

From: [Roberta A](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#); [citycouncil](#); [Virginia Stapleton](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 5.b Mobile Crisis Unit Pilot Project: Needed
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 9:41:14 AM

Councilors:

I support Councilor Nordyke's motion for a mobile crisis unit pilot project because Salem is failing to meet the needs of mentally ill; addicted; and those in crisis with adequate, appropriate treatment.

Sending the police when a social worker, medical staff, and/or other professional is the necessary response, only escalates whatever trauma is being experienced by the person in crisis. The use of police with guns should be reserved for criminal activity - that is, activity that is intentionally criminal, not an activity that is the result of someone in a personal crisis where other interventions are the better solution.

It's been shown that cities which treat people in crisis with appropriate resources have significantly better outcomes all around.

Roberta Cade

1321 Chemeketa St NE

97301

From: [Rob Owen](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Fwd: Agenda Item 5.b Motion from Councilor Vanessa Nordyke requesting information regarding a mobile crisis unit pilot project
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 1:46:02 PM

Rob Owen
Pittsburgh Trib * Seattle Times * Kansas City Star
c: 412-725-4101
1725 Court St. NE, Salem, OR 97301
RobOwenTV@gmail.com
@RobOwenTV on Twitter
RobOwenTV on Facebook
Pittsburgh Trib stories: <https://triblive.com/aande/tv-talk-with-rob-owen/>
Seattle Times stories: <https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/tv/>
Kansas City Star stories: <https://www.kansascity.com/entertainment/tv/>

TCA * Critics Choice * GALECA member

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Rob Owen** <robowentv@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Jan 7, 2022 at 1:32 PM
Subject: re: Agenda Item 5.b Motion from Councilor Vanessa Nordyke requesting information regarding a mobile crisis unit pilot project
To: <ityrecorder@cityofsalem.net>, <citycouncil@cityofsalem.net>

To whom it may concern:

I support the motion for a staff report on a mobile crisis unit pilot project because I have a family member with mental health issues and I do not want to see him gunned down by police if he has an uncontrolled escalation in public someday. People with mental health issues in crisis should be met by trained mental health professionals whenever possible, not by police with guns drawn.

As an assessment of the Salem Police Dept. showed (<https://www.salemreporter.com/posts/5794/review-found-details-lacking-in-salem-police-reports-for-suicide-calls-crisis-response-program-most-effective>) the current county mobile crisis unit is not always available, either due to limited staffing or because it is needed in two places simultaneously. If Marion County will not do its duty to protect its most vulnerable citizens, then the city needs to step up.

Thank you for your consideration.

Robert Owen
1725 Court St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

From: [Tom O'Connor](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#); [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Mobile Crisis Units
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 3:21:09 PM

Dear City of Salem,

I write to support the motion for a staff report on a mobile crisis unit pilot project because prevention is the most effective and cost-efficient way of solving some of our pressing and recurring social problems. I have worked in the criminal justice field for over 30 years. I believe we have an important place among the institutions of society. However, the ability of the justice system to resolve social problems is limited. Far better to spend the money on responses that work.

Thank you,

Tom

Tom O'Connor, Ph.D.,
CEO., [Transforming Corrections](#)
& [Transforming Communication](#)
Mobile: (503) 559-5752

From: [W B](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#); [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Re Agenda Item 5.b, Motion from Councilor Vanessa Nordyke regarding a mobile crisis unit
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 12:34:56 PM

I would like to comment to the Council that I want Salem to have a CAHOOTS-style program. Many times people call 911 because there's no other realistic option to get a rapid response to a crisis... but they don't necessarily want an aggressive man with a gun to come in and start yelling and threatening people with arrest. They can't necessarily afford an ambulance ride or feel like being locked in a psych ward will be beneficial. Given the option, they might have a strong preference between police, fire, ambulance and mental crisis response: they're the ones observing the situation, the dispatcher only has the caller's words to go on.

We have police because the Executive Branch needs a way to physically enforce laws -- usually felonies that are actually arrest-worthy, since traffic, parking, health, labor and other civil penalties are rarely worth a gun on your hip -- by detaining and referring people to prosecution. The idea that police are also dogcatchers and domestic abuse prevention and a force for serving and protecting is mostly PR, and distracts from the very real work of finding and detaining murderers and thieves, or responding to active shootings.

Just as we have firefighters for fire emergencies, ambulances for medical emergencies, and National Guard or FEMA for widespread environmental emergencies, we need mental/social crisis responders who can respond to psychological or small-scale environmental emergencies.

I once watched a crying young child forcibly chased down and ripped from his mother's arms by multiple armed men because Family Court decided that his absentee father was a better provider, despite allegations of abuse. Were guns and physical violence really the best way to accomplish that? It scarred me just seeing it happen, let alone if I were that child being ripped from my only loving parent by the armed government. It seems to me a better system is possible and necessary. The presence of a gun is in itself an escalation of a situation, even if police are supposedly trained in de-escalation.

Some emergencies need response in the form of water, others in the form of morphine, or Humvees, or sometimes even guns. The giant missing gap in our system is emergencies that need response in the form of a sympathetic ear and a safe place to stay. It used to be that the town pastor would fill such roles, but with large populations a more formal, coordinated system is needed. Police can try to fill this gap, but it's not actually their core mission, and many police chiefs nationwide have said that their departments are overworked, filling in too many roles outside their training. We wouldn't dream of using the National Guard as long-term hospital staff, so why are we as a society so eager to use police as social workers? A separate, independent, care-oriented department should be on 911 speed dial so that the right response is possible, separate from the Police Chief's responsibility to enforcing laws and prosecuting criminals.

- Will Bradley, District 1