



# PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, November 15, 2023

3:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Public Safety Committee will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, November 15, 2023 3:00p.m.-5:00p.m. to discuss and receive updates from the Community Safety Department and HEART.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Quinton Zondervan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council's Public Safety Committee was held on Wednesday, November 15, 2023. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00 p.m. by the Chair, Councillor Zondervan. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

**At the request of the Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Zondervan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Toner – Absent

**Present – 3, Absent – 2. Quorum established.**

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to discuss and receive updates from the Community Safety Department and HEART. It was shared by the Chair that the City Manager as well as City staff would not be present at that meeting to discuss updates on the Community Safety Department (CSD). The City Manager did provide a report on updates to CSD ahead of the meeting, which was included in the Agenda Packet, as well as an email regarding CSD updates. Councillor Zondervan read City Manager Huang's email into the record and shared his frustrations and disappointment with City staff not being present.

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan recognized Spencer Piston, Associate Professor of Political Science at Boston University, who read from a prepared statement (Attachment A).

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan recognized Corinne Espinoza from HEART who introduced her team from HEART, Gwenhwyfar Sadie, Bethzaida Otero, Barbara Ortiz, and Consuelo Rodriguez. Corinne Espinoza also introduced Anne Janks from Urban Strategies Council, who joined the meeting remotely. Anne Janks offered comments regarding alternative responses to policing and the research and data that is collected relative to programs that offer alternative emergency responses.

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan recognized Andrea Macone, Community Engagement Coordinate for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, who read from a prepared statement (Attachment B).

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan recognized Corinne Espinoza who shared that her team would be passing out a handout to Committee Members (Attachment C). The two handouts consisted of services that are offered by HEART and an overview of their budget for July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024. While Committee members reviewed the documents, Corinne Espinoza and the team from HEART offered opening remarks (Attachment D) which stressed the importance of why HEART is an important resource to have in the community. Team members from HEART shared why HEART is necessary, HEART's approach, HEART's outcomes, and outreach events. Additionally, Corinne Espinoza gave an overview of the proposed services and pricing that were included in the budget report, noting that HEART first presented this budget proposal to the City on June 13, 2023.

**The Chair, Councillor Zondervan opened Public Comment.**

Meg Stone, 32 Essex Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in favor of the City funding HEART.

Carolyn Magid, 71 Reed Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that support HEART and urged the City to finalize a contract.

David Rini, 99 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA, shared that they were in favor of HEART and urged the City to finalize a contract.

Lonnell Wells, Cambridge, MA, shared their frustrations that the City has not finalized a contract with HEART.

Taron Clayton, 19 Market Street, Cambridge, MA, shared their support of HEART receiving funding from the City.

Marilyn Frankenstein, 75 Holworthy Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in support of HEART.

Lee Farris, 269 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in support of HEART.

Ilham Elazri asked the City how much testimony needs to be heard from the community in order to make a change.

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan recognized Councillor McGovern and Councillor Nolan who both offered their support and appreciation for the work that is done by HEART. Councillor McGovern asked for clarification on how members of the public who are in need of services can reach out to HEART, while Councillor Nolan asked when their warm line will be available. Corinne Espinoza responded, and shared that HEART is hoping to have the warm line available to the public soon, but in order for HEART to provide more support, they also need more support. It was noted by Councillors the importance of having both CSD and HEART as resources in the community that work collaboratively to provide services to residents in need.

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan shared that it has been exciting watching HEART be created and growing into the resource that it is today. The Chair noted his disappointment with the City Manager not being in attendance to discuss a potential contract with HEART. Councillor Zondervan shared that he was hopeful there will be change and that HEART will receive a contract soon and offered suggestions on the proposed budget and fiscal year that HEART could bring forward to the City. The Chair, Councillor Zondevan asked Dr. Piston to explain more about the pattern that is occurring in many municipalities relative to creating alternative police responses. Dr. Piston provided a detailed response to the topic.

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan recognized Councillor McGovern who asked Corinne Espinoza to explain more about the funding they are looking for and how ARPA funding has been used. Corinne Espinoza responded and reviewed their funding, noting that there is over \$800,000 in funding they are looking for in order to provide the quality services they are striving for.

**The Chair, Councillor Zondervan made a motion to extend the meeting by ten minutes. On a voice vote of all members present, the motion passed unanimously.**

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan had additional questions regarding funding and asked for more information relative to the grant from the State Attorney General's Office. Andrea Macone was available to respond and shared that this funding program is fairly new and is to help support people developing a healthy relationship with substances, and help making connections with other agencies to work towards that goal. Corinne Espinoza responded as well.

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan thanked everyone for their participation at the meeting and shared he was hopeful HEART will continue to move forward.

**The Chair, Councillor Zondervan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. On a voice vote of all members present, the motion passed unanimously.**

**The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:08p.m.**

**Attachments:**

- Attachment A – Opening remarks from Dr. Piston
- Attachment B – Opening remarks from Andrea Macone
- Attachment C – Handout on HEART’s services and proposed budget
- Attachment D – Opening remarks from team members of HEART
- Attachment E – 7 written communications received from the public

**Clerk’s Note:** The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

[https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/616?view\\_id=1&redirect=true&h=3fde9668b040377a4d65fa897828e7a5](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/616?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=3fde9668b040377a4d65fa897828e7a5)

A communication was received from City Manager Yi-An Huang, transmitting an email to the Public Safety Committee.

A communication was received from City Manager Yi-An Huang, transmitting a report on updates to the Community Safety Department.

## Attachment A

Hello everyone, and thank you for having me.

My name is Spencer Piston. I'm an associate professor of political science at Boston University and a visiting scholar at the Safra Institute at Harvard University. My award-winning research examines, among other topics, alternatives to policing. I'm currently engaged, along with professors at Columbia University and Harvard University, in a project evaluating the effectiveness of alternative emergency response programs across the country.

We all know the reason for alternatives to policing. The idea is that there are many cases where people need help but they don't need someone with a badge and a gun to show up. They need help without being exposed to police violence or the threat of police violence. So many places have devised alternatives to policing. Some work well, and some work less well.

And what the research shows is that if alternatives to policing are to actually help those who most need help, three things need to happen.

