



# COUNCIL MINUTES

March 10, 2022

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session in the lower-level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on March 10, 2022, at 7:30 a.m.

## COUNCIL PRESENT

John Giles  
Jennifer Duff  
Mark Freeman  
Francisco Heredia  
David Luna  
Julie Spilsbury\*  
Kevin Thompson

## COUNCIL ABSENT

None

## OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady  
Holly Moseley  
Jim Smith

(\*Participated in the meeting through the use of video conference equipment.)

Mayor John Giles conducted a roll call.

1-a. Hear a presentation, review progress, discuss, and provide direction on the use of American Rescue Plan Act funds for the City's public safety response model for mental health-related 911 calls.

Performance Advisor Amanda Freeman introduced Andrew Erwin, Solari Chief Operating Officer, and Matthew Moody, Solari Contact Center Operations Director, and displayed a PowerPoint presentation. **(See Attachment 1)**

Mr. Erwin provided background information on Solari, which is the largest non-profit behavioral health crisis center in the United States that serves Central and Northern Arizona, and explained in the last year 4,800 mobile teams were dispatched in Mesa. He explained Solari acquired the 211 Arizona line in 2016, which is a health and human services line that serves the entire state; fielded 11,000 calls from Mesa residents and assisted them with housing, utility assistance, and food insecurity issues. He added the concept behind this service is minimizing the need for residents to engage the crisis line services.

Mr. Erwin highlighted the structure of the crisis system in Arizona with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) as the main source of funding for the crisis system, followed by the Regional Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA) administered by Medicaid and Medicare, and then the Arizona Complete Health Systems which oversees the crisis line, crisis facilities, and providers.

Mr. Erwin provided information on the crisis line which dispatches a mobile team to support the community and if the team cannot provide the assistance, then the resident is taken to an inpatient facility. (See Page 3 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Moody continued with the presentation and explained research shows a majority of Mesa residents do not want law enforcement involved in non-violent mental health calls. He added the program began with the idea of how to divert 911 calls when certain types of calls are better handled by the crisis system. (See Pages 4 and 5 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Moody commented on the Mesa policy that changed how mental health crisis calls are handled. He stated the policy was changed in 2018 and in 2019 the number of mental health calls began to increase. (See Page 6 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Moody provided details on co-location of 911 dispatchers and Solari staff, stating this involves call center coaching and consulting with the 911 staff, training on the crisis system, how to utilize the services, and what types of calls are effective to send over to the crisis line. He added staff has been co-located since June 2021. (See Page 7 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Erwin highlighted the process flow for Phase Two which will leverage the Crisis Contact Center to utilize mobile teams and inpatient facilities and provide dedicated staff to Mesa. He explained Mesa will have specialized teams that work within the community. He added the mobile teams will be leveraged in down times to work with residents to address homelessness and follow up on 911 call behavioral health issues. (See Page 8 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Erwin explained there are currently 30 mobile teams that operate in the Phoenix Metro area with one to one-and-a-half-hour response times for law enforcement. He commented these are the standards by which Solari judges improvements and it is anticipated once teams are in Mesa, these response times will be reduced. He remarked on the current process stating when calls come in from law enforcement, they must decide how to resolve the issue, whether that is taking the patient to an inpatient facility, jail, or the emergency room. He said having a mobile response team can keep the patient in the community and provide a lower cost intervention and will be more directed to the type of services that are needed.

Mr. Moody commented on the dedicated mobile teams stating the focus is improving the quality of life for Mesa residents and reducing response times. He said the mobile teams will have an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) in the unit that will focus on substance abuse and homelessness and will follow up with residents that are consistently needing assistance. He added using the experience from these teams working in conjunction with law enforcement will assist in making improvements and changing policies and procedures to meet the needs of the community. (See Page 9 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Moody explained the many benefits of enhanced co-location, including collaboration as crisis calls come in and building relationships between crisis and 911 staff. (See Page 10 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Moody described the best practice in Mesa as a model for the country. He added staff works with various community organizations to come up with the most efficient processes and implements best practices to improve services and response times. (See Page 11 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Freeman highlighted the project budget and staff's recommendation to enter into a two-year contract. She indicated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds will cover the contract period at an estimated \$2.5 million. (See Page 12 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Councilmember Luna regarding the qualifications of the response team, Mr. Erwin explained Solari staff are counselors and social workers, generally comprising a two-person team with at least four-years' experience and a bachelor's degree. He further commented different combinations of experience is often used with a master's level clinician and a peer member that has real life experience, providing an intervention that is similar to a counseling session. He clarified staff also completes specialized training that includes shadowing a staff member that has significant experience in crisis response.

Mr. Moody further clarified that crisis work is very specialized and is not learned in the process of becoming a licensed therapist or social worker. He stated the specialized training involves being present in crisis situations and learning how to deal with the many facets of a crisis and the services needed.

In response to additional questions from Councilmember Luna, Mr. Moody explained co-located staff members have spent 20 hours per week in the 911 center and the other 20 hours per week as a crisis specialist. He said the crisis role ensures staff maintains an understanding of the crisis work. He added co-locating staff builds relationship, trust, and an understanding of the expertise of crisis staff and 911 dispatch staff.

Mr. Erwin commented an additional benefit of the co-location is in the rapport that is built with staff when calls are not coming in; that in the downtime, crisis staff is teaching 911 dispatchers how to get comfortable with the types of calls that are being transferred and coaching 911 staff on moving calls to crisis staff.

In response to a question from Mayor Giles, Mr. Erwin explained what sets Mesa apart from other cities is the policy Mesa implemented that directed 911 dispatchers to refer crisis calls to the behavioral health line instead of dispatching law enforcement or fire personnel. He said one of the big takeaways from this change has been that 50% of crisis calls were resolved by talking to crisis staff in what amounted to a counseling session. He indicated this happened in Phase One and Phase Two will include dedicated mobile response teams.

In response to a question from Councilmember Spilsbury, Mr. Erwin explained training would be ongoing. He commented contact center staff are more comfortable when they can interact with clinicians and recommended that level of staff support and service continue.

In response to additional questions from Councilmember Spilsbury regarding safety and community resources, Mr. Moody stated staff would work with the individual, family, or friends to provide resources, dispatch a mobile team, or law enforcement if needed.

Mr. Erwin further clarified that when a call is received staff will determine if the individual is enrolled in Medicaid or in an outpatient treatment program. He explained Solari is looking into an access database for enrollment information to be incorporated into the electronic health record, which will send notices to clinics working with individuals that have called in, to provide care coordination. He stated Solari does make referrals to local agencies for various social service needs.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Duff regarding Mesa Fire and Medical Crisis Response Teams (CRT), Assistant City Manager John Pombier commented the City does not currently have

those teams in service. He clarified when a call comes in to the 911 call center, dispatchers have the choice to refer calls to Police, Fire, or Behavioral Health, depending on the level of service needed. He said staff is continually reviewing the program to ensure the appropriate response is provided.

Mr. Brady clarified this program is a higher level of service than the City has ever provided before. He commented City staff does not have the expertise or the human infrastructure to understand all the training and skillsets to undertake the program as a whole.

Mr. Pombier added police officers may go on calls that dispatchers did not realize was a behavioral health call and would reach out for services. He said this will be a great resource for officers and will help build trust between teams.

Mr. Erwin commented on this concept of code dispatch when an individual is having a situation where law enforcement is dispatched first, then behavioral health is contacted to send the mobile team because they deem the situation stable. He said there are several ways a situation could be handled.

In response to questions from Vice Mayor Duff regarding plans for response teams, Mr. Pombier explained the initial goal is to gauge the response levels and utilization of these teams and see where improvements can be made and to expand the program.

Mr. Erwin commented on the 30 teams that will be utilized Valley wide and there will also be dedicated teams in Mesa. He added if the dedicated teams are busy, Solari will dispatch from the 30 Valley-wide teams to Mesa for additional support.

