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Legislative Proposal to Expand Advisory Group’s Role
BCA Superintendent Drew Evans spoke with advisory group members about proposed changes to the Advisory Group’s bylaws (Minnesota Statutes 299C.65). The proposed changes would assign the Advisory Group additional duties of reviewing and advising the BCA on:
- Audits, accreditation reports, and internal reviews of BCA operations.
- Emerging technologies in the law enforcement and forensic science fields.
- Policies and practices that impact individual privacy interests.
- Other programmatic and operational initiatives of the BCA at the request of the Superintendent.

This review role would help the BCA be more responsive to the needs of criminal justice partners and the public. It would also help ensure that the BCA is gathering input from diverse stakeholders in Minnesota and hearing all perspectives.

The proposed changes also include eliminating two parts regarding the Advisory Group’s role in making recommendations on legislative changes or appropriations, and in reviewing funding and grant requests.

Members expressed support for the addition of an advisory role for BCA processes, but a consensus emerged that the proposed deletions would be better left in place. The Advisory Group also agreed that it would be beneficial to take a closer look at the group’s name and branding, given the expanded role.

See It, Say It, Send It
The Advisory Group heard a presentation on the BCA’s See It, Say It, Send It app by Special-Agent-in-Charge Brian Marquart, head of the BCA’s Criminal Information and Operations section.

The tip reporting app is housed in the BCA’s Minnesota Fusion Center. The app is intended for users to share tips anonymously on possible threats of violence against schools and religious facilities. The Fusion Center processes these tips and can then share them with local law enforcement, religious or school facilities or other resources as appropriate.

Since launching the app in Minnesota on August 18, there have been 8 tips and 72,807 app downloads.

The Fusion Center is staffed during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, with one staff person on-call 24/7. Last year’s budget proposal included 24/7 onsite staffing for the Fusion Center, but the legislature did not take up this budget item.

The Advisory Group discussed the importance of the Fusion Center having 24/7 onsite staffing to maximize the effectiveness of fielding tips on weekends and late at night, when violent situations are more likely. Members agreed to draft a letter to the legislature supporting the value of the app and supporting additional resources for 24/7 onsite staffing at the Fusion Center.

Diversity Subcommittee’s Action Plan
The Advisory Group subcommittee on diversity and inclusion laid out its vision and proposed action plan.

Vision: Implement institutional and systematic changes that will improve the inclusivity of historically oppressed social identities in the workgroup planning and recommended actions.
The subcommittee’s action plan includes several steps to be reviewed at the February Advisory Group meeting, including drafting a list of organizations/individuals focusing on criminal justice issues that impact historically oppressed social identities, developing a list of presentation topics related to diversity and inclusion, and reviewing and proposing changes to the Advisory Group’s bylaws to increase diversity on the group.

After the February meeting, the subcommittee will look toward extending invitations to organizations and individuals identified in its action plan, and continuing ongoing tasks to promote racial equity such as disaggregating racial data and using a racial equity lens to examine issues being considered by the Advisory Group.

Data Practices Subcommittee Update

The subcommittee on data practices briefly updated the Advisory Group on a cheat sheet being developed on data sharing for probation and parole officers. The cheat sheet is currently being reviewed by Department of Administration data practices experts.

Group Updates and Announcements

- The Advisory Group approved its new chair, Diane Bartell. Bartell serves as deputy director in the BCA’s MNJIS division. Members expressed gratitude to outgoing chair Steve Washburn for his service.
- The Advisory Group approved two other leadership vacancies:
  - 1st Vice Chair: Paul Beaumaster
  - 2nd Vice Chair: Nate Reitz
- Also noted are two resignations from the Advisory Group:
  - Safia Khan is taking a new role at the Minnesota Department of Corrections.
  - Shana Conklin is moving to the private sector.

Next Advisory Group Meeting
Friday, Feb. 11, 2022
9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Location TBD