

CITY OF NORWICH
Police Reform
Community Advisory Board (“CAB”)
Meeting Minutes
December 23, 2020
3:00 p.m.
Zoom meeting

PRESENT

Police Chief Rodney Marsh
Christine Rudy – First Assistant District Attorney
Rosemarie Richards – Assistant Public Defender
Alderdwoman Nancy Allaire
Police Officer Brandon Clarke – PBA President
Pastor Jen Westervelt
Adrienne Zornow
David Jennings
Missy Beers
Lynn Murray

Meeting Intro.

Pastor Jen started the meeting with information: The zoom link is at the top of the agenda each week. Next meeting will happen on Tuesday 12/29/2020 at 3:00 pm. The end of the agenda is a section with important dates: 1/12/2021 meet on Tuesday, 1/19/2021 reporting to the City Common Council and 1/26/2021 will be the public forum. On 3/2/2021 we will need to present the final report to the Common Council. The committee will need to be available for questions for the 1/26/2021 public hearing. To make the community aware of the public hearing and the preliminary report an article will be placed in the Pennysaver, Evening Sun, Norwich’s Facebook page and Norwich’s webpage.

Lynn made an announcement from Mayor Sastri: Mayor Sastri wanted everyone to know that if the committee were under the impression that they would be writing policies he apologizes, he said that the committee is here for recommendations.

Lynn stated: After watching the last two meetings there has been some hostility between members, I just want to remind members that we need to follow the ground rules and be courteous to each other. I have spoken with my colleagues from the City of Oneonta and the City of Binghamton and they are all going through the same topics and I wanted to let the committee know that this CAB is advisory not supervisory. Policy writing is a legal process that needs to be done by legal experts. The committee can make recommendations about policy. The anti-biased policing policy has been released to the committee we need to review the policy and make recommendations before the 12/29/2020 meeting. Dave brought up concerns with policies and not having influence. Chief Marsh reached out to Mike Ranalli, a Lexipol consultant, he is willing to come to our next Zoom meeting next meeting on 1/29/2020. Dave brought up the article in Google drive, Lexipol folder, and asked that the committee members view this. A question was asked if the council vote on the Police Department policies? Chief Marsh stated that no the policies are not approved by the council.

Common Council Presentation

How do we want to go about creating the document/plan to the common council, do we need to consider additional work sessions, can we complete this during our regular CAB meetings, who will be involved in the creation of the document, if we plan on using CAB meeting time how do we fit in other topics?

Adrienne says a work session that is either planned or in conjunction with the regular meeting would work best, she wanted to know what will work best for everyone that wants to be involved. She wants to make sure that everyone who wants to be involved is included in these discussions. Lynn can set up zoom meetings and participate in any meetings outside the regular meeting. Chief Marsh can be involved, Missy can but Monday and Tuesdays are best for her, Christine and/or Mike can make themselves available if there are no court cases. Nancy feels like she should not be involved in the writing since she will be voting on it, Dave can be available, Adrienne can do lunch meetings, she can do one-hour lunch meetings on 12/28/2021, 1/4/2021 and 1/5/2021 via zoom or in person at City Hall if proper COVID protocols are followed. Starting 12/28/2020 from noon to one pm, we are going to have a work session to button down the committee report, and this continue to happen on Monday and Tuesday of the following weeks 1/4/2021, 1/5/2021, 1/11/2021. On 1/12/2021 we will finalize our presentation plan and who is sharing what information and the timeframe for each member.

Community Survey Results

Norwich Community Advisory Board- Public Outreach Survey

Total Responses: 242; 207 Digital; 35 Paper

Demographic Information (from optional responses)

AGE

- 18-24 5.9%
- 25-34 16.5%
- **34-44 23.6%**
- **45-54 23.6%**
- 55-64 16.5%
- 65-74 11.8%

INCOME

- Under 40,000 21.8%
- **45,000-75,000 29%**
- 75,000-100,000 19.5%
- **100,000 and above 25%**

SEX

- Male 27.2%
- **Female 72.8%**

RACE/ETHNICITY - select-all

- White 96.1% (222 respondents)

- Person of Color 5.8% (14 respondents- inclusive of Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity)
- Didn't Answer/ "Human" (15 respondents)

TOP CONCERNS

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Mental Health Crises/ High-Risk Behaviors | 54.8% |
| 2. Drugs/Substance Abuse | 52.3% |
| 3. Burglary/ Theft | 40.7% |
| 4. Domestic Violence | 30.7% |
| 5. Child Abuse | 23.6% |

SAFETY

- 83% feel safe or very safe during the day; that drops to 38.6% at night
- 59.8% of respondents didn't report any change in how safe or unsafe they feel over the last 12 months
 - 29% say they feel less safe than 12 months ago

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 40.2% feel the PD works together often or very often with the community to address local problems
 - 24.9% feel the PD does little or nothing to work with the community on problems
- 42.3% feel the PD develops relationships with the community often or very often
 - 28.2% feel the PD does little or nothing to develop relationships
- 36.1% feel the PD does little or nothing to communicate with community members
 - 33.2 % feel the PD communicates often or always with community members
- NOTE: "Neutral" responses were about 30% in all of the above

COMMUNITY CONFIDENCE

- 36.1% feel the PD is only slightly or never transparent (percentage is 57.1% for people of color, 29% for low-income (defined as HHI of 40,000 or less))
 - 33.2 % feel the PD is often or always transparent (28.5% for people of color, 33.3% for low-income)
- 51.9% feel the PD is often or always fair (percentage is 35.7% for people of color, 45.8% for low-income)
 - 19.1% feel the PD is only slightly or never fair (50% for people of color, 31.3% for low-income)
- 62.3% feel the PD is often or always trustworthy (50% for people of color, 54.2% for low-income)
 - 19.1% feel the PD is rarely or never trustworthy (35.7% for people of color, 33.3% for low-income)
- 55.6% have not had any change in their overall feelings for the PD in the last 12 months
 - 30.7% have had their feelings increase
 - 13.6% have had their feelings decrease

