

Police Equity & Use of Force Advisory Committee
Summary of 2nd Data-centered Questions & Answers from Montague Police Department

November 17, 2020

Compiled+ edited by Ariel Elan for the Committee and public [highlights in boldface by editor]

These questions and answers reference other documents, such as Arrest and Traffic Stop data and the MPD Policies and Procedures Manual, that are posted on this committee's web page at montague-ma.gov. See the committee's Data & Documents archive:

<https://www.montague-ma.gov/g/77/Police-Equity--Use-of-Force-Advisory-Group>

1. Regarding **Traffic Citations** print-outs the MPD has provided:

--We requested a **key to the state laws each traffic citation is based on** [listed in the left-hand column on the *Violation Breakdown* page for each year]. Lt. Bonnett provided this in a separate document: *Traffic Citations ~ Key to Violation Codes*

--Regarding **types of traffic stops**, Lt. Bonnett confirms that a "Warning" is a written warning, and "Verbal" is a verbal warning or conversation.

--We asked if we could receive a version of the first page (*Violation Breakdown*) and the final page (*Citation Statistics: Total Citations and Race Data Entry*) for each year **for Montague residents only**.

Lt. Bonnett: "Unfortunately, this is not a report I can generate."

3. Regarding the impact of policing on racial and ethnic sub-groups, which the Selectboard has asked the advisory groups to explore, the committee asked **why differing categories of race and ethnicity were listed for arrests, uses of force, and traffic stops**. *[See footnote for the lists.]

Lt. Bonnett:

"Traffic citation categories come from the state, as citations and traffic violations are managed and submitted to them.

"Arrest categories are set by the federal government, per the UCR (Uniform Crime Reporting) guidelines. Hence the differences.

[Use of Force statistics are a Montague PD initiative, as described later in this memo.]

"As we previously discussed, Hispanic is an ethnicity, and not a race category, as a member of any race can be/not be of Hispanic origin. That said, I know there is one spot that is confusing and lists Hispanic among the other categories of race. While this is technically not "correct", this comes from a mandatory study the state implemented many years ago regarding race reporting on traffic stops.

"Every police department was required to participate for a year, to monitor which departments may be racially profiling. This was called a "special study" and was built into departments' databases -- hence them tracking Hispanic and Middle Eastern specifically along with race, as this was a study to identify departments that may be profiling those groups.

"Those departments that did not raise any flags from the norm were released from this tracking after a year. We were one of those departments that raised no flags or evidence of racial profiling in our traffic stops and were released from participation in the study.

“However, that “special study” data collection metric still is alive in our system (we have seen no reason to delete it), and that is the report you see that appears to have “Hispanic” as its own category. Chief Williams opted to include it for the purposes of transparency.”

4. In the interest of equitably comparing the impacts of local policing on sub-groups, the committee asked whether there was a way to identify how many Hispanic individuals might be found in each of the racial categories reported. In response, Lt. Bonnett manually researched and created the documents *MPD Arrest Data. Hispanic 2016~2020* and *MPD Traffic Citations. Hispanic Breakdown by Cause*

As part of his response regarding demographic categories in reporting, Lt. Bonnett shared this information about the **Montague Police Department’s Use of Force policies, procedures, and reporting:**

“There is absolutely no mandate for police departments to track or provide use of force data in any specific way (most do not). It is not required or collected by the state or any other central clearinghouse.

“We took it upon ourselves to begin mandatory use of force data collection here beginning in 2017. I created a form and wrote a policy (see policy number 3.03, Use of Force Reporting) mandating all uses of force be reported, and how.

“This was done for many reasons, the least of them being able to have the answers in situations like this. More importantly, the data serves as an early warning system of sorts, allowing us to monitor and track our force usage for any anomalies or areas of concern.

“I review and approve every reported use of force individually, and comprehensively review our trends quarterly. Because we create and maintain this data, that is why it is so easy to retrieve and provide.”

5. Is every use of force connected with an arrest?

“While most are, not all have to be. An incident involving the restraint of an emotionally disturbed person in crisis, for example, may not result in an arrest, but would still be reported and documented as a use of force per our department mandate and policy.”

6. Is every use of (an) officer(s)’ Defensive Tactic(s) connected with an arrest?

“Any use of defensive tactics is considered as use of force, and therefore would be reported and documented as stated in question 4 above.”

**Arrest Data Demographic Categories*

Black
Asian
Pacific Islander
Native American
White

**MPD Uses of Force Demographic Categories*

Black

Asian

Pacific Islander

Native American [American Indian/Alaska Native]

White

Hispanic

**Traffic Stops Demographic Categories #*

Black

Asian or Pacific Islander

Native American [American Indian/Alaska Native]

White

Hispanic

Middle Eastern or East Indian [South Asian]

Missing

Categories on traffic citation data appear only if some in that category was stopped.