at CAHOOTS, for example, that a lot of the work is- is modeled after, um, they- they- they have police radios and things where they communicate with the- with their Police Department when they feel the need is there. It's not often that they feel the need is there, but it is there for everybody's, you know, safety. And I- I- I just, um, I hope that we can move forward together. I hope that- that, uh, I- I think HEART has put forward a- The Black Response has put forward a tremendous proposal, um, through HEART, and I think there's a space for that. But I- I- I think there's also a space for- for this. And, um, as many resources as we can have, I think- I think the better. So, uh, thank you, Mr. Chair, for holding this Meeting. Um, and I look forward to the further discussion.

**Louis A. DePasquale:** Okay. Uh, through you, Mr. Chair. I think...

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Uh, (inaudible)...

**Louis A. DePasquale:** ... Commissioner- uh, excuse me, Mr. Chair. I think Commissioner has one more follow up. Sorry. (inaudible)...

**Christine Elow:** Can- I just wanted to make one- through you, Mr. Chair, one more point to Councillor McGovern. I think there's also a number of calls that the police go on that we- we- we- we think would be better suited for an Alternative Response. So, it'd be great for us to be able to call up and say, this is much better suited for HEART as opposed to the police. And we- I've seen a number of calls that fit that requirement. Thank you.

**Louis A. DePasquale:** I think that Christina has one more response, too.

**Christina Giacobbe:** And- and just to, um, remind folks, the CAHOOTS model work- is physically located in the Police Department and they get the calls through 911. And, um, although they, you know, they're integrated. So, in the event that, you know, a safety issue or support needed, they're on radios. And we envision, uh, similarly that the response, uh, model would have radios and connect, uh, with Emergency Communications. Thank you.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** All right. Thank you. And I have a quick question myself, and then we will, um, be going to Public Comment. So, um, in the- the funding proposal, the \$3 million... you mentioned one-and-a-half million is for, um, other- other entities providing contract services. So, it- would that be exclusively for HEART, or you're envisioning that there'll be lots of, uh, entities providing contracted services? And- and what- what might that look like?

**Louis A. DePasquale:** I would say- we don't want to say anything exclusively, but obviously, we have spent a lot of time with HEART. We know HEART. Uh, we know what they can do. And we are anxiously hoping to work with them in as many areas as possible. And I think that would be the best way that I would say... but we are committed to make this work with HEART, uh, as our first alternative, even. And then, if- if there are other areas that they feel they can't do, or we feel, then we would look elsewhere, as well. But with the work that HEART's put in, the time we've spent, I think we could get a very strong partnership with them with that one-point- with that million to \$1.5 million.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** All right. Thank you. And any, um, of that funding as a startup funding, or is it, uh, entirely based on, uh, services provided?

**Louis A. DePasquale:** I- I think what we would look at as what services we were using for- them for, and how we could help them help us get prepared in those services, is how I would probably answer that question.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Thank you. And final question. Uh, any possibility of providing physical space for HEART to operate in Cambridge?

**Louis A. DePasquale:** That is a very difficult question. As you know, right now, we don't have enough space for our own employees. So, I would say that's difficult at this time, as we are, uh, honestly trying to find more space. And David Kale has been the point person for a while, and it's not been a great success in

finding these spaces. So, I d- I wouldn't want to have that expectation, to be honest.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Thank you. Uh, I mean, we do have a number of vacant buildings. So, it's, um, hard to hear that we don't have enough space. But I understand the challenges with that, too. Um, all right. So, w- we will now go to Public Comment. And I do want to, um, remind the folks in Public Comment that you will be called in the order that you signed up, and to please speak to the topic, address all comments to the Chair. And, you know, uh, we encourage you to not repeat what other people have said, um, but to- to share your own thoughts. And, um, we will be limiting to two minutes because we- we're trying to get, uh, to hear from everybody. But, um, you know, just try to share your- your thoughts. And, um, if- if you have more to say, you can- you can always email the Council. And- and we do, uh, re- review those emails, as well. So, with that, Mr. Clerk, if we can go to Public Comment?

**Mr. Clerk:** The first speaker is Andy Nash.

**Andy Nash:** Thank you. Um, hi. I'm Andy Nash, 18 Worcester Street, and I want to start by saying how inadequate it feels to be hearing tonight from the City without hearing HEART's counter-narrative at the same time. I'm here to speak in support of the City investing in the HEART Program as designed without the involvement of Cambridge Police or City-determined support personnel. HEART differs from the City's proposal in that it grew from a collaborative process. Not consultative, collaborative. And it addresses Public Safety through a transformative justice approach based on evidence-based practices, most notably emergency response led by community members trained in de-escalation. I attended the last Public Safety Committee Meeting where you heard from CAHOOTS and the two California Public Safety programs, all models for HEART. And I thought how fortunate we are to have 20-plus years of data on a similar project's outcomes and lessons learned. And then, I wondered why the City Manager and Public Safety Task Force, um, would not embrace that successful model for Cambridge as TBR has proposed. I'm sure the City would find it easier to work with its established agencies and familiar colleagues tweaking its current protocols, but what the community is asking for is a fundamental shift away from a system based on friendly coercion and toward true restoration and healing. We've heard loud and clear that many Cambridge communities do not feel that the City's modifications to the HEART Proposal offer that, and the police reforms we've heard about this evening do not change that reality. So, I ask City Council to be accountable to the commu- community-based process that created the HEART Program, pass HEART as written, and invest in its implementation as a community-based alternative to Public Safety outside of the police and the mandated reporting 911 system. And to Councillors Mallon and McGovern, it's not just the optics of it, but that those systems are not rooted in community healing. Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** We're gonna have a- just brief pause. I have to check for a technical issue. Ellie Carver, please go ahead.

