

Town of Montague
**Joint Meeting of the Community Engagement Police Advisory Group, the Equity
and Use of Force Police Advisory Group, and the Montague Selectboard**
Meeting Minutes
Meeting Held Remotely VIA Zoom Conference
September 22, 2020

Attendees: Montague Selectboard: Rich Kuklewicz, Michael Nelson, Chris Boutwell. Community Engagement Advisory Group: Kathleen Burek, Natan Cohen, Thomasina Hall, Kwamane Harris (joined late), Michael Nelson, Chris Pinardi. Equity and Use of Force Advisory Group: Denise Aiken (joined late), David Bulley, Ariel Elan, Faith English, Elliot Ezcurra (joined late), Deborah Frenkel, Richard Hall, Rich Kuklewicz, Maddox Sprengel. Town Staff: Police Lieutenant Chris Bonnett, Town Clerk Deb Bourbeau, Town Administrator Steve Ellis, Town Planner Walter Ramsey, Police Chief Chris Williams. Facilitator: Paula Green.

1. Meeting called to order

Meeting called to order shortly after 6pm by Selectboard Chair Rich Kuklewicz on behalf of all three bodies meeting in joint session.

2. Swearing In and Review of Open Meeting Law

Montague Town Clerk Deb Bourbeau swore in all appointed members of the two police advisory review groups who had not previously been sworn in. Following this she provided an overview of the Open Meeting Law to ensure all members were aware of its requirements relative to the conduct of appointed members of municipal public bodies.

3. Personal Introductions

All advisory group members shared a bit about themselves, where and how long they've lived in Montague, and in some cases reflected on their interest in participating in these advisory groups.

4. Town Staff Introductions

Town staff in attendance shared a bit about themselves, the role they serve in Town government, and their personal history in the Town.

5. Introduction to Paula Green and Her Role in the Project

Steven Ellis introduced Paula Green and shared her experience working with people around the world and in the Pioneer Valley who are working through important and sometimes conflicted community conversations and decisions. The goal of her work with Montague is to help ensure a positive and productive process.

Her role as presently defined will be to assist with facilitation of this initial meeting and with training in group process and dynamics that is to be provided to both advisory groups. There is a possibility that she could remain engaged with the project following completion of the training, with any future role to be considered once the groups are established and have a better sense of need.

6. Group Norms and Process

Paula Green outlined the topic of establishing group norms as foundational to success in brief, acknowledging this would be among the focuses of the training that is to come at a subsequent meeting. Her work will focus on group and individual relationship-building, norms and ground rules, and productive approaches to communication, and will be supported by selected readings/materials.

7. Review of Selectboard Charge

Steven Ellis shared the individual groups' charges—their focus as defined by the Selectboard's vote to establish the advisory groups. The following text was presented visually and was the subject of some discussion.

On June 29, 2020, the Selectboard established two ad hoc Advisory Groups focused as follows:

- *Police Community Engagement – What are MPD policies and practices relative to community engagement, what is the impact of these practices on key sub-groups, how might they improve?*
- *Equity and Use of Force in Policing – What are MPD policies and practices relative to equitable policing and use of force, what is the impact of these practices on key subgroups, how might they improve?*

The Advisory Groups are charged with exploring questions directly relevant to their focus, developing a broader engagement strategy to bring robust community perspective, analyzing what is learned, and reporting of findings and recommendations to the Selectboard. The timeline for this report is to be determined by the Selectboard in collaboration with the groups. The groups' work is expected to be independent, but also to intersect and be integrated at key points.

8. Overall Schedule

Rich Kuklewicz noted that he is reluctant to set a specific end date for the groups' work, but would like members' input to the idea of having a report prepared by Thanksgiving week. There was some discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of having a schedule against which to perform work and of the accommodations that could be made to allow some elements of the work to remain ongoing after that date. The general consensus appeared to be to hold that date as a goal, but to maintain some flexibility to expand timelines as the work gets underway.

9. Meeting Logistics and Supports

Discussion focused most intensely on whether in-person meetings were possible. Although members held different opinions on the question, it was decided that meetings would be held using Zoom. Steve Ellis volunteered to create minutes for this meeting.

10. Next Meeting Dates

Discussion occurred relative to when the training session for each group would take place and Chris Pinardi and Ariel Elan stepped forward to poll the availability of members of the Community Engagement and the Equity and Use of Force groups, respectively. First meeting dates would be discussed subsequent to that. It was noted that Tuesdays and Thursdays may generally be best, due to standing meetings of the Selectboard and Finance Committee on Mondays and Wednesdays.

First meeting agendas were discussed and Steve Ellis agreed to create broad agendas for each group's first public meeting, which would allow them to organize themselves operationally and make important decisions relative to their approach to the work.

11. Other Next Steps/Topics Not Anticipated

Chris Pinardi noted his concern relative to an under-representation of some sub-groups, including Latinx and older residents. Discussion ensued relative to efforts to recruit individuals from the Latinx community, with Steven Ellis explaining that one terrific candidate was invited to participate but had to decline. It was noted that there is Latinx representation on one of the groups at present. The groups look forward to actively pursuing input from individuals who identify as such through the outreach and engagement process.

There was additional discussion relative to the age of members of the advisory groups with some difference of opinion that older citizens were under-represented. It was again noted that the role of the Community Engagement group, in particular, is to seek input from all sub-populations in town.

12. Adjournment

Michael Nelson moved to adjourn the meeting on behalf of the Selectboard, Chris Boutwell seconded. Motion passed 3-0 (Nelson aye, Boutwell aye, Kuklewicz aye.)