First, these alternatives to policing need to be led by and controlled by the communities they are supposed to serve. This is important to get trust, to get buy-in. But community control is even more important because it ensures that these alternatives actually get help to people. And this is very difficult for city governments, which tend to be run by credentialed, middle-class professionals who don't have strong connections to those who are most at risk for police violence.

Second, these alternatives to policing need to be true alternatives. They need to be wholly disconnected from police. Otherwise they are just policing by another name and they reproduce the harms of policing. In fact there are times when so-called alternatives are worse than nothing: they put a kinder, gentler face on policing, increasing the legitimacy of the institution without decreasing police violence. They also expand the reach of the institution of policing, so that it becomes more entangled with social services. And that is very bad! Because then, people can't get the help they need without being exposed to systems of control and punishment.

Third, and finally, these alternatives need to be adequately funded. Otherwise they starve to death.

There's also a great danger with alternatives to policing, and this happens fairly often in cities across the country, though certainly not always. What happens in these cases is that the community organizes for a meaningful alternative to police – in which the alternative is led by community members (rather than credentialed middle-class professionals), disconnected from police (instead of working with them), and funded well (rather than starved). But then what they get is something very different. What they get is a program run by credentialed professionals who are tight with police and use responders who are mandatory reporters – “mandatory reporters” means that their professional licenses depend on them calling police under a wide range of circumstances related to crime.

Now, in these cases it's rare for city government to tell these community leaders no, sorry, we're not going to do what you want. Instead city government strings them along. City government gives these community leaders the chance to have "input," and tells them that sure, what they want can exist alongside what city government is actually doing. We can all be friends here. And the community leaders attend meeting after meeting after meeting and time drags on and eventually it becomes clear that city government does not intend to support a meaningful alternative to police. It's all just lip service. Instead city government shows consistent disrespect for community leaders while attempting to exhaust their energies.

With these lessons from programs across the country in mind, I'll now turn to the specific case of Cambridge. The good news for this city is that there is an organization, Cambridge HEART, which checks all the boxes. In fact, my professional opinion is that Cambridge HEART should be a model for alternatives to policing across the nation. The capacity these folks have built is simply astounding. They've hired seven full-time responders – responders who now have undergone hundreds of hours of extensive training – and they are already helping people meet their financial needs, their mental health needs, and much more. And, of course, HEART is run by and led by community members and it is wholly independent of police. This is the kind of alternative that the most vulnerable people, the people with the most need, can trust.

However, city government has not held up its end of the bargain. George Floyd was killed more than three and a half years ago, and a policy order requiring a contract for services was passed in March of this year, but the city government still hasn't allocated any of its own money to Cambridge HEART. It's great that some one-time ARPA funds went HEART's way, absolutely wonderful, but if the organization is to continue getting people the help it needs, the city government cannot starve it to death.

Instead city government has sent millions of dollars to the new Community Safety Department. This department did very little for a long time, but recently things have been moving quickly. It should not, however, be viewed as an alternative to police. It's headed by Liz Speakman, who has worked extensively with police in the past, who is a mandatory reporter herself, and who intends to require that all staff serve as mandatory reporters.

Now, the Community Safety Department says it is willing to work with Cambridge HEART. I've spoken with Liz Speakman personally and she says she sees room for both these organizations. She acknowledged to me that there are community members who won't feel safe working with the Community Safety Department.

So why hasn't it happened? Why has the Community Safety Department gotten millions of dollars out of the city budget while HEART has yet to receive anything? I asked for an update and I was told that there was a meeting scheduled for last Friday to hammer out a contract for HEART. But later I learned that the city manager canceled that meeting. And now I see that the city manager isn't even here! And neither is the Community Safety Department. It's not a good look when the community safety department doesn't attend a public safety hearing. And it's certainly not a good look when the city council passes a policy order for the city manager to do something and then the city manager doesn't do it and 8 months later doesn't even show up to report on it.

So with all of that in mind, my impression is that the city manager and the community safety department are stringing along Cambridge HEART. They're playing games. If they weren't they would've funded Cambridge HEART by now. And they would've showed up to talk about it. It appears, then, that the city manager and the community safety department are stringing along the city council as well. The question is whether the city council is going to put up with it.

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Spencer Piston (he/his)

Associate Professor and Director of Advanced Programs, Political Science, Boston University

Visiting Scholar, Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Ethics, Harvard University

[www.spencerpiston.com](http://www.spencerpiston.com)



## Attachment B

Good afternoon members of the Cambridge Public Safety Committee:

My name is Andrea Macone, and I work for the Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Addiction Services, or BSAS, overseeing community engagement and health equity initiatives. I am also a woman in recovery from a substance use disorder who graduated from Matignon High School here in Cambridge, during a time when we were unprepared for the impact substance use and mental illness have on our community. Though we are better equipped today, we still have a long way to go in ensuring the safety of all when these diseases manifest in erratic and violent behaviors.

I thank you for the opportunity to share some of the work we're doing at BSAS to better serve the Commonwealth's historically marginalized populations. As you likely know, drug policy has disproportionately impacted communities of color in the United States. BSAS' data shows that fatal overdoses in Massachusetts continue to rise, with the highest rate of increase among residents of color. Yet the majority of people enrolled in BSAS-licensed treatment programs are white.

My position was created as part of the bureau's efforts to remedy those disparities, to center racial equity, and to build community voice into our system of care. Since January 2022, my multi-racial, multi-gender team has engaged over 400 community organizations, most of which are led by and serve BIPOC communities, to listen to their needs and respond accordingly. We are developing a series of population-focused advisory boards, through which community members are compensated for their living expertise and their contributions to systems change. We have also developed a pilot program that provides capacity-building and funding to BIPOC-led agencies supporting healthy relationships with substances.

We know that individuals with substance use and mental health disorders are unlikely to see improvements by becoming involved with the criminal system; in fact, one of the highest risks of fatal overdose occurs when someone leaves incarceration. We also know that a sense of belonging and community involvement serve as protective factors against high-risk substance use, so we're expanding the types of services we fund to meet people where they are in communities across the state, and to partner with community-based providers who can best serve those with shared identities.