**Ellie Carver:** Good evening, everybody. My name is Ellie Carver, and I'm a Cambridge community member. I want to urge the City Council to support the HEART Program rather than the proposed plan from the City Manager and his team. This presentation was overall disappointing, as it proposes much of the research and planning from the HEART community while keeping ties with the Police Force, mandated reporters, and shifting more resources towards the police rather than away from it. In particular, it feels imperative to call out the re-revisionist framing about the similarities between the HEART Proposal and the City Manager's Public Safety Task Force. I feel it important to highlight key differences in the design and development methods for these programs. First, the City Manager's Public Task Force has had closed meeting spaces that do not operate with visibility or allow for engagement from the community. HEART developed with a coalition composed of diverse group of community members, service providers, and organizations to develop a collective program for our community. Secondly, the organizers of the HEART Program and Black Response team have asked City Officials and co-Chairs of the Task Force to co-create an open process including City Officials, community members, and organizations, and multiple times, these requests were denied. It would be disingenuous for the HEART Proposal to be co-opted by this Task Force, and, um, the community would be denied their voice as it has been for the past five months. As with the design, the implementation of HEART, and the City Manager Proposal and HEART differ in fundamental and imperative ways. The City Manager's Offices intend to use structures from HEART's collaborative planning process with the City Department, including working with social work responders and co-responding with the Cambridge Police. To be clear, this would be co-opting the work of community members and the leadership of Black and Brown women. Um...

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Thanks, Ellie. Thank you.

**Ellie Carver:** Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Gene Intime.

**Naomie Stephen:** Gene has not joined. Carolyn Magid, please go ahead.

**Carolyn Magid:** Hi. Can you hear me?

**Mr. Clerk:** We can hear you. Please go ahead.

**Carolyn Magid:** Why should Cambridge fund HEART and not a City Department as the main operator of the Alternative Crisis Response Program for the City of Cambridge? One key reason is equity. Dealing with crisis is now very different based on race and social class. When I was growing up, someone very close to me had a serious substance abuse problem that precipitated crises. Like me, he was white, middle class, and educated, and we were able to manage those crises without involving the authorities. In my seven months as part of the HEART Coalition, we have heard from many Cambridge residents who don't have the resources to deal with crises, but legitimately fear that if they go to the City

for help, they will get caught up in and stigmatized in the bureaucracy of the state, police, social workers, and other mandated reporters. These include people who are unhoused, living a life of poverty in public, BIPOC people who are rightfully concerned about racist responses, undocumented immigrants, and people of limited resources who fear going to the City would lose them their housing or work. What we have heard is that people don't want the authorities involved. They are looking for community resources they can trust to deal with their crises in a more private way and with minimal bureaucracy. They want what people like me, um, are often able to have. They should have it. HEART can do this job. HEART is built to address these community concerns. It is a non-profit contracting with the City and not a City Department. It will be run by community-based boards and staffed by trained community members who are not mandated reporters. It is organized around principles of transformative and disability justice. As such, it will be a more independent, more trusted, and more effective crisis response framework. It's based on best practices supported by programs all over the country. Its development is well underway, and Cambridge should fully fund HEART as the main Alternative Crisis Response Program for the City. Thanks.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Marilyn Frankenstein.

**Marilyn Frankenstein:** Can you hear me?

**Mr. Clerk:** We...

**Marilyn Frankenstein:** Hello?

**Mr. Clerk:** We can hear you. We can hear you. Please go ahead.

**Marilyn Frankenstein:** Oh, okay. Sorry. Um, I'm a little out of it because I got my booster shot and I'm really tired. But I've been a 40-year resident and citizen of Cambridge. And I won't repeat all the excellent arguments that have come before me. But I have a very important question, I think, around the democratic, or shall I say anti-democratic nature of the fact that eight of the nine Councillors passed the Policy Order which calls for funding HEART, and funding HEART as written, as a separate entity from the City Government, and it seems that that's just disappeared. That means nothing except that some of the language has been co-opted, and the control has all been taken by the City. And it's very troubling to me in terms of the anti-democratic nature.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Thank you, Marilyn.

**Mr. Clerk:** The- the next speaker is Elise Scholl.

**Naomie Stephen:** Elise Scholl has not joined. Betsey Chase, please go ahead.

**Betsey Chase:** Thank you. My name is Betsey Chase. I live at 152 Pleasant Street in Cambridge. Um, I am the mother of, uh, two Black teenage sons, and, um, the, um, also have a lot of their classmates in my life. Um, and I would just like to say I agree with everything that has been said by the other speakers so far. Um, and, uh, what I would like to add is that the HEART process has been... it's so unusual, I feel like, for any of us to really look at- do the work to create something that's

truly transformative. I feel like it's really easy to tweak around the edges and- let's do this thing, but change this one part. And I feel like what I have seen in the HEART Program over these months is a really impressive, really exceptional, really important, um, authentic process that, you know... the answers aren't all known. It's about learning. It's about listening. It's about hearing that people want services that are not connected to mandated reporters, that are not connected to police, that people need and deserve in this wealthy City. We can afford to give people what they need and what they deserve. And that is exactly HEART. So, I strongly encourage, um, the City to proceed with HEART as is, as proposed. Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Ilham Elthre.

**Naomie Stephen:** Ilham has not joined. Monty Montero-Elliott, please go ahead.

**Monty Montero-Elliott:** Hi everybody. Um, Monty Montero-Elliott, lifelong resident, Sidney Street. Um, I'm once again voicing my support for HEART, and I urge the City Council to fund it as the primary, um, Public Safety method, and fund it as written. Uh, I don't really have a lot to say, other than I do not think that this proposed solution that the City has brought to us will get the results that we want. I don't think it will make us safer. I think that a lot of the language has been straight up cribbed from HEART without- from the multiple HEART presentations without really knowing what they mean, or what it means to be a community-based program. I find it hard to believe that a system which does not allow these- these, uh, meetings to be made visible to the public in terms of a video on their website would be an effective and transparent method of- of, you know, responding to- to violence in our community. I- I'm very, uh, disappointed, but not surprised, I think is the right word. I, um, I think we make a lot of noise about being a pro- progressive City. But based on this proposal, it seems like the best that we can do is still the same carceral options. And I hope that there is a better- there- there are better things in the future. And if the City wants to be- th- if this is the solution that the City has, you know, come up with then this is what it is. But yeah. I also think that... uh, please- please just put the videos online and, uh, open, like... that is all.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Emilienne Prophete.

**Naomie Stephen:** Emilienne has not joined. Aviana Dupee, please go ahead.

**Aviana Dupee:** Hello. Um, my name is Aviana and I implemented a version of HEART called HEART Junior at my school, Kennedy Longfellow. Um, and I d- would like to say that I believe HEART should be implemented throughout the City because it truly is something that's necessary, because some people don't feel comfortable calling 911. And it's something that some people have been raised to see as bad. And in- this year, we have seen that it can't always help. And sometimes, it can turn out horribly. We've also seen this last year. Um, and HEART is more of a mental health program, I feel like, too, which is very helpful because 911 doesn't always respond to the mental health issue rather than just the physical issue. Um, and thank you. Yeah.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Kathy Hoffman.

