

TO: Police and Fire Commission

FROM: Focused Interruption

DATE: 10-20-2020

RE: Chief with Group Violence Intervention Experience

The mission of Focused Interruption is to use a holistic approach to reduce generational trauma by providing evidence-based intervention and prevention services to victims, communities, and families impacted by gun violence. As Madison's only non-profit solely focused on community gun violence prevention, Focused Interruption has assisted over 500 victims of gun violence and their families since 2016, effectively collaborating with victims and perpetrators of gun violence and their families, the Madison Police Department, Madison/Dane County Public health, and local social services to help keep people safe. In the last year alone, Focused Interruption has responded to over 40 incidents of gun violence, at times responding to shootings within hours of each other during the peak of Madison's recent 88% increase in gun violence.

Recognizing that Focused Interruption's programming needs to be part of a broader public health approach to community gun violence reduction in order to be most effective, we ask that the Police and Fire Commission recruit a chief who has a track record of collaboratively working with communities of color, social services, front line police officers, and elected officials to successfully reduce gun violence.

Specifically, this means a chief that has experience implementing the Group Violence Intervention (GVI) in a way that demonstrably reduced gun violence and recidivism while improving relationships between police and communities of color. A current iteration of the GVI in Oakland, called Oakland Ceasefire, has successfully reduced gun homicides by 50%. The GVI is a partnership-based problem-solving initiative involving police, social services, and community working together to reduce gun violence. This is accomplished by analyzing local gun violence patterns to identify people at highest risk of being shot or shooting someone, then reaching out those individuals and groups and offering a range of tailored services such as mental health treatment, jobs and mentorship as well as sending a clear message that further shootings will not be tolerated. Numerous independent evaluations of the GVI over the past 30 years have shown a consistent 30% - 60% reduction in gun violence.

These numbers mean that if gun violence rates in the Madison area continue at current levels, even a moderately successful version of the GVI if implemented a year from now could save 10 lives over the next 5 years. An extremely successful version, especially when combined with evidence-based programming could save 25 lives or more. It is therefore essential that the PFC hire a Chief with the relevant experience and vision to assist in bringing this effective intervention to our city.