

August 3, 2017, 6:00 – 8:00pm

Meeting Minutes: The Sounding Board, Chicago Public Media

1. Welcome & Board Member Renewal

- a. If interested, reach out to Haley Carlson

2. Breakdown of What the Night Looks Like

- a. Separating people into groups and introducing the questions listed below for discussion

3. CPM Questions (Tricia Bobeda Leading Discussion with Sounding Board Members Providing Input)

- a. What do you wish other people understood better about gun violence in Chicago?
 - i. It is not everywhere
 - ii. People actually hear about it
 - iii. Chicago is not number 1 place of gun violence in America
 - iv. People in the affected communities are actually out there trying to do something about it
 - v. Media and all understand that this is extremely complex
 - 1. More than just bad people from bad home
 - 2. There are many variables
 - vi. Police participants
 - vii. Role of white supremacy & responsibility politics
 - 1. People of Color (“POC”) are not an experiment; POC do not want to be examined like one
 - viii. It feels more sensationalized; too much emphasis
 - ix. Is the actual situation actually worse? Is it just the context?
 - x. Power exists in specificity
 - xi. There is not enough to tell the range
 - xii. Perspectives aren’t being put along with the context
 - 1. Ex: Every other hour, someone is shot. At the same time, babies are being born, people are getting married, etc.
 - 2. Not different from other cities
 - a. The hood in Chicago vs. the hood in Philly or the hood in NY, etc.
 - b. Responses are the same for those living outside the hood vs. in the hood
- b. What do you wish you understood better about gun violence in Chicago?
 - i. Why it’s so prominent in storytelling
 - ii. Its relationship with CPS/schools & participants
 - 1. What are the conditions of the students at home? Parents?
 - iii. What are all the organizations/support geared to assist this issue?
 - iv. Intersection of legality
 - v. There is a severe neighborhood complex
 - 1. “South side” & “west side” & “north side” are not neighborhoods
 - vi. What is perceived as “violence”?
 - vii. Who’s allowed to carry guns?
 - 1. What are the limits of being a gun-holder and not being threatened?
 - viii. Do the shooters know what the impact is on their futures?
 - 1. What is going through their mind regarding the future when they shoot?
 - 2. The life of the shooter is also lost when they shoot someone

- 3. Members expressed that they would like to see more stories about those folks
- ix. Where do guns come from?
 - 1. Why are there military-grade weapons in private homes?
- x. What is the legality of guns?
- c. What do you wish elected officials understood better about gun violence in Chicago?
 - i. The heavy impact of closing afterschool programs & mental institutions & its correlation
 - ii. Laws are penalizing people, not the actual violence
 - iii. Behaviors in POC communities = policed different as opposed to white people
 - iv. What is the level of involvement of elected officials in this?
 - 1. How do they work together?
 - v. Why do they think the solution is police/prison?
 - vi. Laws need to be more efficient and effective
 - 1. New law penalizes legal gun holders/possessors, as opposed to those that actually do the crime
 - vii. People don't care about the issue unless it affects them (election, economy, etc)
 - 1. Ex: Politicians use it as part of their platform, but don't actually go through with the promised change
- d. What do you wish the media understood better about gun violence in Chicago (WBEZ included)?
 - i. What does gang violence mean?
 - 1. Media heavily reports mainly on the crime of the south & west sides, but not the positive impacts coming out of there – becomes a label
 - ii. Wording feels like there is no connection
 - 1. "These people" – impression of the speaker looking in from outside
 - iii. More community events & alternative coverage
 - iv. Lollapalooza (lifestyle event) vs. Crime (stated intention to the objective – inherent)
 - 1. Lollapalooza isn't seen as threatening because the main crowd consists of mainly "affluent white kids"
 - 2. Despite all the illegal substances being used
 - 3. Tank tops are worn without being seen as threatening
 - 4. Illegal activities/trashing = never reported as "gang-related"
 - v. Media has lost relevance on reporting violence because they haven't delve deeply enough into the stories – no depth
 - vi. "Gang-related" has become vague
 - 1. Wailing black women have become the symbol of suffering
 - 2. People in the heat of the night
 - vii. Statistics aren't being reported, because complexities in the issues have come out
 - 1. There is a loss of credibility in the media because of this
 - 2. Issues are now colorized
 - viii. Lost credibility in what "alerts" are
 - 1. Members who live in the southern neighborhoods have expressed that alerts for shootings/etc. have become clutter, because the area has become so generalized that those who do not live in the area automatically assume the members are around the shooting area
 - ix. Violence isn't the most remarkable issue
 - x. Media works with a fine line, as attitude towards the subject depends on perspective
 - 1. If the issue of violence keeps getting blown up, elected officials are pressured to do something about it

- xi. Chicago Tribune article – the media publicizes each criminal story differently
 1. One sentence vs. One whole article
 2. What is the whole story?
 3. Who is pulling the trigger? What was the reason of the person becoming a victim?
 4. People want to know more about this individualize

4. Members were then divided into 3 groups with Haley Carlson, Cate Cahan, and Tricia Bobeda leading discussion in three areas.

