

Committee on Police Reform and Reinvention

Meeting: February 10, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Recorded by Susannah Amiteye

Attendees:

- Mayor Larry Woolbright
- Police Chief David Bush
- Lori Acee (Chairperson)
- Susannah Amiteye
- Joe Stapf
- Ray Otten
- Kelli Gregory

Unable to attend:

- Lorri Riggs

Proceedings

Lori:

- Tonight's focus will be the "areas of opportunity" for committee recommendations
- Police department functions:
 - What should we include in the report?
 - Updating policies: underway
 - Include initial demographics (remove this from the report as a recommendation)
 - Susannah added info from the Economic Development Plan
 - Add page numbers
 - Susannah had provided qualifiers regarding "all citizens"
 - Ray does not feel qualifiers are needed; does not feel adding specific groups are needed
 - We could add "equity for all" after the qualifiers
 - Lori: Because some of these issues prompted this issue, we should include the qualifiers
 - Kelli agrees
 - Chief Bush: One of the problems we run into is that we are excluding other groups
 - Chief: would be okay with including the qualifiers in the Mission Statement or Vision

- Chief: Does not want to include in every policy; We need to get the Use of Force Policy as soon as possible
 - Decision: leave Use of Force Policy the way it is
 - Lori: how about “regardless of orientation”
 - Susannah does not think it goes far enough
 - Decision: Include the qualifiers in the Mission Statement
- Add CAD System for tracking: OK to add
 - Chief: It’s a county-controlled system; we will come on board when it’s rolled out
- Regular yearly or periodic soliciting of opinions
 - Lori to follow up with Joe
- Hiring/recruiting:
 - Recommendation to post openly and solicit applications as needed. Is that ok?
 - Chief: OK to put out call for applications regardless of openings
 - Kelli: Continuously accepting applications
 - Ray: That’s what we say on the EMS website
- Training/Officer development
 - Supporting mental health for police force
 - Chief Bush: Met with County undersheriff regarding training
 - Most groups will focus on de-escalation, diversity training, etc
 - County is coming up with a syllabus including mental health training
 - Lori will come up with social media post about the AWARE training
 - Chief: Would like the village to train with the county; budget will have to be covered
 - Mayor; If it’s local and/or online, budget should not be prohibitive
- Survey the police to see what we can do to support them, uncover training needs
 - Lori to take offline with Joe
 - Chief: One of the frustrations that PD officers have is that when one officer does something bad, all officers are bad. Police officers need to take decisive action in tough situations. We are scrutinized. Do you want us to stop the aggressive assault? Or do you want us to be compassionate? Constantly going from one level of mentality to another. I don’t want police officer to wonder if they should stop and react. I want them to react. Not every police call is a controlled environment
 - Lori: The officers need to be people and officers. It could be stress reduction, or something along those lines
 - How do you feel about surveying the officers:
 - Chief: It’s a good idea
 - Lori: there may be commonalities
 - Mayor; What could this committee do to support you, or help you in your job?
- Culture of the Community
 - Chief is working on a policy: conduct on duty/conduct off duty
 - Need to spell out what is/what is not acceptable. Will be in the handbook
 - Mayor: maybe we recommend that that is covered in the Policies and Procedures Handbook, and that it be brought on line as soon as possible

- Develop an assessment of police officers
 - Chief has this in draft; will be in use very shortly
- Make the current committee a standing committee as advisory council
 - Lori thinks it's a good idea
 - Check in on the work that has been done and what more can be done
 - Chief thinks that the committee has done a fantastic job, he is very pleased
 - Things pop up and would be good to have this type of committee to approach this type of issue
 - Lori: We're a diverse group, neighborhoods, ages/stages, different parts of the community. We could get the pulse
 - Mayor: Included this in the original email that went out to the group; could resign as needed
 - Ray: semi-annual would be warranted; things change on a dime.
 - Lori: Or as needed

Survey

- We have preliminary survey data: 90 responses (75 residents)
 - Age demographics. Over 60, 16%, etc.
 - Do we still need paper survey?
 - We would be promoting to that age group, and we would have to compile the data
 - Mayor: Sounded like a perfect bell curve
 - Ray: has been working the system, and listening to seniors who don't have access to computers or cell phones
 - Mayor: 60 and up is a broad age range.
 - Kelli: OK with giving these out
 - Survey went out to EMS, Police Department website, Village.
 - Chief: Seniors really want to be heard
 - County undersheriff said they only got out 30-40 surveys
 - Mayor: Does Doubleday Woods have equal members who lived here and has moved here? Yes
 - Chief: Doubleday Woods knows the PD very well
 - Susannah: Distribute a sample of 20?
 - Lori: We would have to find a volunteer to enter in the paper copies OR we keep all the paper copies
 - Mayor: Distribute as many as you want and then randomly choose responses
 - Lori: Mohegan Hills? May not need to increase the sample (skip it)
 - Lori will drop them off for Joe at the Police Station
 - Decision: Distribute widely and then enter random sample of 20
- Next meeting:
 - Any additional commentary would be welcome
 - Review the survey results; discuss how to present the overview of the
 - Joe: He could have them done in a day; Susannah will key in the results

- Public comment?
 - Liz Kormos was on for at least part of the meeting; no comment