RESPECT

- 66% feel officers are often or always respectful while on-duty
- 56.5% feel officers are often or always respectful while off-duty
 - 13.7% feel officers are rarely or never respectful while on-duty
 - 19.1% feel officers are rarely or never respectful while off-duty

UNIFORMED OFFICER

- 51.9% Love the Idea (for those with children in the district this is 49%)
- 13.2% Strictly oppose or are hesitant to the idea (for those with children in the district this is 12%)
- This section had 84 comments- also a “hot topic” among the community

TRAININGS

1. De-escalation and conflict management 72.3%
2. Mental Health conditions and symptoms 62.8%
3. Ethics and integrity 42.6%
4. Mindfulness/ Emotional awareness training 33.5%
5. Firearms & Weapons training 33.5%
6. Self-Defense tactics 28.1%
7. Implicit Bias training 27.3%

(NOTE: after implicit bias training there's a pretty big drop-off; Health/Fitness Training is 8th at 12%)

RECRUITMENT

1. Reviewing officer background for past complaints 75.2%
2. Officers who grew up in the community 44.2%
3. Focus on recruiting officers that would add racial diversity to the agency 40.9%
4. Changing the age restriction to allow those over 35 to enroll 28.1%
5. Prior law enforcement experience 27.7%
6. Increasing the number of female officers 26.4%
7. Recruiting officers with prior careers outside of law enforcement 16.5%

More analysis needs to be done on the police officer on/off duty and comments.

Need to improve community engagement, community confidence is coming down to trustworthiness and transparency. Chief Marsh thinks the survey is very interesting, he thinks that training and community confidence can be something that can be completed immediately, he appreciates everything that has been done with the survey. Pastor Jen talked about the SOR position in the school, and noted that Scott Ryan, Superintendent of Norwich City School as of January 4, 2021 asked that Brandon and herself present to the board of education in January. Jen was wondering if the CAB would like to see the presentation. Adrienne wanted to know if this can be postponed to February, she feels disheartened that the BOE will be voting on something that our committee has not finished. Pastor Jen said there will not be any voting it is an informational presentation. Mental health was discussed as being a top priority from the community.

Leadership and Culture

Mission statement has the support of the group and is in the final proposal for the group to consider.

Ethics and integrity were number 3 on under the training category, which speaks to leadership and culture. Adrienne saw some comments that did not reflect the PD in a good light. We should pause and reflect on some of these issues and this topic speaks about the culture of the PD. The morale question that was specific to the police survey showed a wide range of different viewpoints with no consensus. Any ideas on how we boost morale in the PD and get PO to feel better about their job. Chief Marsh stated he is ultimately response for the morale of the PD, he believes the lack of training especially hands-on training (which he hopes will take place in 2021) and the amount of overtime is a huge burden on the Police Officers. Adrienne believes that when people are happy to go to work, they do a better job. Officer

Clarke believes that some of the hurdles they have had should ease up with new staff. A fully staffed department will allow for training which will give better results to the community.

Officer wellness – Jen and Chief have been going back and forth about shifts, and as the Chief predicted and experienced in the past the officers are saying that they would rather do the 28-day rotation because if I hate nights at least I am only on for 28 days then I am back on days. The shift swapping concept might help with some of the overtime issues and open more time for training.

Incentives – are there any incentives for officers currently? Chief Marsh stated that incentives are used infrequently; he has issued commendations only a few since he was Chief. Pastor Jen wants to know if the team should come up with recommendations on this for which officers can be encouraged or rewarded. Officer Clarke was asked if he had a prospective. He does not think anyone takes on this job for the accolades, they become police officers to help their community. There are times where officers go above and beyond, if you ask any officers about this, they will say they are just doing their job. Adrienne was hoping that we could incentivize police officers for going above and beyond and promoting a positive culture. Nancy stated that the difference between corporate and the police, is that the police are involved in helping the community as their actual job and it is what they do all day. To add another expectation is a nice idea but when it comes down to it, (if they want to do it they can) most people just want to go home and have a break. Pastor Jen stated that what she saw in the survey seems like the in-person trainings are what the officers are looking for especially specialized training and that is incentive enough for them. Officer Clarke stated that in times past that has been a huge motivational factor.

Adrienne just wants to refer people to the one article that she put out, leading culture change. She believes it can be a thankless job and police officers deal with a lot of bad in society and can influence their view of the community even if they are not aware of it. Communicating with the public, being visible and being engaged in a positive way will go a long way with the community. What can we do to do more outreach into certain areas of the community that have a low trust of the police department?

Pastor Jen wanted to know if the Union Contract should be a topic that needs to continue to be on our agenda for further discussion. Committee agreed that it is an important topic.

Action Items:

Lynn will take care of coordinating with Evening Sun, Pennysaver and Facebook regarding the two city council meetings prior to January 19th.

Members need to review the bias-based policing policy and come with recommendations/questions to the 12/29/2020 meeting.

A representative of Lexipol will be joining the 12/29/2020 meeting and any questions should be sent to Adrienne prior to noon on Monday.

Everyone is encouraged to read the article that Dave Jennings supplied to the committee members.

Starting on Monday 12/28 from noon to one there will be a work session focusing on developing and finalizing our plan.

January 12th we will finalize our presentation plan in terms of who is sharing what information and timeframe for each section.

Next meeting December 29, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Closed meeting at 4:30 pm