**Cathy Hoffman:** Thank you. Um, Cathy Hoffman, Cambridge Peace Commission for many, many years, longtime City resident, 67 Pleasant Street. I have, uh, sent to the City Council already two forms of testimony for tonight, um, but they are a bit changed, um, as I have listened to tonight. Um, TBR and so many others came out of the response to George Floyd's murder, and the role of a policing intervention model is non-appropriate or needed in many cases, and harmful and others. Those concerns were amplified in so many conversations here in Cambridge with different communities, as well as nationally in the conversations with the recognized programs which have been mentioned here. After all of that, so many conversations, it was heartening for the June City Council vo- to vote eight-to-zero to implement HEART, something left out of tonight's position, as it unrolled a history of the Task Force, which was a bit of a surprise to some of us. It's also challenging or curious to have your lead-off be police-led and embraced, where police can make the decisions about where to involve HEART. But when some go low, let's still go high, because that is what HEART has done, already implementing, already extending. The essence of HEART is the response to emergency, a community, peer-based, with a whole structure already conceptualized and partly in place after consultations with many. HEART is interested in lifting up and seeking additional community services, but that's not their focus. The respo- and the response is not just to people in crisis, but also people calling the police on others. Someone making noise, teens annoying, dogs attacking. The idea is to have non-criminal responses. There is so much more to be said about this powerful principle program that I hope you will endorse. Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Andrew King.

**Andrew King:** My name is Andrew King. I'm a Cambridge resident, born and raised in the Port, went to Cambridge Public Schools. I want to urge the City Council of Cambridge to vote yes on investing in the implementation of the Cambridge HEART Program as currently designed by the community, and not the watered down version offered by the City Manager's, uh, Public Safety Task Force. This is a community-based holistic alternative that doesn't involve police or other carceral systems, and it really empowers marginalized community members. I'm proud to say that HEART was first envisioned by some of my close friends and classmates from Cambridge Public Schools, a space where we first cultivated our social justice values, the same values which are embodied in this program. A central pillar of the HEART Program will be the employment and leadership of young people of color living at the margins of Cambridge's high-tech prosperity. This resonates with me personally as a kid from Cambridge who worked in our City's youth centers and teen programs. Um, and for- and I've seen more than a few Black and Brown peers pushed out of school, face police harassment, arrests, lack safe afterschool recreational spaces, and often get stuck on pathways to low-wage employment or incarceration. I think that HEART is, uh, radically- the HEART Proposal is participatory democracy in action. It was born out of a radically inclusive and democratic process. It's created new bridges



of solidarity, love, and caring among Cantabrigians from all walks of life. And the City cannot continue to stand on the progressive values of transparency and collaboration that it espouses in programs such as Participatory Budgeting if it will not actually support this essential community process. Combining the proposals and recommendations without accountability to the central community-based process that created HEART will violate those values. So, I urge the Council to pass HEART as written and invest in development, implementation of the program, um, as written, outside of the police. Thank you for your time.

**Andy Nash:** The next speaker is Manraj Gill.

**Manraj Gill:** Hi. Uh, my name is Manraj. Uh, I've been living in Cambridge at Windsor Street for the past three years, uh, three-and-a-half years. Uh, I'm asking the C- Council members to support the HEART Program's immediate implementation as a First Response Dispatch Program that is entirely independent of the City Manager's programs and departments. Uh, this implementation hinges on, uh, an almost immediate allocation of the full few million that the HEART Pro- Program is asking in funding so that they can begin the necessary hiring support staff, and start building, uh, the necessary, uh, infrastructure that they'll need to independently, uh, put in place. And I hope that this is not further delayed by, uh, these political distractions by the City Manager's Office, as we've heard in the last hour and observed over the last year, uh, to try to come up with their own in-house departments and, uh, dodge what is central, uh, to the issue. Given that the Council had overwhelmingly passed the Policy Order almost half a year ago, these delays seem quite absurd, uh, from my point of view, and I think they need to be addressed in haste. Uh, what's being asked monetarily, uh, from my point of view seems like pennies compared to what we've been investing in the Cambridge Police Department. Uh, so, I'd urge you to listen to the people that have been speaking, that are speaking right now, continue to speak and act. Thank you. That is all.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Jacqueline Kung.

**Jacqueline Kung:** Oh, hi. This is Jacqueline. Um, I live in Central at 47 William Street. Um, I'm asking the City Council to fund and implement the HEART Program as, uh, how it was written by The Black Response. Um, the reason why I'm asking is, I unfortunately witnessed firsthand what happens when the police respond to what even they themselves describe as a mental health crisis. Um, one of my fellow citizens, a young African American man, was distraught because his mother had just died. He was trying to get into my apartment building to see her, and I witnessed the police abuse him verbally and handcuff him violently despite his tears. I called 911 for an ambulance to help with the mental health crisis- what the police said was a mental health crisis, and the 911 dispatcher refused to send an ambulance. So, I'm worried to hear the City Manager and his staff state- say tonight that our police and 911 dispatchers are doing a good job, because that's not my lived experience. Um, so, I think we need to hear ideas not just from the City, because they don't seem to be aware of our

lived experiences. Um, I would only trust the new system if The Black Response approved of the proposal fully. Um, that's all. Thank you so much.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Tara Miller.

**Tara Miller:** Hello. Can you hear me?

**Mr. Clerk:** We can hear you. Please go ahead.

**Tara Miller:** Thank you. Um, my name is Tara Miller. Um, I'm proud to be involved with the HEART Program, and I urge the City to invest in and implement the HEART Program exactly as written. Um, I've been very disappointed tonight to hear the way the City is expressing its work- the City Task Force is expressing its work and, um, supposed collaboration with The Black Response and HEART. Um, we've heard the word co-opt a lot tonight, and I think it's very clear that, um, the City Task Force has taken a lot of the components of the HEART Program, um, and taken- taken the labor and the expertise of a lot of folks who have, um, developed this program, um, in conjunction with community members. It's also, uh, hard to hear misleading comments made, um, by- by the Task Force. For example, um, CAHOOTS, uh, is not in 911. Um, they're in the White Bird Clinic. They have a dispatch team in the Eugene Emergency Communications. And CAHOOTS endorses the HEART Program as written. So, it feels, um, misleading for the City Task Force to present CAHOOTS as, um, perhaps endorsing the City program, when they do endorse the HEART Program as written. Also, in terms of some of the funding, um, the annual budgets of all of the programs that the City Task Force mentioned, um, are over 1.5 million, um, which is the- the maximum m-amount that the City is suggesting for HEART, or to split amongst HEART and other service providers. So, that's clearly not enough for a genuine effort to provide these alternative safety services for community members. I'd also like to ask, um, who this City Department of Community Safety is supposed to serve. How is it supposed to serve marginalized communities when they say they don't want police involved? They don't want, uh, mandated reporters. And it hasn't actually asked these community members what they want as HEART has clearly done.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is...