My time today is limited, so the most important message I want to share that I have learned through this work is that people have always taken care of one another at a community level, whether or not the government has been involved. The privileges and power that we in government hold can be leveraged to support that care without paternalism, by acknowledging the harms we have caused and creating space for new pathways to healing. It's not my place to tell anyone what that healing looks like or how it should happen – but it is my place to serve as a conduit for community voice. Those voices have told me, and continue to tell me, that we need more services led by people who look like the communities we serve, that we need to be more flexible in who and what types of programs we fund, and we need to support our communities in



what they are already doing to help our most vulnerable residents and neighbors, even if that means changing how we've always done things.

I am hopeful that if we continue to listen to what our communities tell us they need, if we center the needs of those most marginalized, and if we use whatever power we hold to meet those needs, we will better ensure the health and safety of all. Thank you for your time today.



**Mutual Aid**

HEART practices mutual aid by facilitating low barrier access to material needs. This includes helping to coordinate with already existing grassroots networks in the community where people help each other get their needs met.

**Peer to peer support**

HEART responders engage in peer-to-peer support by showing up for community members in whatever state they're in. Responders see community members as whole people with many experiences, not defined by their worst day.

The HEART responder team includes peer certified specialists. HEART responders engage in peer-to-peer support through listening, checking for understanding, and using their own life experiences to support community members. Responders share what has/has not worked for them, as equals with the person who is looking for help. This practice is rooted in supporting the person to figure out what the community member wants or needs on their own terms.

**Wellness checks**

HEART engages in wellness checks by attempting to directly communicate with an individual or household who community members may be worried about, either because of their mental or physical state, or because there has been no known contact with the person/people in question for a period of time.

**Noise complaints**

Cambridge HEART responds to "noise complaint" calls by engaging both the person who is concerned about loud noises or disturbances in their vicinity and the person(s) causing the sounds.

### **Interpersonal disputes**

HEART Responders address arguments, conflicts, or disagreements between two or more people. Responders can support those who are involved as well as those who are witnessing the event if they are in distress.

### **Interpersonal harm**

Cambridge HEART responds to reports of interpersonal harm by supporting the immediate safety needs of the harmed person. After safety needs are met, Cambridge HEART can offer transformative justice practices, connection to other resources, or can hold space for a safe and facilitated conversation between parties. Cambridge HEART can also support the person who caused harm by offering to connect them to resources, process the harm, and/or work with them to address the root causes of their behavior.

### **Loitering call**

Cambridge HEART responds in a professional and caring way to calls made by people who feel uncomfortable by the presence of other people in certain areas. Responders communicate with the caller after response to help them feel safe, treating the community member “loitering” with respect and supporting their right to be in public spaces. Responders support the uninvited person if they are on private property and wish to relocate or access any resources.

### **Supporting people surviving poverty outside**

Cambridge HEART supports people who are surviving poverty outside by building relationships of trust with unhoused community members. HEART responders support any material, emotional or physical needs of the person who has asked for help. Responders engage unhoused community members as whole people by listening and responding with care.

### **Community gatherings**

Community gatherings are one of the ways in which HEART shares information, builds knowledge and understanding, and tools with neighbors. The community gatherings nurture love and care. These are opportunities to come together to listen, share, feel, process, learn, work through something, while being together in a shared space.

### **Community Care**

Cambridge HEART provides community care by sharing resources and holding community gatherings. HEART hosts events that center marginalized communities. These offer a sense of connection and joy. Cambridge HEART can share tools to build capacity and skills so that neighbors can turn to each other in times of need. The goal of community care is to build, maintain and improve mental and physical health in communities across Cambridge.



	AGO	ARPA	Donors	City Contract
<b>In-Kind professional services</b>	119,160			
<b>Non-Personnel Program Expenses</b>			100,000	
Consulting	100,000			
Consulting (Development)	20,000			
<b>Trainings (responders)</b>				
Family coach / recovery coach	2,400			
Ongoing self defense	2,235			
Van use training	502			
Firearm safety training	2,000			
Youth best practices training	800			
Transportation to trainings, training	2,500			
<b>Wellness supplies for staff</b>	500			
<b>Supplies</b>				
Responder bags	800			
Supplies	10,000			
<b>Emergency Response Infrastructure</b>				
PATCH mobile dispatch app, iCarol data	12,545			
Telzio VOIP service	1,200			
T-Mobile cellular service	6,228			
Apple manager	1,200			
Internet provider (or wi-fi extenders)	2,508			
Mobile office generators	2,000			
VPN	200			
Norton Antivirus	50			
<b>Call Center set up</b>				
Respite space for staff	3,000			

	AGO	ARPA	Donors	City Contract
<b>Public Outreach</b>				
3 large community outreach events	15,000			
3 focused community outreach events	3,021			
Signage / outreach materials	3,000			
<b>Mobile Crisis Response Van</b>				
Maintenance	750			
Cleaning service	600			
Gas	2,275			
Vehicle insurance	8,000			
RMV required (registration, title, inspection)	35			
<b>Uniforms</b>	7,000			
<b>Retreats (2 per year- December / June)</b>				
Food	4,000			
Space	4,000			
<b>Rent</b>	9,000			
<b>Total Program expenses (non personnel)</b>	<b>227,350</b>		<b>100,000</b>	
<b>Administrative expenses (non personnel)</b>			<b>8,000</b>	
Trainings (admin staff, volunteers)	1,500			
<b>Fundraising fees</b>				
<i>Network for Good donor management software</i>	2,600			
<i>special zoom license fees</i>	400			
<i>materials (printed annual reports, etc.)</i>	2,000			
<i>letters / mailings 2 x per year</i>	2,000			
Website, email, domain	1,600			
Administrative software licenses	406			
Food/meals	2,000			
Office supplies	2,500			
Dues and subscriptions	2,575			
Advertising, publicity, and promotion	500			
General Liability Insurance	2,000			
Miscellaneous expenses	15,333			
<b>Fiscal agent fee</b>	110,891	27,153	10,800	
<b>Total expenses FY24</b>	<b>\$ 1,338,958</b>	<b>\$ 298,683</b>	<b>\$ 118,800</b>	<b>\$ 241,731</b>



Hello, my name is Corinne, I am sitting here with Kevin, Barbara, Consuelo, Amanda, Betzy, Gwen, Mike and Ishraq. Our colleague Dara is on leave. We are the staff paid to work on Cambridge HEART. We are grateful for the work of the Black Response that made it possible for HEART to exist, especially HEART's co-founder, Stephanie Guirand, Queen-Cheyenne Wade and Dara Bayer. We are grateful to the many dedicated volunteers, like Virginia Cuello, who built HEART and made HEART's work possible. We are especially grateful to our community, who designed the program and who keep us accountable to our values and an ethos of continued improvement.

