

Police Equity & Use of Force Advisory Group
7:30 – 9:00 pm Thursday, October 29, 2020
Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/95691505142>
MEETING MINUTES

In attendance:

Committee members Richard Kuklewicz (Selectboard Chair), Ariel Elan, Maddox Sprengel, Richard Hall, David Bulley, Faith English

Town staff: None

Community members: Jeff Singleton, Peter Hudyma

Absent: Committee member Deborah Frenkel

1. 7:17 PM, Ariel calls the meeting to order, including announcing the meeting is being recorded and roll call taken.
2. Table the vote on minutes of September 22 and October 22 meetings.
3. Faith volunteers to take the minutes going forward.
4. Questions group members may have about the process so far:

Propose we use this time to refocus what our goals are/what questions we want to answer, given how much information we have received from the Montague Police Dept. (MPD).

Maddox: Want to determine whether policing in Montague is equitable. What would it mean for policing to be equitable? What does use of force look like in Montague, what are the incidents and who do they happen to?

Rich H.: It would be helpful to get accounts from officers about how they handle specific situations.

Faith: What is our desired outcome from our report? Are we hoping for the MPD to implement policy changes based on our recommendations?

Rich K.: The Selectboard is looking for suggestions from the groups to be considered at a meeting that will be convened once reports are finalized (MPD and committee members would be invited). We hope that the Selectboard, Committees and MPD can all be in agreement on potential policy recommendations.

Ariel: There are not many incidents of use of force in the data we have been provided with. Also am struck by how many arrests involved people from other towns. The racial breakdown also doesn't reveal huge disparities between arrests.

Rich K.: I would be willing to work with the numbers we have been given (chart/graph) in order to highlight trends. Need to also determine if any of the arrest data are repeat

arrests to see if certain people are being arrested multiple times. This committee is tasked with the nuts and bolts of how/why the MPD functions. The other committee (Community Engagement) seeks to speak with the community at large regarding how police are perceived, what their experience has been, etc.

Faith: These committees have been formed in response to the murder of George Floyd; these committees are a response to that atrocity, hoping to prevent this from happening here (*e.g.* requiring specific trainings, etc.).

Rich H.: We would benefit from learning specific policies our PD has. We might leave the community engagement piece to the other committee.

David: Most police departments will say that unnecessary use of force never happens. We need to look critically at their documentation. What are the criteria for specific scenarios (in which force is used). The use of force is defined differently between us and the police department. Need to compare arrest data with census data to get a sense of how high/low the numbers are among people of color who have been arrested.

David and Rich H. will start drafting questions to be addressed to members of the police department during an in-person interview. Send questions to them to be added to the list. These will be reviewed during next week's meeting and we will invite MPD to the following meeting.

5. Report on any contact with Montague Police Dept. regarding written materials this group has requested, such as handbooks of policies and practices.

--Covered in topics above.

6. Review data requests and questions for the MPD that members of this group agreed to in our Oct. 22 meeting, and/or submitted to Ariel between Oct. 22 and tonight's meeting. Add/subtract/reframe questions as the group deems most effective.

--Also covered in previous topics.

7. Discuss outreach strategies.

Ariel: Let's engage with the police first, then move on to possible outreach among the community if that is necessary.

David: I think it is vital to speak with people about their experiences with the police.

Rich K.: We don't want to duplicate efforts with the other committee (Police Community Engagement committee). We might want to convene a joint meeting in a few weeks.

Rich H.: The other committee will reach out to people. We should see where they get; we can fill in any gaps.

Ariel: We can table outreach efforts and wait to see what the other group comes up with. In the meantime, committee members (of this committee) should continue to submit data questions.

Maddox: This is why it is important for us to get a sense of the policies and compare with the experiences learned from other committee. We need to learn how MPD defines use of force and how community members define use of force. Recommendations could be related to alternatives to policing. There are skilled, trained people who might be better suited to handling these situations.

David: I have experience as disciplinarian in school setting. People who have experienced trauma break the rules, escalate. We should look at the issue of how an officer with the best intentions can still escalate when working with people who have experienced trauma.

Faith: Much police response is a symptom of a lack of safety net/social support programs. I hope we might start the conversation around who should be responding to crisis situations and whether or not a police response is appropriate.

Community Member Peter H.: A question for the MPD: How many officers come from a military background? What kind of weapons do they have access to on their person, in their cars, at the station? Recommends a book, *The End of Policing* by Alex Vitale.

Community Member Jeff S.: Can I send questions that I would like asked of the MPD?

Ariel: Yes, feel free to send them through me.

8. Confirm any next steps and member responsibilities.
 - Continue to send data questions to Ariel
 - Review all data we have received
 - Send questions to be used in our interviews with MPD to Rich H. and David
9. Select facilitator for next meeting.
--No volunteers, Ariel agrees to facilitate again.
10. Topics not anticipated within 48-hour advance-notice posting requirement.
--N/A
11. Adjournment
--Rich K. makes motion to adjourn; David seconds. Meeting adjourned unanimously.