**Marc C. McGovern:** Mr. Chair, Point of Information.

**Mr. Clerk:** Yes, Councillor.

**Marc C. McGovern:** Uh, I just want to make sure that people are clear, because we've he- heard this a couple of times before. The presentation today was not a presentation by the Task Force. Um, the Task Force was a different entity that made a re- that made a report to the City. Um, and so I just want to make sure that that i- is clear, uh, and that people understand that relationship. Thank you.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Thank you. Uh...

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Claire Pryor.

**Claire Pryor:** Hello, everyone. My name is Claire Pryor. I'm a Cambridge resident living at 64 Linnaean Street. I am here today to urge the City Council to invest in the implementation of the Cambridge HEART Program as written. I really believe that the HEART Program as written is what we need to make this community truly safe. One of the biggest reasons I'm inspired by visions of a world without police is because those visions are focused on providing what a community actually needs to thrive. But how can you expect to know what a community needs without talking to people? The City Manager's Public Safety Task Force is a closed meeting space that did not operate with visibility or input and engagement from the community. In contrast, the HEART Program Coalition not only created a survey to figure out what services communities need, they also discussed and collaboratively created a proposal for those services with community members and organizations. And the people The Black Response talked to were super clear about what they need. They need conflict resolution services, non-violent crisis response, better access to food and other basic goods. And most importantly, they need a system that doesn't rely on police, that doesn't collaborate with police, and that doesn't operate out of the Police Department's literal building. I am an undergraduate student at Harvard and I live about a 20-minute walk from the center of campus. Every night around 11:00, I walk those 20 minutes back home. And every night, I do not feel safe because I know that if something violent were to happen to me, or if I were to see someone in crisis or causing harm, the City of Cambridge has no options for me other than an armed and violent force whose presence at best will do nothing to address the root cause of why that harm occurred, and at worst will escalate the situation and cause much more harm. An Alternative Response System simply cannot work with the police if people are going to feel safe calling for service. And that's why I'm asking to support HEART as written, without police involvement. Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker will be Sara Suzuki.

**Sara Suzuki:** Hello. My name is Sara Suzuki and I'm a longtime Cambridge resident. I live on Elm Street. And I urge the City Council to invest in Cambridge HEART as is. Cambridge HEART is an Alternative Public Safety System that centers experiences of those who are not the City's most privileged. HEART is built to provide safety and care to those that were not born into intergenerational wealth, those that are struggling to survive without a house, and many more who are most impacted by harm and violence in our communities. We cannot settle for a version of HEART that is not true to its core values. The City Manager's Public Safety Task Force has had closed meetings and does not operate transparently and with engagement from the community like HEART. As someone who has fought for workers' rights and for immigrant people's rights, I know firsthand that solutions handed down from above are never in the best interests of the people. HEART was built from the ground up by a coalition of community members and service providers working for the community. This is the only approach to creating a program that is truly what the community wants. Cambridge cannot be regarded as an equitable City if it continues to disregard public safety efforts led by its Black residents and other community members who are the ones most

impacted. Cambridge cannot call itself an innovative City if it continues to rely on expensive, distrusted systems for public safety. Cambridge cannot say it cares about its community members when it does not adopt community-led initiatives. I urge Cambridge to pass HEART as written, as a Quasi-NGO community members who will act as first responders. Thank you for your time. with

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Ragini Shah.

**Ragini Shah:** Thank you. Um, oh. Hello? Can you hear me?

**Mr. Clerk:** We can hear you. Please go ahead.

**Ragini Shah:** Oh, sorry. Okay. So, um thank you, and this is Ragini Shah. My address is 22 Harris Street, and I am, um, testifying today in support of the HEART Proposal as written. I think it's extremely important that HEART remain an independent quasi-nonprofit, um, because that is what the constituents of the City Council, the people who are most affected by the policing and other carceral policies, have asked for. And they've done, uh, the research to show that these sort of community-led proposals are the ones that have the most success. They've also built relationships with people in the community, as well as experts from outside of Cambridge, who can speak to h- how important, and again, effective it is to have responses, um, to situations such as mental health situations, et cetera, that do not involve the police in any way. I think it's extremely important that the, um, differences between the HEART Proposal as written and what the City Manager's Task Force has come up with are highlighted. I think one of the key differences is who controls the decision making. In the City Manager's Task Force, there are really only two people making decisions. That Fask Force has not operated with any transparency. Um, in q- quite contrast, I would say, the HEART, um, meetings are open. They welcome input from the community. And I would like to see something like that implemented in our City. I think it's going to keep the City safer and is also going to be more responsive to constituent needs. Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Lee Farris.

**Lee Farris:** Good evening. Um, Lee Farris speaking for the Cambridge Residents Alliance. Uh, I also want to urge the City Council to vote yes on investing in the implementation of the Cambridge HEART Program, uh, rather than the program that the City Manager and others have outlined tonight. I think our City needs to respect the hard work of the Black and Brown residents in The Black Response who've conducted deep research into the issues of creating an Alternative Public Safety Response, and who have engaged the community in learning about and developing the HEART Proposal. The HEART approach will, I believe, be more effective than the proposed City-led program. If people in crisis know that police will still respond or correspond, uh, communities or people who have deep-seated mistrust of police or in the prison system will likely not call an emergency number, even if it's 988. Uh, and then, um, I think if the response is by trusted community members, uh, it will, um, build a stronger, more resilient community, as opposed to having outside forces like the police or City-hired social workers who will be mandated reporters come in. So, I think passing HEART as written as

a quasi-non-Governmental organization with community members as responders is the best option for Cambridge, and I hope the Council will pass HEART as written. Um, but I also have a few questions based on the City's presentation. The City said there are two differences from HEART, but they did not explain why they, uh, have those two differences. And they did not explain why they prefer an internal City Department when the City Council itself voted for the HEART Proposal. I'd like to know if The Black Response agreed with the City, uh, job descriptions or other aspects of the proposal, and what their role will be in influencing how that City program starts up, hires, and operates. Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Susan Ringler.