Cambridge HEART has seven community responders, deeply rooted in Cambridge, who are trained to respond to people's emergencies in a holistic way that centers our values: healing, self-determination, community, care and transformative accountability.

Our responders completed more than 600 hours of foundational training, starting with an EMT course, mental health crisis support, how to best serve marginalized communities such as people experiencing violence in relationships, people surviving poverty in public, people who hear voices, etc. Our responders have completed the Certified Peer Specialist program with Kiva Centers.

Bárbara is going to talk about why the community built Cambridge HEART, Gwenhwyfar is going to discuss how we approach our work, Betzy is going to share a bit about outcomes and Consuelo is going to talk about our outreach.

### **Why is HEART Necessary?**

We are Cambridge HEART. HEART stands for Holistic Emergency Alternative Response Team. HEART came from the community, it originated from a participatory action research project in which community members shared their thoughts on questions such as:

*What safety would look like for them?*

*What makes it hard for them to get the help that they or their family needs when experiencing a hard time, or in crisis?*

We all know about the disproportionate amount of Black and brown people who die in the hands of law-enforcement. This is always a fear. In addition to that, there are other harms that happen, for example:

- Separation of families
- Forced hospitalization
- Arrest
- Conditional aid (you must do x,y,z in order to receive certain benefits/aid/support)
- Mandating reporting is not neutral, it is in fact biased.

People with money and access are able to experience their crises privately while those without these do not have that same luxury. A person experiencing a crisis in public is especially vulnerable to harm.

The H in HEART stands for holistic. Holistic, we look at the whole situation – how did it come to be? What are the tipping points? How might the Intersectionality of identities come into play with his community members as they navigate life? How do we prevent further harm? The care received is always led by the community member.

We are uniquely positioned, as neighbors and peer. Our neighbors trust us, so many of our requests have come through word of mouth.

We are not only an alternative response team; we are autonomous. We do not correspond with law-enforcement nor are we tied to them. This is particularly important to our most vulnerable populations. These populations remain underserved — they include community members who are trying to survive poverty in public (otherwise referred to as unhoused population). This also includes community members who may be undocumented, community members who use substances, community members who are sex workers, returning citizens (formerly incarcerated people). All of these community members, their families, and loved ones, their friends are likely to avoid government-based alternatives, even if they find themselves in a crisis. This is why we are here.

### **HEART's Approach**

So, what do we do at HEART and how do we do it?

The short answer is– we support community members holistically, centering our values of care, healing, transformative accountability, community, and self-determination.

In practice, this means letting the community members we support take lead on things that impact their lives.

This could look like:

- Accompanying community members to a doctor's appointment or a meeting with housing, ensuring that they are not treated dismissively during the appointment, and following up so that their concerns are properly addressed.
- Providing court support. This includes emotional support and potential de-escalation before, during, and/or after a community member is required to be in court.
- Connecting community members to mutual aid networks to get their material needs met. We have working relationships with organizations like The Spot and MAAP to meet clothing/shoes/toys/toiletries/other material needs, and Resource Generation for support with financial needs. We are tapped into Buy Nothing groups to supplement this as well.
- We support community members by using strength-based approaches to building action plans that support them in accomplishing their goals. *What do they want? How can we support them in getting their needs met? Let's make a plan together combining our training and knowledge of resources in the area with the expertise of the community member who is truly the expert of their own survival. What can we figure out together? What can't we figure out together yet, and who do we need to reach out to who might be able to help us figure it out? Let's do it together so no one feels alone navigating these questions and needs!*
- We share about pod-mapping for all sorts of situations, which supports folks in building out a map-like visual flow chart of a network including people, places, orgs, resources that are relevant or might become relevant for a given situation.
- We offer safety planning, which we do with folks. Part of a safety plan for example might include a pod map that identifies particular supports.

- We offer mediation and conflict resolution processes when folks do not want to take an issue into the courts but need support working through conflict, harm, and accountability.
- We support community members through grief. And brainstorm creative ways of honoring and releasing the embodied intensity of feeling that come with grief and stress and anxiety.
- We sit with community members and listen to them. We listen and validate issues they have been dealing with, sometimes for years, without feeling heard or seen. We see them and believe them, and they feel that care. They tell us again and again how much it is appreciated. They thank us for not giving up on them when it feels like most others have.

At every point, we highlight the importance of informed consent, sharing what we know or have experienced personally while staying open to new creative possibilities to address what are, quite frankly, old needs. And the whole time we do so with compassion and an unconditional positive regard for the community members we support.

### **HEART's Outcomes**

Hi I'm Betzy, I'm a HEART Responder, a lifelong Cambridge resident of over 38 years, a local chef, activist and a mom of 3 Cambridge public school students. HEART has been vital to not only supporting myself but also supporting people in our community.

So far, in 2023, we reached over 1,170 community members through mutual aid and outreach events. In addition, we have been actively supporting community members with non-emergency calls for about a year. A non-emergency call is when someone reaches out to us for support. Right now, we commit to being back in touch with them within a week. When we support a community member, we might support them for a few weeks or for a few months. The average community support situation lasts about three months.

Over the last year, HEART received 78 requests for support. Most community support situations involve multiple people. For example, a parent may be getting personalized support for themselves, personalized support for multiple children

and then support for the family as a whole unit. So, when we count 78 requests, we are talking about 78 family or household units.

We are currently supporting 19 requests and 59 are “paused.”

