From: Ashley Gregory
To: Tracy Jensen; Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; Tony Daysog; Trish Spencer; Malia Vella
Cc: Manager Manager; City Clerk
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Item 7-B: CARE Team
Date: Tuesday, February 21, 2023 3:36:44 PM

Dear Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft, Vice Mayor Daysog, Councilmember Herrera Spencer, Councilmember Jensen, and Councilmember Vella;

As a mental health professional and concerned Alamedan neighbor, I am writing to express my support of continued funding of the CARE program provided there is a detailed plan to phase out Alameda Police Department's involvement.

It is clear that dispatch procedures are an important part of ensuring real safety for all Alamedans. Personnel need expanded training and firm direction to ensure that APD dispatchers are not sending police to calls that do not require them while a plan is made to phase them out completely. Callers should be able to specify that they need the CARE team only, and informed that they have this choice. Additionally, AFD and AFS program staff should explore how the national 988 rollout ties into the CARE team's needs. Ultimately, we have to hold the vision that APD should not be involved in the CARE program in order to realize this goal.

With a focus on eliminating police involvement, funding can focus on providing AFD the resources they need to prioritize first responder mental health. This might mean changes in staffing from folks with traditional firefighting or EMT backgrounds to paramedicine experts specializing in street health, harm reduction, and skills relevant to our unhoused community members.

The Alameda Community Budget shows that community members resoundingly want to see police eliminated from community interactions related to mental and physical health related crises. This supports the initial direction from the subcommittees, the messaging from the community all along, and the larger national evidence that shows how terribly ineffective, inappropriate and violent it is to have police respond to these types of crises. This program holds incredible promise, but only if it is implemented the way it was intended - without police.

With the two year anniversary of the murder of Mario Gonzalez right around the corner, on April 19th, and it is a stark reminder that Council must take seriously the life-saving measure of removing all police involvement in the CARE program as soon as possible.

Respectfully,

Ashley Gregory

From:	Drew Dara-Abrams
To:	Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; Tony Daysog; Trish Spencer; Malia Vella; Tracy Jensen
Cc:	City Clerk
Subject:	[EXTERNAL] Item 7-B Recommendation to Receive a Twelve-Month Update on the Community Assessment Response and Engagement (CARE) Team Pilot Program and Transition the Program from a Pilot to an Ongoing Program
Date:	Tuesday, February 21, 2023 12:07:13 PM

Dear Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft, Vice Mayor Daysog, and Councilmembers,

In recent years, the City of Alameda has talked a lot about complicated topics including racial equity, police reform, and homeless support. To be frank, the city has had a mixed record of actually following through on this talk.

The Alameda CARE team is a very bright spot. It's a concrete program that's made meaningful changes to how the City delivers care to vulnerable individuals — and it's a meaningful change in how concerned residents and business owners can call on the City to provide support in situations that are uncertain or worrisome.

The CARE team is proving to be effective. In addition to the staff report, if you have not already, let me recommend you read the earlier but perhaps more accessible article at https://www.jems.com/community-paramedicine-and-mobile-health/city-of-alameda-ca-behavioral-paramedic-program-dramatically-reduces-ems-transports/ It's striking how many more people are assisted on-site rather than transported to an emergency room or a psychiatric hold facility.

Each one of the situations handled by the unarmed CARE team is a situation that is not handled by the city's armed law enforcement personnel. Of course, the Alameda Police Dept. remains available for situations where someone is dangerous to others. But I think we can agree that the more situations that can be served with a compassionate unarmed response, the better — both for the individuals in each situation, as well as for everyone in Alameda who cares about how the city provides services on our behalf.

Please make the CARE team an ongoing program, so that it can continue to be a part of the city's toolkit of services for the entire public.

Thanks for your time,
Drew Dara-Abrams
Calhoun St.

From: Is Sullivan
To: Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; Tony Daysog; Trish Spencer; Malia Vella; City Clerk; Tracy Jensen
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Item 7-B on 2/21/23 Agenda
Date: Tuesday, February 21, 2023 7:54:59 AM

Dear Council,

I am writing you to voice my support for the continuation of the CARE program under the condition that a plan be put in place to remove APD from CARE operations. The CARE program was originally conceived as a non-police alternative to support people having mental health emergencies. For the CARE program to be a true alternative, CARE dispatch should be decoupled from APD dispatch, and CARE staff should receive the training, support, and funding needed to avoid APD responding to calls. Some of this funding could come from APD's budget, mapping with the decrease in calls that APD has to take.

A true non-police response to mental health emergencies is an essential and potentially life-saving need in Alameda. To be at its most accessible, the CARE program should continue on, entirely separate from APD.

Thank you,
Is Sullivan