**Susan Ringler:** Hello, this is Susan Ringler. Can you hear me?

**Mr. Clerk:** We can hear you.

**Susan Ringler:** Hello.

**Mr. Clerk:** Please go ahead.

**Susan Ringler:** Yes. Um, I'd like to speak today in favor of the Cambridge HEART Proposal as developed by The Black Response, Cambridge. HEART was approved unanimously by the City Council, and funding was ordered to be allocated in the FY22 budget. HEART is the best option for Alternative Emergency Response in our community, and it must be funded as written. The City Council has a re- responsibility to follow through on the HEART Proposal that became a Policy Order in June. The funding allocation must move forward for the HEART Proposal as written. HEART was developed by seeking out best practices nationwide and giving priority to community voices, especially those most affected by systems of violence. We owe it to the residents of Cambridge to provide the services that they have asked for and the City Council has ordered. The City Manager must initiate this funding allocation, and we hope that this Council Meeting this evening provides him with that opportunity. I especially want to acknowledge the needs of those Cantabrigians who are least able to speak for themselves and advocate for themselves. This is about them, their needs, what they want. This is about community. Thank you. Please fund HEART as it is written.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is William Ruhm.

**William Ruhm:** Um, hi. My name is William. Um, I'm a licensed clinical social worker with the Cambridge Health Alliance Peace Program based in East Cambridge on Gore Street. I'm testifying to urge you to fully fund the implementation of the Cambridge HEART Program as written and to maintain HEART's transformative vision of safety for and by community members by keeping HEART completely separate from the Cambridge Police Department. In past hearings, when HEART has come before the Council, I have testified to share my experiences as a health professional with Cambridge Health Alliance, and, um, I will not repeat this testimony, as you already have it in your inboxes from me multiple times. Rather, I wish to share a contrast I have observed over the past

months of conversation. The City of Cambridge has put community members through over five months of back-and-forth- bureau- bureaucratic back-and-forth to get HEART passed and funded, this after we've shown up hearing after hearing to tell you why we feel this program is important and we need it. In contrast, when vo- voting on the City budget in June of this year, the City agreed to an increase of the Cambridge Police Department's budget of over \$3 million as though it were just a matter of course. This after unprecedented protests in support of Black lives in the summer of 2020, and after a hearing in this very Council where hundreds of community members showed up and shared passionate testimony explaining why police are not the solution we need. Members of the Council and Mr. City Manager, please do not put the community of Cambridge through another half year of bureaucratic back-and-forth to get HEART fully funded and implemented. Please do not co-opt HEART and turn it into something the community does not want by linking it in any way to the Cambridge Police Department. Please demonstrate to us that our voices and our opinions do matter in your decision making around important issues. Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Tina Lieu.

**Tina Lieu:** Hello. My name is Tina Lieu. I am a Cambridge resident of- on Huron Avenue. I'm also a parent. I strongly urge the Cambridge City Council to vote yes on funding the implementation of the Cambridge HEART Program as it has been conceived by the tremendous efforts of members of the community, um, in the HEART Program and The Black Response. Um, these are the people who have been most impacted by police response, and it has been done in collaboration with service providers and community organizations. Cambridge leads in so many areas, both locally and nationally, and I say Cambridge can model what an alternative to police response looks like. Let's be one of the Cities that takes a genuine step towards supporting people who need a non-police response to a situation that police officers are not specifically trained for. However, to reach that goal, we need to have the HEART lead the response, and not the City to lead. The City needs to follow what this collaborative process designed by the people most impacted is saying. This is also key to the City to becoming an anti-racist organization. Um, more personally, I have a son who is on the autism spectrum. He is not Black or Brown, but I'm speaking for all children and all adults who are... actually, they- they- they're all children for somebody. And yes, I could totally imagine that if my son got tangled up with the police while he was severely dysregulated, it would not end well. So please, let's try the HEART Program as conceived. We- we say we are an inclusive, progressive City. Let's not pay lip service to all this hard work by our community members. Please do not take the proposal that has come from the City Manager's Public Task, um, Public Safety Task Force. Um, I am also feeling, um, disheartened that when the HEART Program and The Black Response reached out to City Officials to ask for a co-creation, that this- their request was denied. I urge you to please fund the proposal as, um, conceived by HEART. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Samantha Powers.

**Naomie Stephen:** Samantha Powers has not joined. Louise Parker, please go ahead.

**Louise Parker:** Hi. I'm concerned by the apparent police involvement in the City proposal and clear misunderstanding of CAHOOTS, and I wonder if this proposal has even been shared with The Black Response in writing. Regardless, I urge the City, as many have tonight, to invest in Cambridge HEART as the primary Alternative Safety Program. To not do so is to disempower Black and Brown people. HEART was developed through a transparent, uh, a participatory process and close collaboration with CAHOOTS. Extensive, careful thought, research, and effort has been devoted over many months to work out the details. This work has been done well, and- this work has been done and done well, and it just require funding. Moreover, my decades of experience as a social policy analyst, researcher, educator, and as a former social worker and mental health provider convinced me that HEART will meet a pressing community need. I have deep respect for the commitment of social and health service workers. But I also have a deep understanding of the limitations of traditional services and the potential harm they can cause. The research demonstrates, and my own experience corroborates, the involvement of Social Services and healthcare systems can remove community members' personal agency. As a service provider, I often found myself powerless to stop families from being torn apart, individuals institutionalized against their desires without clear benefit for them or the community. I've seen crises that could have been resolved carefully turned violent, and people end up imprisoned unnecessarily. And it's clear that these problems are baked into the system because social workers and healthcare workers are mandatory reporters. The solution is to create an alternative to the police, a professional ser- service response that is run by the community for the community. This is exactly what HEART will do. And again, I urge the City to fund HEART as designed and funded fully. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Valerie Bonds.

