

## Father of slain student addresses City Council a - Chanhassen Villager (MN) - September 13, 2018

September 13, 2018 | Chanhassen Villager (MN) | Unsie Zuege [uzuege@swpub.com](mailto:uzuege@swpub.com)

Don Amorosi, the father of **Archer Amorosi**, the 16-year-old teen who died following a July 13 shooting by Carver County Sheriff's Office deputies, addressed the Chanhassen City Council at Monday night's council meeting.

Amorosi had also spoken to the council in August about his son's death. Amorosi asked the council what actions it has taken related to his previous questions. He asked that a tree be planted in his son's memory in the city. Amorosi also said he wants the council to develop a plan to help residents experiencing a mental health crisis.

"You have an obligation to aggressively pursue the truth," Amorosi said. "An alarming tragedy happened in your town and under your watch..."

After Amorosi's address to council, Mayor Denny Laufenburger asked City Attorney Roger Knutson "What is the council's official responsibility to respond to Mr. Amorosi's request?"

Knutson said the council could study mental health issues in general, but must avoid the specific case being investigated.

Laufenburger read an update from County Attorney Mark Metz who suggested the investigation may be closed by Sept. 14, after which Metz has 30 days to review the findings. "The elements (of the investigation) will remain confidential if charges are filed. If not, when the case is concluded, the information becomes available after the term of appeal period ends," Laufenburger said.

Councilors expressed their sympathy for **Archer Amorosi** and his family, and each councilor spoke in support of looking at partnering with the community and schools to address mental health issues.

Councilor Elise Ryan asked for more information from the Minnesota Department of Health and a HealthPartners "Make it OK," program, and to look into planting a tree.

"I'd like to bring it back to a work session," Ryan said. "What these programs are, what the role of the city would be. To discuss it at a work session."

City Manager Todd Gerhardt said staff could research the programs, define them, how they work, then find out what the council might want to do. "As for the memorial tree, we have a program," Gerhardt said.

"I know know NAMi (National Alliance on Mental Illness) is very willing to come in and speak," Councilor Bethany Tjornhom said. She offered as a citizen, not as a member of council, to connect

the Amorosi family with mental health resources.

Laufenburger also addressed Amorosi's statement that the council had been silent in the face of his son's death.

"There are some things I'd like to say as a citizen, but because of my title and role as mayor, I have to use judgement of how I use the comments. He (Amorosi) said he didn't hear any condolences. The city manager went to the wake; I was at the funeral. Each of us chose to console and offer condolences in our own ways ... This is not passivity or silence, but deep caring for our community. There are restrictions on what we can do."

Laufenburger suggested staff work with City Attorney Knutson to write an official response to Amorosi, then create a work session for the council to learn about resources available for stress, anxiety, mental health, addiction, and to learn what other similar communities are doing. "Perhaps this precipitates a human rights commission," Laufenburger said.

Councilor Ryan made a motion to approve such a work session, seconded by Councilor Jerry McDonald. The motion passed unanimously.

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