In response to questions from Councilmember Freeman regarding the structure of work hours, Mr. Erwin explained an analysis was done and based on the number of calls to 911, the number of teams were determined to meet 70 hours of coverage per week.

Ms. Freeman confirmed the peak times are 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and teams will work shifts of 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., with another shift from 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. seven days a week.

Mr. Brady stated this program will continue to lighten Public Safety's workload. He said it is clear that this model is a more effective and efficient process, as well as being less expensive than utilizing police officers. He stated that once the two-year contract is complete, the program will make sense from a City funding perspective to continue maintenance of the program.

Mayor Giles thanked Solari and City staff for the presentation.

1-b. Appointments to the Economic Development Advisory Board.

It was moved by Councilmember Luna, seconded by Councilmember Thompson, that the Council concur with the Mayor's recommendations and the appointments be confirmed. **(See Attachment 2)**

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Giles-Duff-Freeman-Heredia-Luna-Spilsbury-Thompson  
NAYS – None

Carried unanimously.

2. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of various boards and committees.

- 2-a. Economic Development Advisory Board meeting held on February 1, 2022.
- 2-b. Housing and Community Development Advisory Board meeting held on February 3, 2022.

It was moved by Councilmember Luna, seconded by Councilmember Thompson, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Giles-Duff-Freeman-Heredia-Luna-Spilsbury-Thompson  
NAYS – None

Carried Unanimously.

3. Current events summary including meetings and conferences attended.

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Councilmember Luna –    | Police Department Promotional Service<br>Good Samaritan Recognition Ceremony                                   |
| Councilmember Freeman - | Mesa Police Academy graduation   |
| Vice Mayor Duff –       | Police Department Promotional Service<br>East Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce -<br>Women’s Day Celebration |

4. Scheduling of meetings.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that the schedule of meetings is as follows:

Thursday, March 17, 2022, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the City Council Study Session adjourned at 8:34 a.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
JOHN GILES, MAYOR

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
HOLLY MOSELEY, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 2022. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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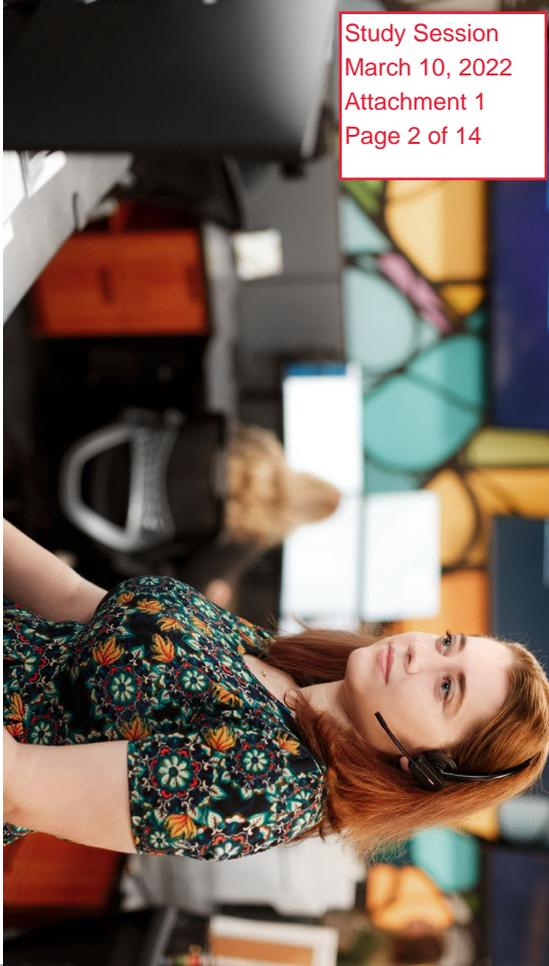
HOLLY MOSELEY, CITY CLERK

abg/dm  
(Attachments – 1)

# City of Mesa

## Crisis Collaboration Project





Solari is an award-winning non-profit based in Tempe, Arizona. Solari provides solutions that improve public access to local services.

Solari's Crisis Response Network has provided crisis line and dispatch services in Arizona since 2007.

Inspiring

*Hope*



**Solari**  
CRISIS & HUMAN SERVICES



# State Structure

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AHCCCS

RBHAS

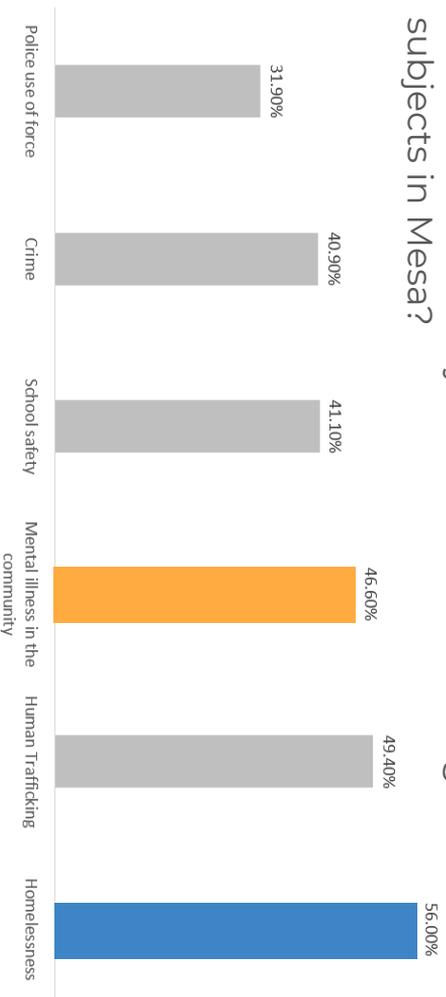
Crisis Line

Crisis Facilities

Providers

# Morrison Institute Research Findings

How concerned are you about the following subjects in Mesa?



# 87%

of residents would like Mesa to respond to mental health related calls with co-professional teams (mental health and PD) or solely non-police alternatives.

# 74%

- of residents are supportive of using public funds to hire mental health professionals to handle non violent mental health calls.

# 911 Diversion

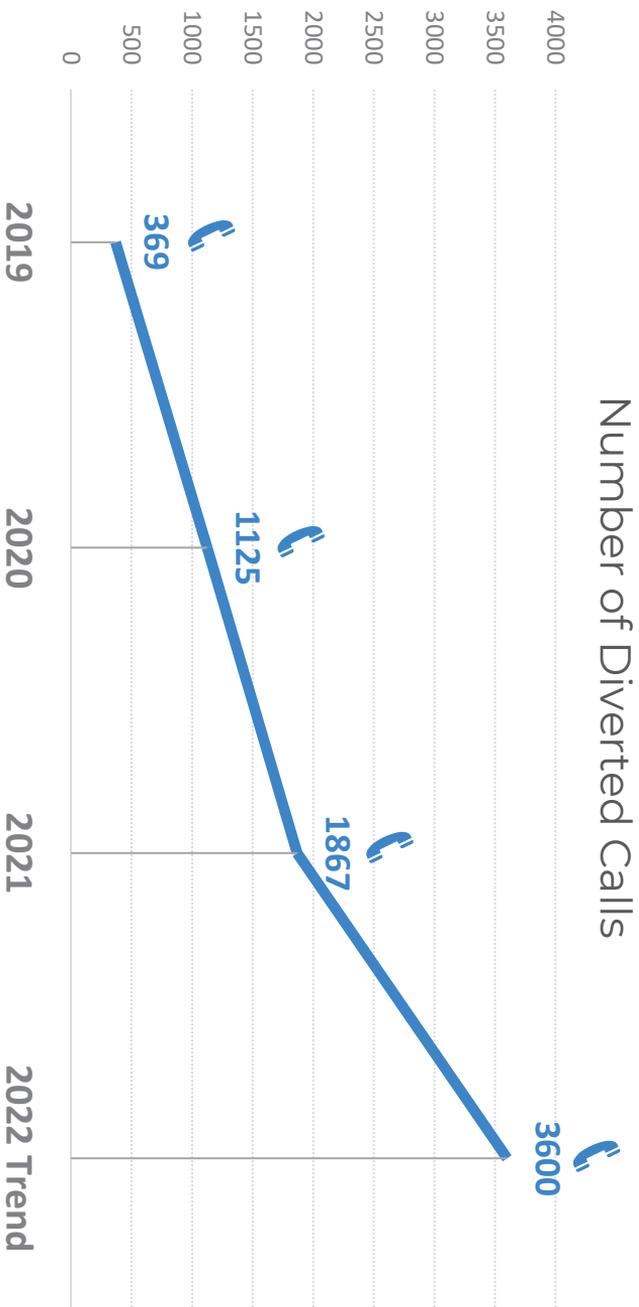
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**Goal:** Identify calls that meet criteria for Solaris's crisis line, and do not have immediate safety concerns. Then transfer those calls away from 911.