**Valerie Bonds:** Uh, good evening, everyone. Uh, Valerie Bonds, uh, 808 Memorial Drive. Uh, uh, I'm o- overwhelmed in some ways by the calling out that seems to plague many of our Meetings here on Public Comment. I heard the reference of one woman indicate that they need, them, those, and I'm speaking for us. Those who are closest to the problem have a more realistic understanding of the solution. I do not see HEART as anti-police, but I see HEART as pro-social services. Maybe HEART would be better served under the Department of Human Services or under Public Health. I believe that it is necessary to understand that comparing our Police Department to the atrocities that occurred, uh, referencing the death of Mr. Floyd, that our Police Department has always been willing, and still willing, to work and collaborate with all agencies in our City, to provide whatever is best support for alternative responses to situations that, uh, do not involve criminal activity. I think it's important that the words collaboration, cooperation, communication, consistency, are used as opposed to the negative comments that I've heard today, and often, I must admit, tired of hearing. The HEART Proposal is an alternative to support those in need of social services,

those in need of educational services, those in need of other services that will help them in the intricate aspects of the lives that many of us do not encounter on a day-to-day basis. The HEART Proposal still needs to be tweaked, but in the end, we do need it. Where's Queen- Queen Cheyenne? Wait, where is she? Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Kit Haines.

**Naomie Stephen:** Kit Haines has not joined. Sandy Middleton, please go ahead. You have the floor.

**Sandy Middleton:** Good evening. My name is Sandy Middleton. I am a Cambridge resident living at 54 Market Street. I have resided in Cambridge for many years. I love Cambridge, and I value so much of what Cambridge is and can become. Now, I intimately experience Cambridge and know Cambridge through my many focused walking trips throughout the many neighborhoods and squares that define our City. I commute through the streets of Cambridge. I see Cambridge in all its glory, and I regularly see serious problems of inadequate or no housing, and people suffering from a lack of proper mental health programs, and an ever-growing number of people who are just dealing with strife and daily stress. The streets are tense. Hardship of some people, many people, is laid bare for those who choose not to look away. Tonight, I speak to share why I believe the HEART Response Program Model offers an immense opportunity for Cambridge and all its citizens. The HEART Model has been researched and it's rooted in community healing. And I believe- and I urge the City Council to accept and fund and fully support the HEART Model as it was originally designed. Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Ife Omidiran.

**Ife Omidiran:** Hello everyone. My name is Ife Omidiran, and I am a student at Harvard, and I'm a member of the Harvard Alliance Against Campus Cops. Today I'm speaking on behalf of HAAC and the Harvard Law School chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, and we are in full support of the implementation of the HEART Program Proposal as it was initially proposed. We are both abolitionist groups, and we- our hope is that Cambridge eliminates carceral systems and instead builds up alternative systems that can promote community safety, justice, and healing. And the HEART Program, we see, uh, it- we see it as an imperative step towards both safety and justice for the Cambridge community. Police, prisons, jails, and surveillance only punish and oppress our community members, especially those who hold marginalized identities. They also fail to affect any sort of justice and that's the rationale being used to justify their violence. We support HEART because it's a- an alternative to policing systems in our City that does not work with the police. Um, the proposal from the City Council, as we saw at the beginning of this Meeting, chose to start with- by having police officers be the ones to present it. But people with disabilities, people with mental illness, and people of color are in dire need of the HEART Program's offering specifically because it- HEART is committed to not involving police. And when police are involved in responses to crises, it- they often end up- it often ends up leading to escalation, violence and im- imprisonment. Indeed, in t- 2018, Harvard students became acutely aware of this when a Black Harvard student who was having a



mental health e- episode was punched, tackled and arrested by Cambridge Police Department officers. University Health Services called the Cambridge Police Department, but what if instead there was a response that they could call that would certainly not involve the police? The HEART Program presents an opportunity to instead respond to crises like these with community care, mutual aid and de-escalation. Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker- we're going to go back to Kit Haines, who seems to be back on the call.

**Naomie Stephen:** My apologies, Mr. Clerk. They seem to have left in that time. Um, if they come back, we'll let you know.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Lisa Gimbel.

**Lisa Gimbel:** Good evening. Uh, my name is Lisa Gimbel, and I'm both a resident and a worker here in the City of Cambridge. Um, and I'm urging the City Council to implement HEART as it was originally written and designed by community organizations like The Black Response. Um, I have been involved in community-based planning processes for many years, and what it teaches me over and over again, um, is that the solutions and the- c- that come through these processes are significantly different and better than what I or any other individual would have thought of. Um, I've had to learn how to be teachable over and over again. And I ask that you and that we as a City make ourselves teachable and willing to actually listen. And, like, I get it. It's hard to give over control and to trust people. But that- that is what the challenge is here. That's what we're- what you're asked to do, City. Um, the irony that HEART would have come up with this so brilliantly, and then it would be punted to a Task Force, and then the City Manager would come up with something- th- th- something else. It's like- the community has provided what we need. Why do this separately? Um, taking the community output- the input out of the process, um, is like taking the wheels and the steering column off of a vehicle for social change and thinking it might still actually go to the intended destination. Like, it can't happen. Um, making this- it- uh, through a Department of Community Safety completely would undermine the values, the policies, the point of HEART. And, uh, you know, to the City, I say, please, like, you can justify it to yourselves to push this through as something else. But then, call it something else and say, you know what? We're scrapping your idea, because that is what it is. Like, this has to be quasi- like not underneath the Government. Um, we see nationally and locally that- that people don't trust...

**Mr. Clerk:** S- excuse me, Lisa. Your time has expired. The next speaker is Rebecca Lavine.

**Rebecca Lavine:** Hi. My name is Rebecca Lavine, and I'm a long-term community member, as well as a licensed independent clinical social worker. And, uh, when I was, um, heard that this hearing was happening, I was very excited to testify. Um, I've only learned about this recently, but I very much want to see the HEART Program implemented and funded as written. It is an excellent program. We have an opportunity here in Cambridge to do something very

special. Th- if we really do believe that we all care about the lives of everybody in this City, including, you know, everybody who is marginalized, and w- then, we have this opportunity to fund it as written and to listen to the community process. More to the point, a holistic Emergency Response Team can de-escalate and save resources, lives and suffering. So, I urge the City Council members, who I know believe in these values, to stand up for them and to show the rest of the City of Cambridge that you really do care and believe that Black Lives Matter. Thank you very much.