“Paused” refers to a community member who reached out for services, received support and has gotten to a resolution that they are satisfied with for the time being. They understand they may reach out for support again, but for the time being they feel comfortable using tools to continue their journey independently of our support.

### **Outreach Events**

Good Afternoon! My name is Consuelo Rodriguez. I was born and raised in Cambridge, MA. I am a single parent of 3 beautiful daughters and 1 daughter that became family through love and community. I just believe Cambridge HEART needs to be around and I wish it was around when I became a single parent as I struggled while raising my girls.

With the outreach events that we have done we have reached a lot of community members and families. The age ranges from older to younger, all nationalities and all different walks of life. They always ask when we’re doing another event and are really grateful for the work we have done.

People really appreciate that we are doing something. There are other organizations who do things but we take our time, we don't rush them, we help them. We get to know them as individuals and they get to learn more about Cambridge HEART and how it's led by people from their very own community.

At one of our outreach events I met this little girl and she instantly stuck to me. I asked her mom if she didn't mind if the baby stayed with me so she could look around and grab what she needed without the baby bothering her or crying. She has attended a few events that we have thrown and the baby hangs out with me each time. That's what we call COMMUNITY. She was so grateful and I'm glad that I could help her out.

We did a summer outreach event in Central Square. We were out there giving away toiletries, food and drinks. There were people just coming around getting a sandwich and stuff, we didn't put a limit on it. We are very humbled with the work we do. We were letting them know to take one, take two, take three as long as

they're happy. That's when we know that we are doing the right thing. Some events happen at short notice but guess what we always have a great outcome and that's what it's about. Us getting to know the community and the community getting to know us.

I love what I do, I love that the org exists and I hope the city gives us the money we need to keep our hard work going. I am part of the community and even love giving back and helping the community even more.

I will finish this off by stating a few words that we hear from community members we have helped " I'm glad you'll exist because you'll actually listen to us and what we need". This is why I do the work.

Thank you so much, Consuelo. I am always so moved by the way we have been able to support people as they go through a hard time. I've been that person with big problems and nowhere safe to get help, so my heart is grateful that we can be there for others. I am humbled by our responders and our responder manager, the training you have received, the way you hold HEART values in everything you do, I could not be a responder and I am so grateful that you are trained, practiced, able and ready to do it.

Like you heard from Betzy, HEART has been doing a lot. One thing that I will add is that in 2023, we helped facilitate more than \$3,000 dollars of mutual aid. We refer people to donors who directly share money with the person who needs cash to avoid eviction, move to a safer location, a piece of furniture related to their health, etc.

We also had major accomplishments in 2022, we had a fantastic summer with youth through the Mayor's Program. Also, through a partnership with the SPOT, Cambridge HEART responders helped fill 364 individual orders for people in our community who needed shoes, winter clothing, clothing for children, etc. On top of that, the SPOT and Cambridge HEART held major giveaways, such as a winter clothing giveaway and a prom clothing giveaway. The many people served at those events would be added ON TOP OF the 364 orders filled.

Since its inception, HEART met with numerous organizations to build connections, we started partnerships across the city, the region, the state and the country.

For context, going back to the beginning, Cambridge HEART was incorporated in November 2021, two years ago. At that time we had zero paid staff and zero



dollars. The Black Response and volunteers did a fantastic job of raising money through private donations to pay for community members to attend an EMT class. Private donations also enabled us to hire paid responders in April 2022. By August 2022, we had two paid co-directors. In October 2023, the Black Response's funders supported the hire of a Community Engagement and Operations Coordinator, who works for the Black Response and is also authorized to also support Cambridge HEART's development. We have one open position, funded by the ARPA grant, and are interviewing folks for that role, Director of Wellness, this month.

We are able to do the work we do thanks to our dedicated staff and hundreds of volunteers. Recently, our auditor required us to put a number to the time volunteers share with us, and a conservative estimate was over \$119,000 of *pro bono* support in one fiscal year.

This has allowed us to stretch every dollar very far, but to be sustainable, we need contract revenue. We currently provide services to Cambridge people at no cost to them. We want a contract for services with the city.

Right now, Cambridge HEART is fiscally sponsored by Community Service Care, Inc. a 501(c)(3) in Boston, MA.

Since November 2021, HEART has raised more than 1.2 million dollars from individuals, foundations and government. We are very grateful for this support, but need about 1.3 million for the current fiscal year to support our current staffing structure. For long term sustainability, we would like to see contract revenue, grants and donations be equally distributed.

I want to move us into the details of our proposal, and then spend some time answering any questions the City has and discussing any hopes or concerns y'all have. I'll go over the proposed services and our pricing.

You have in front of you a list of services our responders are willing to offer. They have been thoroughly trained to provide each of these services, these are services our community asked for through our Participatory Action Research and with the exception of a "loitering call" – these are all services that we have been providing for more than a year.

You have the definitions in front of you (DOCUMENT: HEART PROPOSED SERVICES), but the pricing we will discuss next would mean that Cambridge HEART could continue to provide the following services at no cost to the people who request support:

Mutual Aid  
Peer to peer support  
Wellness checks

Noise complaints  
Interpersonal disputes  
Interpersonal harm  
"Loitering" call  
Supporting people surviving poverty outside  
Community Care

Community gatherings

We propose providing 15 hours of the full HEART program, responders, responder manager, administrative support, mental health professional once hired, etc. to the City for the amount of \$419,658 for 12 months. We first presented this proposal to the City on June 13, but since a few months have passed, most likely we won't be able to get a contract for 12 months. If we assume the City is willing to move forward with a contract for services and that we sign documents by December 1, that would leave us 30 weeks to bill this fiscal year. If we scale down our proposal to exclude the 22 weeks that have already passed, The adjusted cost of our proposal (for 30 weeks instead of 52) would be \$241,731.

One way to break down that number is per staff member (counting responder and responder manager), which comes out to about \$76 per hour per responder/responder manager.

Our board approved budget for FY24 is about 1.3 million dollars. This funds us at current capacity.

(REVIEW BUDGET WHICH WAS PASSED OUT TO COUNCILORS)

Right now, Cambridge HEART is doing non emergency response and preparing to launch our warm line. We are close - our warm line should be active within a couple of months. Two months after that, we will launch mobile crisis response. Mobile crisis would happen with the warm line as part of our service. We would continue outreach work and switch from non-emergency response to comprehensive aftercare and follow up.

Our vision for the future is 24/7 mobile crisis response. To realize that vision, we

would need to triple our funding so we could triple our staff. We are working steadfastly toward that goal. How quickly we can ramp up will depend on funding.

Erwin, Nicole

## Attachment E

**From:** Eva Tine <evaracheltine@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 19, 2023 5:55 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** November 15th, 2023 Public Safety Hearing Testimony  
**Attachments:** Letter in Support of Heart.pdf

Dear Council Members,

Have you or someone you love ever felt so overwhelmed by fear, stress, pain, annoyance, etc. that you did things you never would have done if you had instead felt safe, calm, and at peace? And in times when you or your loved ones were feeling intense emotions that led to potentially scary or harmful reactions, what was or would have been most effective in reducing those overwhelming feelings and resulting harm? How would you have wanted others to treat or respond to you or your loved ones, to help things quickly return to a state of calm, feeling safe, supported, and ready to face and resolve whatever felt so overwhelming and the harm it caused?

I am a social worker with a specialization in harm reduction as well as preventing and healing trauma. One of the common themes of my Masters' education and professional experience is that many crises are caused by feeling temporarily overwhelmed, and that this can happen to any of us. Luckily, continuous mindfulness training, safety, and good therapy can help increase everyone's effectiveness at staying calm and preventing and successfully managing crises.

When we are in crisis, our bodies often automatically enter "Fight-or-Flight" mode, which shuts down our ability to think and act rationally, until we feel less overwhelmed. Every single person has the capacity to act violently towards self or others if overwhelmed enough, and even the angriest people can become gentle, when surrounded with enough safety, compassion, and more beneficial behaviors.

Police are currently the only resource that most people can call when we believe that something scary or annoying is happening. In the moments where things were stressful enough for you or your loved ones to be acting in harmful ways, was there a possibility that an unfamiliar third party, arriving with weapons and a loud, aggressive approach, could have made the situation more dangerous, or potentially lethal?

When a Cambridge neighbor saw Sayed Faisal cutting himself during a state of overwhelm and was worried about Sayed's safety, the neighbor called the Cambridge police, with no other resource to call for help. And the Cambridge police arrived and did what they seem to be trained to do: assess for threat and then minimize perceived threat, using force as deemed necessary.

Unfortunately for Sayed and for all of our loved ones, when we are in a state of overwhelm, our prefrontal cortex basically shuts down and the more animalistic parts of our brain take over, in an attempt to ensure our survival. Our capacity for rational thought and rational behavior also shuts down along with our prefrontal cortex; in other words, when we are so overwhelmed that we are harming ourselves or others, our nervous systems have entered survival ("fight or flight") mode, and we have become literally incapable of behaving rationally. Almost everyone has

Fortunately, most people have at least one thing that can make them feel calmer and safer, if we help them to pause and then brainstorm solutions, while building and maintaining trust, safety, and calm. Even a 90 second pause from overwhelming stimulation has been shown to help people prevent harm to self and others. Unfortunately, the very nature of a police response is overwhelming to countless people. People who are in crisis typically know that the police are there to minimize rather than resolve perceived threats and are rightfully afraid, so they respond in the only ways

available to them: to fight or to flee, which are the behaviors that often cause police to increase their pursuit and/or use of lethal force, as tragically occurred in Sayed's death.

I strongly believe that myself and many other Cambridge residents could have avoided countless years of suffering, danger, abuse, and even death, if we had had HEART to call before, during, and after our crises, to help us mediate and resolve causal factors while also helping us and our loved ones to connect with needed supports and resources.

I have been brought to tears on many occasions by how impressed I am with the model Cambridge HEART has created, which is so impressive that it has garnered broad local and national support and attention. Cambridge HEART responders have over 600 hours of training in things like crisis de-escalation, trauma informed care, co-regulation, mindfulness, and EMT training. HEART also maintains an up-to-date community resource list and connects the people it serves with numerous community-based resources and opportunities for prevention and healing, like community meals for men and backpack and coat drives for the Cambridge community.

Cambridge HEART was created and is sustained by people who deeply love Cambridge as well as the housed and unhoused neighbors who live here, and we deeply want to help everyone in Cambridge to stabilize, heal, and thrive, no matter what crisis or situation they're dealing with. At Cambridge HEART, we genuinely love our neighbors so much that we have dedicated thousands of hours to trainings, outreach, and meetings, to ensure that whatever we offer to the Cambridge community is something that we and our loved ones would also be grateful to receive in our times of need.

As a longtime Cambridge resident, a parent of a lifelong Cambridge public school student, a social worker with a specialization in understanding, preventing, and healing trauma, and as a volunteer on HEART's mental health committee, I ask that you finalize HEART's contract and fund Cambridge HEART at the requested amount or higher. We look forward to demonstrating how much safer and more enjoyable Cambridge can be for all of its residents, when we all have the responders at HEART to call for support and compassion, before our overwhelming emotions and tough circumstances have a chance to turn to more serious harm.

As a longtime Cambridge resident with expertise in trauma as well as crisis prevention and response, I strongly support the Cambridge Holistic Emergency Alternative Response Team (HEART) as a community led public safety initiative and urge the City of Cambridge to finalize a contract for services with Cambridge HEART. Please don't hesitate to contact me at [evaracheltine@gmail.com](mailto:evaracheltine@gmail.com) with any thoughts or questions.

With respect and gratitude,  
Eva

"Tomorrow belongs to those of us who conceive of it as belonging to everyone; who lends the best of ourselves to it, and with joy."  
— Audre Lorde

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Meg Stone <mstone@impactboston.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 16, 2023 10:18 AM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- November 15th Public Safety Committee Hearing

My name is Meg Stone and I'm the executive director of IMPACT Boston. I've been a Cambridge resident since 1997. IMPACT is an organization that teaches safety, violence prevention, and de-escalation skills to people of many walks of life. Our programs reach human service workers in multiple sectors – the people we train support domestic violence and sexual assault survivors, unhoused people, immigrants and refugees, and numerous other people and communities. We teach these essential workers the skills to de-escalate potentially unsafe situations and interrupt violence and abuse.

