

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BROWN COUNTY
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Pursuant to Section 19.84 Wis. Stats., a special meeting of the **Brown County Public Safety Committee** was held on December 8, 2022 at the Brown County Sheriff's Office, 2684 Development Drive, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Present: Chair Deneys, Supervisor Schultz, Supervisor Coenen, Supervisor Nicholson
Excused: Supervisor Kaster
Also Present: Supervisor Pat Evans, Chief Deputy Bradley Brodbeck, Director of Public Safety Communications Cullen Peltier, Green Bay Police Chief Christopher Davis, Sheriff Todd Delain, Director of Student Services for Unified School District of De Pere Jerry Nicholson, Assistant Superintendent of Operations at Howard Suamico School District Mike Juech, President of the Brown County Chiefs of Police Association Brian Uhl, Safety and Security Manager for Green Bay Area Public Schools Chris Collar and other interested parties

I. Call meeting to order.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Deneys at 3:36 pm.

II. Approve/Modify Agenda.

Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Schultz to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Comments from the Public – None.

Action Items Including Proposed Resolutions, Ordinances and Budget Adjustments

**1. Resolution Regarding 911 Policy of PSC Department (Request to Send Officers to Schools in Certain Situations).
*Referred back to Committee from October County Board.***

Motion made Supervisor Coenen, seconded by Supervisor Schultz to amend the Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved language in the resolution to read as follows:

Now, Therefore Be it Resolved by the Brown County Board of Supervisors that it shall be the policy of the PSCD to vet all 911 calls received from a landline at a school and direct Public Safety Communications Director to work with local law enforcement and public and private schools to work together to come up with best policy/practices to optimize safety plans and ensure school safety. *No vote taken; see friendly amendment below.*

Supervisor Coenen feels all calls need to be vetted. We all want to make schools a better place to be and each school has a unique safety plan and everything needs to work through the respective safety plans. Safety plans may not be equal from school to school and Coenen feels the Committee needs to make the best policy for all schools, taking into account the environment within each school. She feels there has been good conversation on this and light has been shed on some things that need to happen, but we also have to be conscientious of the school safety plans and have a consistent process.

Supervisor Schultz feels if we are going to change the resolution as stated in the motion that all 911 calls should be vetted, in his mind, we are going back to what we were originally doing. Chair Deneys noted the motion also includes that Public Safety Communications would work with schools to come up with the best policy and practices to make sure what is done is correct. Director of Public Safety Communications Cullen Peltier noted that calls are already being vetted.

Schultz is just as concerned about school safety as everyone else, but if the word “vetted” is included, we are right back to where we were and he would like to see the motion rescinded and this left to the professionals.

Coenen noted calls can be vetted and law enforcement still not show up. Peltier added that calls are going to be vetted prior to requesting an officer whether or not the resolution passes. Coenen mentioned there are different needs between public and private schools and there needs to be conversations between local law enforcement and the public and private schools.

Supervisor Evans does not feel the vetting language in the proposed amendment needs to be included because it is already being done. He also noted the education portion is already in the resolution and he does not feel we need a resolution to say what we are already doing. He would like to concentrate on the issue of having law enforcement respond to 911 calls to do a welfare check.

Peltier explained the plan all along was that calls would be vetted. He does not have a problem with that language being included in the resolution because the vetting is going to happen whether it’s in there or not. The one concern Peltier does have is that the policy be consistent across the board for all schools.

Schultz said when calls are vetted like they currently are and the decision is that it is not a true emergency and not dispatched there is no statutory authority to respond in emergency fashion with lights and sirens. If an officer responds in a non-emergency situation to do a welfare check, in many cases it will take the officer at least 20 minutes to get there. Schultz finds this frustrating and confusing and feels we should rescind this altogether and just let the professionals do their jobs.

Jerry Nicholson, Director of Student Services for Unified School District of De Pere, informed they are required to review and update their safety plan for the Department of Justice Office of School Safety every year, but he does not know if private schools have the same requirement. In terms of consistency, what they support is that calls are vetted and an officer is not sent if it is determined it was a mistaken call. Part of the reason is the current swatting trend that is going on nationally. Additionally, typically when there is an active violence situation occurring in a school, there will be multiple 911 calls. Some school districts are also looking at software that will allow all staff to link to landline phones and school systems to dial 911 from their cellphones.

Jerry Nicholson agrees that outreach or collaboration with private schools is appropriate, but he does not feel there should be different procedures for private schools and public schools. Instead, there should be coaching and training about what the response is and then work with the private schools to make sure their internal processes compliment that. A resolution that has outreach to private schools would be more beneficial than a change in procedure in Nicholson’s opinion.

Sheriff Delain agreed with everything Nicholson said. He stressed that if after a call is vetted law enforcement is still required to respond no matter what, he is going to be opposed to it, most of the schools are going to be opposed to it and so are most of the Chiefs. He also stressed that he 100% percent supports the resources that are needed based on the vetting.

Mike Juech, Assistant Superintendent of Operations at Howard Suamico School District is a firm believer in trusting the professionals to make decisions, both internally as well as other organizations. He has had nothing but positive experiences with the BCSO, including their SROs and he feels their professional judgment should be relied on and followed. Secondly, it seems this would be adding another layer which then undercuts the DOJ Office of School Safety and he feels before decisions are made those people should be consulted so everything aligns with best practices that are being identified to school districts from that office. Juech also questioned who would be working with the schools as mentioned in the resolution, because although it may sound good, if relationships are not established, mandating those components is difficult. This goes back to the professionalism and trusting the professionals and establishing community partnerships and he reiterated the wonderful response he has had from all first responders, including the Sheriff’s Office. Juech also concurred with Nicholson that the policies need to be uniform so all situations are taken in the same light.