**Aviana Dupee:** The next speaker is Meredith Moore.

**Meredith Moore:** Hello. Uh, I'm going to read- I'm going to use my time to read testimony written by Cambridge resident Amanda Moment, who's not able to attend tonight. Uh, my name is Amanda Moment, and I'm a Cambridge resident who has chosen to live here for the last 20 years and raise my family in this community. I'm also a social worker. As a clinician, I want to strongly support implementing the HEART Proposal. The current system of responding with policing to a vast array of community needs is not ethical, not trauma-informed, and not healing. The brunt of the damage this system creates is borne by the lives and bodies of our Black and Brown community members and vulnerable members of our society, including undocumented people. Other communities like Eugene, Ore- Oregon are leading the way with collaborative programs that do not rely on police or even clinicians such as myself to be first responders, but on community members who can be carefully trained to triage needs. Residents often have strong feelings about the systems that police and clinicians represent. I have often felt this as a mandated reporter in my hospital work. And this can lead to less trust and outreach for help. This mistrust is rooted in lived experiences of racism, minimization, violence and oppression in interacting with fields such as social work and policing. We cannot pretend that we do not carry these histories into every interaction with residents, or that they should turn a blind eye to them. Training community members as responders engenders more trust among residents, prevents escalation of situations, allows specialists like myself to practice in the most efficient spaces, and creates employment and empowerment in the communities they benefit. I'm proud to live in Cambridge and I want us to be leaders in social and racial justice. I urge the City to implement HEART as written, creating a cutting-edge program that can be a model for other communities. Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Eleanor Craig.

**Eleanor Craig:** Hello. Can you hear me?

**Mr. Clerk:** We can hear you. Please go ahead.

**Eleanor Craig:** Okay, great. My name is Eleanor Craig, and I work in Cambridge at Harvard University. I lived in Cambridge for five years. I want to urge the City Council of Cambridge t- to vote yes on the implementation of the Cambridge HEART Program. I urge it to be passed as written and as a community-based alternative to public safety, independent of and outside of the police. This would

be a truly transformative approach to Public Safety, one that has buy-in from the community members most directly impacted and most frequently harmed by policing. We have the opportunity for something truly different that has the trust of the community and their investment in the process. Overriding these efforts is completely anti-democratic. The mischaracterizations of CAHOOTS and the obfuscation of the ways HEART has been sidelined and co-opted in the City Manager's process does not reassure that the City is engaging in good faith with The Black Response and those who contribute to their work. My partner worked for several years in a Cambridge nursing home where, when police were called for mental health emergencies, often with elderly people, the situation deteriorated and escalated into something more dangerous than it ever needed to be. The positive portrayals of policing in Cambridge tonight have glossed over abuses by Cambridge Police that we know are real and regular occurrences. I've been with friends in dangerous situations who would not take the risk of calling police when they were in crisis. And I fear for the safety of my two Brown children. I've seen profiling of their behavior on the street happening starting as toddlers. We need the City to be accountable to the community-based process that created HEART. The desires and demands of community members are expressed in the HEART Proposal, which should not be watered down and subsumed in the Public Safety Task Force. Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is...

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Uh, Mr. Clerk? Um, let's do a vote to extend the Meeting for- to 6:15 so we can get through the Public Comment.

**Mr. Clerk:** Yes. On that Motion, Councillor Carlone.

**Dennis J. Carlone:** Yes.

**Mr. Clerk:** Yes. Vice Mayor Mallon.

**Alanna M. Mallon:** Yes.

**Mr. Clerk:** Yes. Councillor McGovern.

**Marc C. McGovern:** Yes.

**Mr. Clerk:** Yes. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. Absent. Councillor Zondervan.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Yes.

**Mr. Clerk:** Motion passes. Four in favor, one absent. The next speaker is Kit Haines.

**Mike Nakagawa:** Hello? Hello? Can you hear me?

**Kit Haines:** Hi, my name is Kit Haines. I live at 10 Hazel Street in Cambridge. And we need the HEART Program as written. A number of my friends have been suicidal at different points in time. In a number of situations, especially with friends with suicidal tendencies, I'm unwilling to call 911. Suicidal ideation and suicide attempts increase after the psychiatric holds. I think that's worth

repeating. Suicidal ideation and suicide attempts increase after the psychiatric holds. What mandated reporters are mandated to do makes the situation worse. Mandated reporters are far more likely to force someone into a psychiatric hold, even when they know this danger. In that way, mandated reporting increases suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. This new suggestion introducing mandated reporting to the process is not a difference of optics. This is a dangerous introduction of a carceral system. 911 takes control away from people who are in need of help by deciding what help they need. In crisis, we don't give up control, it is taken from us. When you take control from people in crisis, you are adding to trauma and escalating the situation by the design, not because anyone's doing anything wrong. The difference between the HEART Proposal, which leaves control in the community and with the people in crisis and this proposal of the City Manager, which gives control to the police and authority and mirrors- also mirrors the difference between how these proposals were developed. The HEART Proposal has built trust with transparency and listening to concerns and elevating marginalized voices. The City Manager has broken that trust by deciding we need something different, acting behind closed doors, and making a different decision for us without us. The HEART Proposal is different for a reason. On every point where there is a difference, the HEART Proposal is different for a reason. And until you're listening to those reasons, you will keep doing crazy things like this. Thank you for listening. Please implement the HEART Proposal as written, not some 911 nonsense.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Mike Nakagawa.

**Mike Nakagawa:** Hello, this is Mike Nakagawa from North Cambridge. Um, last year, a driver invaded the bike lane I was in, and I ended up sprawled on the street while trying to avoid the collision. While exchanging, um, info with the driver, a police officer showed up, and it was clear he was trying to intimidate me into not filing a report against the woman, um, using terms that seemed racially triggering. As the interaction continued, I went from calmly trying to get on my way to feeling increasingly vulnerable. Um, the power dynamic was notable. I can see how interactions can escalate, um, being disrespected, so I appreciate trying to change that dynamic. What I like about the HEART Program is in the first letter, holistic. When my late wife taught in the Cambridge Public Schools, she noted one student was sometimes disruptive. She figured out that when the student was, um, hungry, they would lack concentration, be irritable, and become a classroom challenge. Instead of punishing the child, she realized the solution was to treat the root cause by supplying a snack bucket to the class. Classroom issues were a natural outcome of something beyond the student's control. We need to understand the big picture in every situation. The world is a complex system, and trying to address individual components of a problem often doesn't work. Everything is interrelated. HEART seems like a thoughtful, comprehensive, um, approach, and I hope it will be funded. It's better to take an established program, and use its experience, and adapt and enhance, rather than starting from scratch, thinking that the City knows better from a theoretical standpoint, and running into

new unexpected issues with a delay in trying to overcome them. Please start with the HEART Program as written and adapt it as needed. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Kavi Kaushik.