It has been my great honor to collaborate with Cambridge HEART. In over 20 years of training hundreds of people, the HEART responders stand out. They are among the most skilled, compassionate, smart, creative and engaged people I have ever had the honor to work with. They are calm under pressure, compassionate, and thoughtful.

HEART responders have life experiences that are similar to those of the most marginalized Cambridge residents. They are able to connect with the people who need community safety the most.

Having an independent community safety organization that centers social justice is exactly what Cambridge needs. We are a city of high ideals and good values, but we are also home to sharp inequities. Wealth and poverty live side by side in our city. Those most impacted by poverty, racism, and ableism have every reason to distrust any government entity, so HEART plays a vital role that compliments other City initiatives.

City government sometimes moves slowly, but the problems facing our most marginalized community members are urgent. The City Council has already voted to financially support HEART. It is time to ensure that the City Manager executes that contract without further delays.

As a Cambridge resident and a violence prevention expert, I can say that the need for HEART is urgent, and I hope to see the City act accordingly.

Meg Stone (she/her)  
 Executive Director



IMPACT Boston  
89 South Street #406  
Boston, MA 02111

Impactboston.org  
(617) 597-4947



**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Michelle Cushman <MCushman@lexipol.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 15, 2023 8:42 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Municipalities Need Better Training Solutions  
**Attachments:** LocalGovU - One Sheet.pdf

Hello Diane,

**I am sorry I missed you today, I speak to City Clerks all over the county and you all have a lot on your plate. I was hoping you might have a little time to chat with me tomorrow? Just in case you are unfamiliar with Lexipol, I thought I would give you a little information below (including an attachment) before we chat.**

Did you know that Lexipol's award-winning online learning platform LocalGovU provides quality training to meet annual requirements? We provide 10,000 communities and 2 million first responders and local government officials with our services? Our affordable training platform allows your staff to train anytime, anywhere with our vast online library that includes more than 3,000 diverse courses and videos. Some examples of our course topics include:

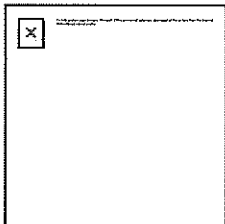
- Work-Related Illness and Injury Reporting Policy
- FMLA
- Time Management Skills
- Anti-harassment in the Workplace
- Protection from Ransomware and Phishing Attacks?

Additionally, administrative features allow you to track individual progress and completion, manage licenses and credentials, design custom courses, and build custom reports and training transcripts for state reporting. LocalGovU courses are accredited or accepted for use for continuing education credits for a variety of state agencies. To learn more, check out our short video or let's schedule a short demonstration. You can book time on my calendar or 469-731-0828.

Best regards,

**Michelle Cushman**

Lexipol Representative  
 Office: 469-731-0828  
 Other: 469-217-6765



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[Wellness](#) | [Grants](#) | [Industry News](#) | [Gov1](#)

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Dan Totten <dantottencambridge@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 15, 2023 11:47 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk; Huang, Yi-An  
**Subject:** support for HEART

Hello,

I have a conflict this afternoon, so sending a note in support of HEART.

Over the years, I have heard a near-unanimous desire from councillors to integrate HEART into our alternative response. In fact, the council voted (by a 7-1 vote, in March 2023) for the manager to *"complete negotiating a contract for services with HEART as quickly as possible, to include but not limited to HEART responding to certain 911 calls starting in the fall of 2023"*

I think almost all councillors want to get to a "yes" on some sort of ongoing partnership between HEART and the city, but there has been very little progress.

And while the manager should be applauded for getting HEART's ARPA contract done earlier this year, that outcome does not represent an ongoing partnership between the city and HEART.

Look, maybe the partnership doesn't include responding to 911 calls right away. But these young people of color who mostly grew up in our city deserve a chance to show that an ongoing partnership on **something** can be successful. They've put in the work! HEART is no longer just an idea on a PowerPoint slide.

I'd hate to see an outcome here where HEART is given the runaround for a few more months, only to be told in March 2024 that they aren't needed after all because the CSD has got it all covered.

We all know that there is a population of vulnerable people in our city who will never turn to the CSD model, especially with the recent choice to use 100% mandated reporters, a reversal of the city's initial openness that was seemingly made behind closed doors with very little transparency.

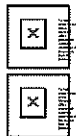
But even if you are fine and comfortable with using only mandated reporters, you should still support getting to a yes on an ongoing partnership of some sort between HEART and the city.

In many ways this seems to be the one big question mark left from what was otherwise a historically productive council term -- and in this case, the ball seems to be firmly in the manager's court.

At a time when the Charter Review Committee is actively considering the recommendation of a switch to a directly elected executive branch, this seems like a great opportunity for the council and manager to work together more effectively/transparently to sew things up so that we can all look forward to the CSD & HEART alternate response rollout that has been promised for 2024.

All the best,

Dan Totten  
 54 Bishop Allen Drive #2



**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Andy N <anash18@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 14, 2023 5:07 PM  
**To:** Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** November 15th, 2023 Public Safety Hearing

Dear Council Members,

My name is Andy Nash, a Cambridge resident and volunteer with HEART. It's been eight months since the council passed a Policy Order to support HEART with federal ARPA funds and then a city-funded contract for services. Yet here we wait.

I ask that you urge the City Manager and Community Safety Department to finalize this contract so that the city can begin benefitting from HEART's well-trained community responders and HEART's model of compassionate, non-punitive, peer support for those in (or at risk of) crisis.

HEART is already responding to non-emergency requests and building relationships with community service organizations. We need a contract to secure the coverage of salaries and operating expenses so that HEART can launch the emergency response program you have already funded it to build.

Thank you for your consideration and I appreciate your support!

Sincerely,  
 Andy



**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Steven Miller <semiller48@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 14, 2023 12:37 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** November 15th, 2023 Public Safety Hearing

Dear Council Members,

I am writing as a Cambridge resident in support of the Cambridge Holistic Emergency Alternative Response Team (HEART) as a community led public safety initiative and to urge the City of Cambridge to finalize a contract for services with Cambridge HEART.