- This reduces the burden on the 911 system and ensures highest level of care for callers.

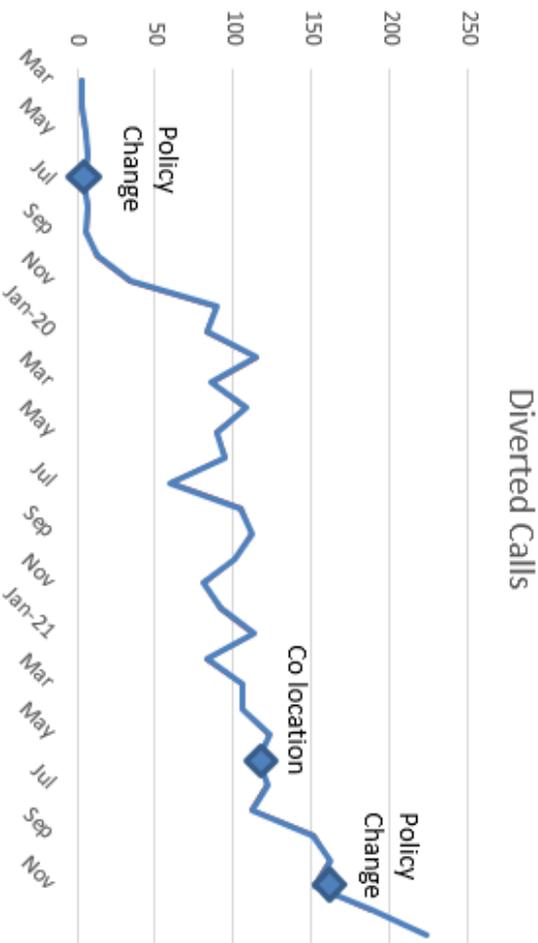


# Co-location Success

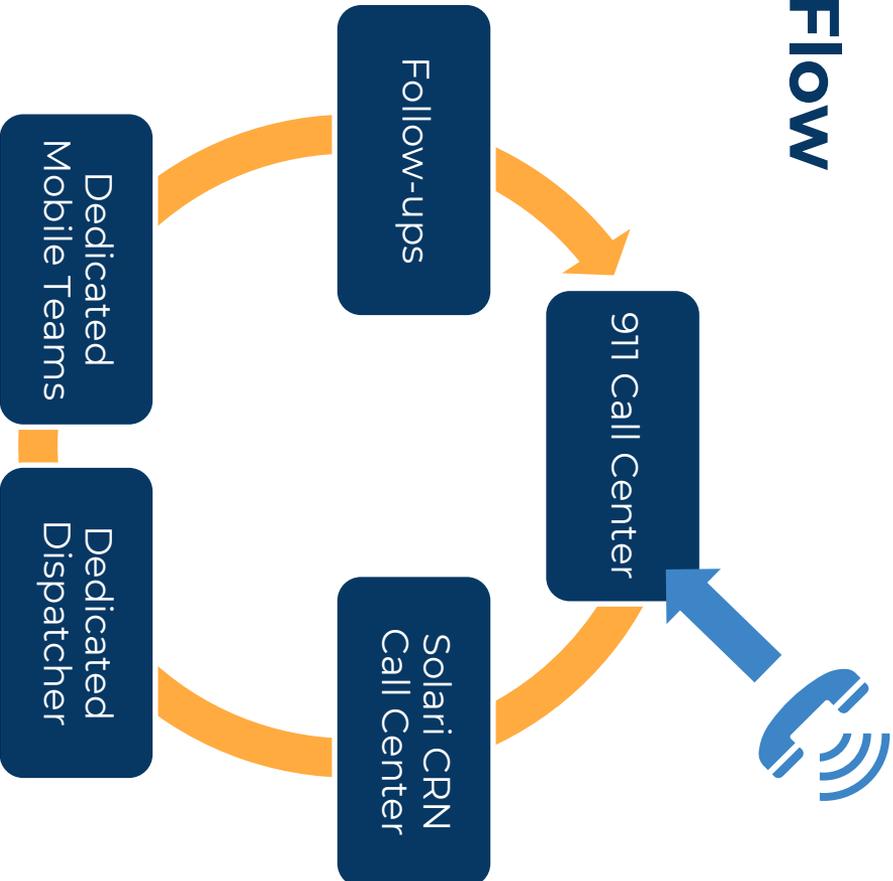


# Success Details

- Diverted calls are up 175% since June 2021
- 4 policy changes effective November 2021
- 100% of Dispatch staff received specialized training
- Solari staff are co-located 18-20 hours per week



# Process Flow



# Dedicated Mobile Teams

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Teams through Community Bridges and EMPACT will provide response for mental health crisis, substance use, homelessness and follow-ups.



# Enhanced Co-location

Necessary for  
consistent change.

Develops a position  
that understands  
police culture as  
well as the mental  
health system.

Provides real-time  
support and  
training.

# Best Practice in Mesa, a Model for the Country



## **INNOVATIVE**

Mesa is the first city to adopt this approach. It will create a national best practice.



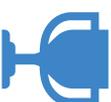
## **EFFICIENT**

This model leverages the crisis system rather than creating new costly models within law enforcement.



## **SPECIALIZED**

We are specializing services in Mesa to support the community and reduce ETA's.



## **QUALITY**

The crisis system has oversight and infrastructure to ensure quality and consistency.

# Budget

| <b>Item</b>                  | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Cost</b>        |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Dedicated Dispatch Resources | Law Enforcement Crisis Liaison, Law Enforcement Dispatcher Lead, Technical Support and Administration, equipment and licensure. | \$353,675          |
| Dedicated Mobile Teams       | Dedicated mobile teams for outreach and Mesa specific community follow-up. Two teams available 70 hours per week.               | \$900,000          |
| <b>ANNUAL TOTAL</b>          |   | <b>\$1,253,675</b> |

# Thanks!

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**Any questions?**



mesa.az



March 10, 2022

TO: CITY COUNCILMEMBERS

FROM: MAYOR JOHN GILES

SUBJECT: Appointments to Boards and Committees

The following are my recommendations for appointments to City of Mesa Advisory Boards and Committees.

**Economic Development Advisory Board** – Nine-member board including new appointments.

Michelle Genereux, District 1. Ms. Genereux is a Land Rights Management Supervisor at SRP and has over 20 years' experience in the public utility industry. She earned a bachelor's degree in management from Western International University and a master's degree in business administration from Ottawa University. She volunteers as a youth mentor at Big Brothers Big Sisters. Her term expires June 30, 2023.

Kathleen Jolivette, District 5. Ms. Jolivette is Attack Helicopter Programs and Mesa Senior Site Executive Vice President at Boeing who oversees more than 4,300 employees. She earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from Lindenwood University and an MBA from Washington University. She is a volunteer at Sunshine Acres Children's Home. Her term expires June 30, 2023.