Coenen questioned if instead of sending law enforcement for a welfare check, schools could give some sort of security code or safe word when called back and if the school was not able to do that, law enforcement would be sent.

Deneys suggested a friendly amendment be made to the earlier motion as follows:

To amend the resolution by striking the first Whereas paragraph, keeping the second Whereas paragraph, striking the Now, Therefore Be It Resolved paragraph and amending the last paragraph to read "BE IT RESOLVED that the Brown County Board of Supervisors hereby directs the Public Safety Communications Department and law enforcement agencies to work with the school districts that operate within Brown County regarding the 911 process to schools and to develop best practices.

After discussion regarding this friendly amendment, the following motion was made:

Motion made by Supervisor Coenen, seconded by Supervisor Schultz to amend the resolution by striking the first Whereas paragraph, keeping the second Whereas paragraph, striking the Now, Therefore Be It Resolved paragraph and amending the last paragraph to read "BE IT RESOLVED that the Brown County Board of Supervisors hereby directs the Public Safety Communications Department and law enforcement agencies to work with the school districts that operate within Brown County regarding the 911 process to schools and to develop best practices. Vote taken. Ayes: Deneys & Schultz Nay: Nicholson Abstain: Coenen. MOTION CARRIED 2 TO 1

Evans does not support this and likes the way the resolution is currently written. He said every school has a multi hazard operational plan. This is a county policy and he appreciates the schools and Chiefs weighing in. If the schools or Chiefs do not like this, they can go to their respective councils or boards to weigh in and say they don't want to do this. He does not feel this adds another layer for the schools. He also talked about earlier comments made regarding law enforcement response with lights and sirens and said he has seen law enforcement comes to schools many times without lights and sirens.

Evans explained why this communication originally came to be and his question is still how a call taker would know there was not a bad guy with a gun to someone's head when 911 calls back on a hang up call. School safety is talked about all the time and how the children are number one, but now we do not want to do this and that is strange to him. He does not understand why we would not want to add another layer of protection for the schools. If the schools, Sheriff's Department and Chiefs do not want this, if something bad happens and the response is going to take 20 minutes, that is a problem. Evans does not have a problem adding another layer of protection. It is stressed in school training that the number one priority is the safety of the students and he does not understand the problem with this. He has heard from some officers that the Chief and Sheriff do not want to be told what to do by the Supervisors. Evans feels Public Safety Communications can dispatch an officer as a county policy and if the Sheriff or any other agency says no, they are going to vet it back, and they decide they don't need to go, that's their decision. Evans said area law enforcement does a great job and they should make the decision, but the county should still make the policy.

Regarding Evans comments that there are officers that do not agree with policy, Deneys said that happens in every employee/employer relationship. As to whether the school is called back and someone has a gun to someone's head, that is why Public Safety Communications would work with the schools and law enforcement to develop best practices. Deneys feels the important thing is that there is some connection between PSC and the schools to be sure we have best practices and that is what his suggested friendly amendment would do. It would direct the professionals to come up with the best policies to keep schools safe.

Brian Uhl, President of the Brown County Chiefs of Police Association supports the friendly amendment and noted the Chiefs are very supportive of making sure the kids are safe. Concerning codewords, that is something that would be up to the schools to determine what they are comfortable with.

Coenen asked school representatives if they were open to using codewords. Jerry Nicholson responded that the Office of School Safety has instructed them to refrain from using codewords. Research shows when a codeword is not used very often, a lot of times there will be confusion as to what the code word means. They have been directed that best practice is to state what is being done in terms of response. Nicholson likes that the resolution not only directs to look at best practices but also provides for training for all schools, no matter how small, to know what the 911 process is. From that standpoint, he is very supportive of the resolution.

Chris Collar, Safety and Security Manager for Green Bay Area Public Schools informed most of their schools are monitored 24/7 by a company in Minnesota. If an alarm is activated the call goes to the alarm company who then dispatches an officer and then a call is placed to the building to verify there is actually an emergency. In those situations, the school has a password they can provide to the dispatchers to let them know it is a false alarm. This information is then relayed to the officers so there is not emergency response when it is not needed. If no one answers when a school is contacted back or the password is not given, law enforcement responds.

Christopher Davis, Green Bay Police Chief thinks the code word idea is good but feels a resolution coming from the county should be more general guidance and not too specific to allow law enforcement room to do more research. He likes the idea of finding out what best practices are and then implementing the best thing that can be found.

Coenen feels everyone's goal is to improve school safety and if everyone sticks to their guns, nothing is going to happen and she does not want that. She would like to see something that makes everyone happy.

Schultz said we need to get out of the emotional part of this and use the reasoning part of our brains which is saying leave this to the professionals. He loves the idea of suggesting and recommending PSC to work with law enforcement and schools. Anything beyond that is out of the scope of this Committee and the County Board.

At this time, Schultz called a vote on the motion.

Other

2. Such other matters as authorized by law. None

3. Adjourn.

**Motion made by Supervisor Schultz, seconded by Supervisor Coenen to adjourn at 4:31 pm. Vote taken.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Respectfully submitted,

Therese Giannunzio
Legislative Specialist