As recent tragic incidents show, our city desperately needs a non-police method of responding to individual public disturbances related to emotional/mental illnesses, addiction, and other stress-related behaviors.

It is outrageous that, despite a City Council Policy Order passed in March 2023 to allocate ARPA funds to Cambridge HEART and to engage in a contract for services, Cambridge HEART still doesn't have a regular contract for services with the city.

Since its creation, Cambridge HEART has successfully hired 7 full time responders who have completed over 600 hours of extensive training. HEART has actively been responding to non-emergency requests from the community and building relationships with organizations that support our people.

Cambridge HEART signed an ARPA contract with the City in June 2023 for federal funds. While this support was very important, ARPA is a one time, emergency funding mechanism. A regular contract for services would cover more of HEART's salaries and operating expenses so that they can continue to serve community members at no cost.

Thank you for your consideration and appreciate your continued support!

Sincerely,

Steven E. Miller  
 92 Henry St.

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 15, 2023 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Lois Markham <loisamarkham@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 14, 2023 12:14 PM  
**To:** Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton; Azeem, Burhan  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** November 15th, 2023 Public Safety Hearing

Dear City Council Members,

My name is Lois Markham. I have lived and voted in Cambridge for nine years. I support the Cambridge Holistic Emergency Alternative Response Team (HEART) as a community-led public safety initiative and urge the City of Cambridge to finalize a contract for services with Cambridge HEART.

When George Floyd was murdered in May 2020, in my grief, I asked myself, "How do we best protect and support people who have been marginalized for generations by our society?" My answer is that we do it through a holistic, community-based approach to public safety. A vision of public safety that is proactive rather than reactive. This is exactly what HEART is offering to the City of Cambridge. It is a gift that the city has waited too long to open.

Cambridge HEART is fighting for (and still doesn't have) a regular contract for services with the city despite a Policy Order being passed in March 2023 to allocate ARPA funds to Cambridge HEART and to engage in a contract for services.

Since its creation, Cambridge HEART has successfully hired 7 full time responders who have completed over 600 hours of extensive training. HEART has actively been responding to non-emergency requests from the community and building relationships with organizations that support our people.

Cambridge HEART signed an ARPA contract with the City in June 2023 for federal funds. While this support was very important, ARPA is a one time, emergency funding mechanism. A regular contract for services would cover more of HEART's salaries and operating expenses so that they can continue to serve community members at no cost.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge you to support HEART by immediately signing a contract for services.

Sincerely,

Lois Markham  
 316 Rindge Ave., Unit 10  
 Cambridge 02140

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Marilyn Frankenstein <Marilyn.Frankenstein@umb.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 14, 2023 10:15 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** please generously funding HEART

Dear City Councillors:

I am a 40+ year Cambridge community member, tax-paying home owner, who is a strong supporter of alternatives to police for community safety.

Below are highlights from some of the previous letters I have sent to you expressing my very strong support for Cambridge HEART, The Black Response's community created, community led proposal for alternative community safety.

Here I will ask you to please consider those arguments for our city to act on the promise of creating a truly thoughtful system of community safety.

Further, I will ask you to consider that funding HEART at the level where the brilliant ideas and research behind this alternative can be enacted is the only way to effectively evaluate its success. It is only a government with a solid system of raising revenues that can take away the burden of promising projects having to devote resources to solicit for funds. Further, as someone who believes in all of our responsibilities to all of our community, I want to see my taxes support these kinds of promising projects in our community.

Surely our Cambridge, one of the intellectual capitals of the country, should be a leader in pointing the way to more peaceful, safe ways to be together in society.

Sincerely,  
Marilyn Frankenstein  
75 Holworthy Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Excerpts from March 6, 2023

As I wrote to the previous city council, as a retired professor of Quantitative Reasoning and Arguments, I am struck by the fact that at that point, our city was spending \$630 per resident per year on the Police Department, while Cambridge HEART is requesting what amounts to \$23 per resident per year. For such a modest investment, Cambridge can be a leader in innovative non-carceral programs to make communities across the country safe.

Another aspect of HEART that I have written about in the past and would like to emphasize is HEART's support for the employment and leadership of impacted communities. The idea is that those who are most affected by problems in community safety, such as Black communities, disabled communities, communities of color, houseless communities, unemployed communities, and youth communities, have the best knowledge to create and enact solutions. Further, those community members should be fairly compensated for making our city safe. Actually, providing such jobs is part of the solution to making our city safe!

During my long teaching career at UMass/Boston, I often started the beginning of the term asking students to reflect on a profound comment by Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo: "the intellectual activity of those without power is always labeled non-intellectual." My forty years of teaching people who have been labeled non-intellectual, has convinced me that the intellectual activity of those most negatively impacted by *those with power*, contains incisive intellectual analysis of the causes and the solutions to those problems.

Something else that I have emphasized more recently in testimony before City Council is the incredibly thoughtful planning of the HEART team. Evidence of this is that both the time-line and the finances needed were taken into consideration to prepare responders for a pilot program launch. The strength of the responders is evidence of this excellent planning. In an area where there is a shortage of responders, HEART responders have taken over 30 different trainings, including EMT training, Red Cross CPR and First Aid, Domestic Violence Creative Intervention, Harm Reduction, and Transformative Justice; 3 responders are certified Peer Responders and 4 are studying to become certified.

Excerpts from March 20, 2023 note:

I am a proud member of the community support group for HEART.

For years HEART has done an incredible amount of research into best practices of community safety, collaborating with doctors, social workers and people impacted with mental health challenges. HEART has organized a wide-range of Cambridge community support. HEART has trained and developed of an impressive team of community safety responders. And HEART responders have been creating ties with the Cambridge community developing trust.

I can't imagine any new program that could be as developed as HEART has been for years. I can imagine that if a HEART responder, someone whose life background would deeply understand the stress that Arif Sayed Faisal was experiencing, someone who had the multiple kinds of trainings/preparation organized through the HEART program, if a HEART responder had responded, surely it is likely that Arif would be alive today. Surely, it makes sense to fully support HEART's efforts to create humane, alternative responses to community safety!