

**Birmingham City Commission  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Workshop  
Monday, April 11, 2022  
6:45 p.m.  
Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/693372436>**

**Workshop Session**

**This will be considered a workshop session of the City Commission. No formal actions will be taken. The purpose of this workshop is to participate in a discussion regarding trends and insights related to teen substance abuse, mental health and the needs of the teen community as presented by the Birmingham Bloomfield Community Coalition.**

**I. Call to Order**

Therese Longe, Mayor

**II. Roll Call**

Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk, called the roll.

Present: Mayor Longe  
Mayor Pro Tem Boutros  
Commissioner Baller  
Commissioner Haig  
Commissioner Host  
Commissioner McLain  
Commissioner Schafer

Absent: None

Administration: City Manager Markus, City Clerk Bingham, City Attorney Kucharek

**III. Presentation & Discussion**

CM Markus introduced the item. Carol Mastroianni, Executive Director of the Birmingham Bloomfield Community Coalition (BBCC), and Ethan Marcus and Evann Oleshansky, seniors at Groves High School, presented the item.

In reply to Commissioner inquiry, Ms. Mastroianni explained:

- BBCC will be looking further into why young women and girls seem to be negatively impacted at higher rates compared to young men and boys;
- It is possible that young women and girls report having a more difficult time because it is considered less acceptable for them to express frustration or anger;
- It is possible that young women and girls experienced more negative effects from isolation during the pandemic;
- Students and families may be reluctant to have their students speak openly with school counselors

- because school counselors write students' letters of recommendation to college and university;
- BBCC will be looking into why students reported a decline in substance use and mental health issues in 2015 and an increase in 2016. She said she would be happy to let the Commission know BBCC's conclusions once they are available;
  - BBCC will be tracking more of these trends over time moving forward, but some of the issues were measured for the first time in 2021 so the year-over-year trends have not yet been established;
  - This data is being shared at Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills schools, with community organizations, and via key findings reports in BBCC's e-newsletters;
  - Both Groves and the Bloomfield Hills Parent-Teacher Organization Council have established Health and Wellness Committees to take actions based on the surveys' findings;
  - BBCC works with its coalition partners, which include local, regional, and national organizations, to increase the resources available to the BBCC community; and,
  - The BBCC would love to work more closely with the City Commission.

In reply to Commissioner inquiry, Mr. Marcus explained:

- Speaking with school counselors may cause students to experience challenging feelings which they are not comfortable navigating while at school;
- Students may also not trust that school counselors are a safe resource to discuss mental health issues;
- Young women and girls are more likely to be comfortable expressing and discussing feelings overall, whereas young men and boys are more often encouraged to repress or deny their feelings, which may also partially account for why fewer young men and boys are willing to report being impacted by mental health or substance use issues;
- Ms. Mastroianni and other BBCC staff report the Youth Action Board's insights to the BBCC Board, and it is valuable for the students to know they have a voice in the organization.

In reply to Commissioner inquiry, Ms. Oleshansky explained she got involved with the Youth Action Board her first year of high school as a way to spend time with friends while participating in an extracurricular activity. She continued to participate because the opportunities to discuss shared issues with students from other schools was valuable.

Commissioner Haig asked Ms. Mastroianni to update the Commission on its findings regarding the change from 2015-2016 once those findings are available.

Commissioner Haig asked how the Commission could best support the BBCC's efforts.

Ms. Mastroianni said publicizing the BBCC's research, messaging, and findings would be helpful. She said it was often difficult to get parents and caregivers 'to even listen to any of this'. She said increased funding would be helpful, noting that BBCC receives \$3,000 from the City and spent \$50,000 on the survey that produced these findings. She said additional funding particularly for prevention would be helpful. She said the City could also partner with BBCC to expand access to social workers, therapy dogs, and/or other resources already available to the City. She said it would also be helpful to increase youth involvement in the City's work.

Mayor Longe noted that youth serve on many of the City boards.

Commissioner McLain said she would email Ms. Mastroianni about trends between 2015 and 2017 that may have impacted students' mental health and substance use. She said that eighth grade is a particularly difficult time developmentally for students. She thanked Mr. Marcus and Ms. Oleshansky for their work on the Youth Action Board.

Deborah Macon, BBCC Board Member, said that letting the BBCC address the Commission was a profoundly impactful step. She spoke of the value of having students serve as full members of the BBCC Board, and thanked the Commission for their engagement.

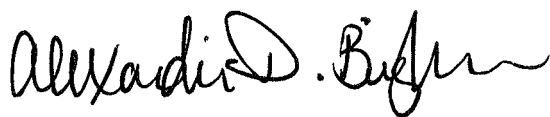
The Commission thanked the BBCC for presenting their findings.

Ms. Mastroianni invited the Commission to contact her with any further questions.

**IV. Public Comment**

**V. Adjourn**

Mayor Longe adjourned the meeting at 7:27 p.m.



Alexandria D. Bingham, City Clerk



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist