

Police Equity and Use of Force Advisory Group
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, January 21, 2021 7:15 – 8:45 pm

In attendance:

Committee members: Ariel Elan, Maddox Sprengel, Deborah Frenkel, Faith English

Not in attendance: Richard Hall, Richard Kuklewicz (Selectboard Chair), David Bulley

Community Member: Jeff Singleton

1. Facilitator opens the meeting, announces the meeting is being recorded; takes roll call.
2. Approve Police Equity and Use of Force Advisory Group Minutes: January 14, 2021 meeting.
 - Ariel makes motion to amend minutes to change “agenda” to “minutes” in header. Maddox seconds, motion passes unanimously.
 - Faith makes motion to approve amended minutes, Deborah seconds. Motion passes unanimously.
3. Finish list of questions & topics for the committee's second public interview with Lt. Chris Bonnett of the Montague Police Dept., which has been confirmed for Thursday, January 28 from 7 to 9pm. Chief Chris Williams has also been invited. Finalize our proposed date & time frame for this meeting.
 - Additional questions discussed/added.
 - Ariel to send final version of questions to the committee prior to our interview with Lt. Bonnett.
4. Continue outlining and considering language to be included in our report to the Selectboard.
 - Reviewed/edited list of draft recommendations (below).
 - Discussed creating a working group to begin drafting outline/body of the report to be brought back to share with the larger Committee. Maddox and Deborah volunteer to do this.
5. Share any additional information not discussed under previous items, from any member, that may inform our work.
 - None
6. Plan Agenda for next meeting.
 - Interview with Lt. Bonnett
7. Topics not anticipated within 48-hour advance-notice posting requirement.
 - None
8. Adjournment
Deborah makes motion to approve amended minutes, Faith seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Action items:

- All committee members to review final version of questions for Lt. Bonnett prior to interview on 1/28/21
- All committee members continue to prepare items to be added/recommended in report (can be sent to Faith via email or discussed in future meetings).

Draft items to include in our report (subject to further discussion):

- Make recommendation that the MPD conducts a full review and revision of policies so that they accurately reflect practices, be done with a civilian entity (some policies have ambiguity/discrepancies with how they act versus what is written such as how MPD makes determination around who is and isn't deserving of medical attention).
- Establish a Civilian Complaints and Use of Force Oversight Commission: this commission would serve as an alternative method for submitting complaints in order to establish oversight/transparency with regard to how complaints are received and addressed. They would also review all incidents of use of force. It is essential to have independent review/oversight rather than internal review exclusively/important for people to have alternative venues for filing complaints. *include research that supports this
- Alternative recommendation regarding use of force policy: require that all incidents of use of force be reported to the FBI National Use-of-Force Collection if the MPD does not already do so.
- Explore alternatives to mental health crises/wellness checks: this might need to be a regional effort, FRCOG would be a valuable partner in beginning this conversation, we could also consider briefing our State Senator, Joanne Comerford and Representative Natalie Blais. We recommend adapting existing approaches such as the CAHOOTS model implemented in Eugene, OR in which a team of mental health professionals, social workers and/or crisis counselors are sent as first responders to calls involving mental health crises.
- Explore the possibility of using cannabis revenue to fund either of the commissions/programs mentioned above.
- [End Policing of Minor "Broken Windows" Offenses \(pulled from Campaign Zero's website\):*](#)
The following activities do not threaten public safety and are often used to police black communities. Decriminalize these activities or de-prioritize their enforcement:
 - Consumption of Alcohol on Streets
 - Marijuana Possession
 - Disorderly Conduct
 - Trespassing
 - Loitering
 - Disturbing the Peace (including Loud Music)
 - Spitting
 - Jaywalking
 - Bicycling on the Sidewalk
 - Prostitution

The Committee decided to add this as a question for Lt. Bonnett to see what their policy is regarding policing these types of activities. Will revise and/or remove recommendation based on his response.

**This seems like a particularly effective approach to reduce unwanted interactions with the police that don't necessarily result in arrest but might contribute to inequitable policing.*