**Kavi Kaushik:** Hello. Uh, good evening. My name is Kavi Kaushik, and I am honored to offer this testimony on behalf of YWCA Cambridge, with a mission to eliminate racism and empower women, where I'm the advocacy and outreach coordinator. YWCA Cambridge is in support of the Cambridge HEART Proposal as written by The Black Response and the Cambridge community. As a provider of single-room occupancy housing, we believe our tenants and clients could benefit from a community response that does not involve law enforcement or the criminal legal system, but instead one that is based in community care and directly addressing the requests and need of the Cambridge community. As folks have said and will continue to say, the HEART Program was built out of a collaborative process with mostly Black and Brown community members, whereas the Task Force and City efforts, which, again, are all part of the City's process to get to this point, were a closed group. HEART was born out of a desire to, yes, address immediate needs like crisis response and conflict resolution, restorative and transformative practices, but also to center community care, healing, addressing the root causes of harm and violence, which are crucial to any community-led public safety program. Additionally, the HEART is designed to give jobs to local community members, especially Black and Brown community members and other folks who are marginalized. As, again, many people have said already, any groups of Cambridge residents that both of our- both of our alternative programs are trying to reach may be distrustful or fearful of emergency responses. So, programs based within and in close partnership with the police do not solve these inconsistencies. Passing HEART as written would allow people who are members of communities to respond to crises instead of mandated reporters, building trust within communities, and also building an anti-racist response system. We as the City of Cambridge have an amazing opportunity here to pass a system built by those directly impacted by both interpersonal and systemic violence and to make Cambridge the best it can be. Again, the HEART Program proposal, PO 114, was passed with overwhelming support from the City Council. And so, therefore, we urge you to pass HEART as written as this Qu-NGO community-based alternative completely outside of the police created by and for the community. Thank you for your consideration and attention.

**Mr. Clerk:** The next speaker is Lauren Crowe.

**Naomie Stephen:** Lauren Crowe is not on. Robert Cesari, please go ahead. Robert Cesari, if you can unmute yourself, you have the floor.

**Robert Cesari:** Hello. Am I here now?

**Mr. Clerk:** We can hear you.

**Naomie Stephen:** Please go ahead.

**Mr. Clerk:** Please go ahead.

**Robert Cesari:** Okay. Good evening, everyone, and thank you for extending the Meeting so that we could all be heard. Um, I'm speaking to ask you to, uh, fully fund and implement the HEART Program as originally directed by the City Council. Uh, HEART is a bottom-up solution to the periodic personal crises within our community, and independent of the City administration, not a solution imposed from the top down by this- by a City-organized Task Force. As such, it will involve members of our community most affected by the depredations of social crises in a collaborative effort to prevent harmful behaviors. As r- uh, therefore, HEART will increase the trust and confidence going forward of the community in their neighbors and those who respond to their personal crises. I just want to say that, uh, I've had 30 years, various roles working in the courts and the criminal justice system in Massachusetts, and in addition to that, uh, studied international affairs and international development down in D.C. at the Elliott School. So, I've seen everything with respect to the subject matter at hand, and it leads me to conclude that initiatives such as the HEART Proposal really work. I'll end there. Thank you.

**Mr. Clerk:** There are no further, uh, public speakers.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Um, so, at this point, um, we have received the City's presentation. We've heard from members of the public. Um, my suggestion is that we recess this Meeting. We can schedule another, uh, session in the next few weeks. We would not need to take Public Comment in that session, so we could hear from HEART, and then Have a further discussion among the Committee about how to proceed. So, I'll, um, entertain comments from my colleagues, and then I think we should vote to recess.

**Dennis J. Carlone:** Uh, Mr. Chair, s-...

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Councillor McGovern- uh, Councillor Carlone?

**Dennis J. Carlone:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I- I think your summary was, um, well-stated. Um, I don't recall a Meeting where every Public Comment, um, proposed the same thing. And, uh, that's very unusual. My own reading on this is- and not being active in the HEART discussions was that this seemed very reasonable. But a number of people who spoke that I know of, um, I have to also include their point of view, since, uh, I think highly of them. Um, so, I do think we have to digest this and, um, and meet again, and, um, and maybe learn more of why people feel that way. And I think it's beyond, uh, a feeling of trust. I think it's, um, it's deeper than that. And s- at least I have to learn more about that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Thank you, Councillor. Any further discussion? Seeing none, Mr. Clerk, if we can vote on a Motion to recess.

**Mr. Clerk:** On adjournment, Councillor Carlone.

**Dennis J. Carlone:** Yes.

**Marc C. McGovern:** Uh, w-...

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Uh, on...

**Marc C. McGovern:** Recess, right?

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** ... recess.

**Mr. Clerk:** Uh, on recess, Councillor Carlone.

**Dennis J. Carlone:** Yes.

**Mr. Clerk:** Yes. Vice Mayor Mallon.

**Alanna M. Mallon:** Yes.

**Mr. Clerk:** Yes. Councillor McGovern.

**Marc C. McGovern:** Yes.

**Mr. Clerk:** Yes. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. Absent. Councillor Car-Councillor Zondervan.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Yes.

**Mr. Clerk:** Motion passes. Four in favor, one absent.

**Quinton Y. Zondervan:** Thanks, everyone.

## CERTIFICATION

I, Froste Williams, a transcriber for Intellectix, do hereby certify that said proceedings were listened to and transcribed by me and were prepared using standard electronic transcription equipment under my direction and supervision; and I hereby certify that the foregoing transcript of the proceedings is a full, true, and accurate transcript to the best of my ability.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 7th day of October 2024.

*Froste Williams*



1. **A communication was received from Louie DePasquale, City Manager, transmitting a presentation for the Public Safety Committee meeting on November 17, 2021**
2. **Sundry Communications for the Public Safety Committee meeting on November 18, 2012**