5. Group discussion and shared insights and perspectives on the topics

- a. Media only highlights the negative as opposed to the positive
- b. Complex competitiveness between media outlets
 - i. Creates a terror-level alert on society in competition
 1. Competing with fear
 - ii. Everything has become driven by ratings & not the institutions anymore
- c. Work closely with the elected official – hold them accountable
 - i. Solution needs to include diversity
 1. Reporters, media, etc needs to be more diverse
 2. Needs to stop generalizing
- d. More personal stories around the idea of taking someone who has walked through crossfire all their lives, overcoming the negative stereotypes, prevailing, etc.
 - i. People who are actually in the neighborhood should be the ones to tell the stories
 - ii. Children of these neighborhoods need mentors
 - iii. Stories from the law enforcement side also
 1. How do they feel policing these neighborhoods?
 2. Have them share their input as to why they think their neighborhood crumbled
 3. Hear from them as individuals, as opposed to representative spokespersons
- e. Thinking consciously about language
- f. Problem becomes systematic issue, especially surrounding color
- g. What can I do to help? (What are the grassroots efforts?)
 - i. How to help & who's doing what (MASK)
 1. Profiling people who are involved & heading up the efforts
 - ii. "For more information" being put at the end of the stories to connect people to actual helpful resources
 1. Are we using WBEZ resources to connect people?
- h. Relationship between shooters + CPS + legality of possession
 - i. Schools aren't equipped to support
 1. Should they be the support center for complex issues and intervention
 2. Identifying who your own shooter is, is tricky
 - a. People aren't trained to do so
 - ii. What are the actual red flags vs. a struggling student?
 - iii. Rational being a well-performing school with large class sizes & teaching social an emotional skills
 - iv. Upcoming shooters lose their potential – who gets lost?
 - v. "Back in my day" needs to stop
 - vi. Highlighting successful young people
 1. Not just their stories but what resources they used

- vii. We're talking about children
 1. People tend to put themselves on those shoes, as an adult
 2. Needs to hear more from the young people themselves

6. Reactions to EOH stories from Sounding Board members

- a. Reactions
 - i. Glorification of the first interviewee sets a different tone from the rest
 1. Opposing view: In a non-glorification way, it humanized the interviewee
 - ii. Annoyed: The case of hiring ex-offenders
 1. Felt like another example of POC having to prove themselves and arguing for their place
 2. Ex-offenders can't be a sole label for people
 - a. "You are just an ex-offender." is not an okay impression to give off
 - iii. As a POC, it seemed like there were only two white guys saving all these POC guys
 1. Background Context: A reporter did a story in a jail – program to connect low-level offenders getting out to adapt back to the world
 - a. Hardly any other organizations stepped up to hire them
 - iv. There was no development for what the interviewees went through in order to get them ready for jobs
 - v. Wants to know what organizations are available to be used
 - vi. Wants to know the effected lives of the employees
 1. Not eligible for:
 - a. Financial aid with college
 - b. Living in publicly-assisted housing
 2. The system follows them to their graves
 - vii. Alderman story
 1. Appreciated all the voices in the story
 2. Wants to hear more than just their professional enactment
 - a. They can make changes with the city for the better
 3. Alderman's job is complex – but the story created a great entry point
 - a. Wants to hear more about reviewing the policy issues
 - b. Wants to hear more aldermen & civic workers and what they do in the vulnerable communities
 - viii. Support the project continuing
 1. Want more depth into the story
 - a. What's the community's response to these shootings?
 - ix. UMEDICS (Ujimaa Medics) story
 1. Very clear illustration about a group that teaches necessary skills – doing good, yet they still felt endangered by police
 - a. There's this idea that people of these communities have to manage their police, despite that being their jobs, taking that into consideration
 - i. Why is "I was nervous" a legal standard for cops to use in defense, despite that being their job?
- b. Recommendations
 - i. EOH feed being plugged into WBEZ feed would be great
 - ii. WBEZ needs to have a bit more of interactive feed with their app

7. Cate's Closing

- a. Moving forward with the idea they started with – trying to understand who is doing the shooting in Chicago, as a way to get at the systematic problem
 - i. What would make a 13-year old use a gun?
 - ii. Personal stories of these effects
- b. Accountability – who should be doing something about this?
- c. Employment & opportunity is a big gap here
 - i. People want to work & contribute
 - 1. Mini project being formed to look at what it takes for enough people to be employed to make a difference in Chicago
- d. Solutions
 - i. UMEDICS
 - ii. Aware of tons going on that hasn't been reported on
 - iii. Considering doing a project with poets
- e. Coming Up
 - i. Mick Dumke of Pro Publica working on a joint story about a man being sentenced for gun-running in Chicago
 - 1. Answers where guns come from
 - ii. WBEZ Reporter Shannon Heffernon is working on the City Clearance rate
 - 1. How it affects families who have had a loved one murdered
 - a. What creates the vicious circle/process?
 - b. One woman said families get all the blame (from cops, etc.)
 - iii. Uptick in shootings during the daytime
 - 1. Want to figure out what that's going on about
 - a. Typically youths
 - 2. Focusing on a teen from Englewood
 - iv. Intersection of foster care and violence
 - v. Personal story of a police officer
 - vi. Natalie Moore, *South Side Reporter*, is working on a couple of the projects
 - vii. Request from Sounding Board member: Possibility of a way to connect the stories in an episodic way; there's an actual thread through the story i.e. trilogies
 - 1. Currently is a bit more scattershot
 - viii. Projects Attempt
 - 1. Kid who was paralyzed because he was shot
 - a. One of the parties' business was connected with this
 - 2. "High Kids" – kids taking pills, marijuana, alcohol, just to get high
 - ix. Request from Sounding Board member: Possibility of following up with these stories years down the road
 - x. Interested in the part of a story that hasn't been told
 - 1. What was in their head when they fired a shot?

Sounding Board Member Attendance

Lucy Flores
 Erin McDuffie
 Tracey Mabrey

Sameena Mustafa
Shelia Lewis
Tyrone Martinez-Black
Terreene Bryant
Anita Kavuu
Dave Stanford