

CITY OF NORWICH
Police Reform
Community Advisory Board (“CAB”)
Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2021
3:00 p.m.
Zoom meeting.

PRESENT

Police Chief Rodney Marsh
Assistant Police Chief Scott Burlison
Christine Rudy – First Assistant District Attorney
Police Officer Brandon Clarke – PBA President
Pastor Jen Westervelt
Adrienne Zornow
Missy Beers
Melody Girgenti
Lynn Murray

Other

Introduction:

Changes with upcoming dates with common council and upcoming public forum. Next regular meeting is next week, February 24th where we will review the final plan and before the end of today’s meeting, we will need to decide if we need to schedule any work session or if the committee is comfortable with work being done offline based on the input of the last couple weeks.

Final plan is due March 2nd in person, we will send the PDF prior to the meeting, the public forum will be March 16th and it will be in person. We need to figure out who is going to provide the updates to the council? Will the council still be asking questions? Lynn – yes, same format. If anything comes up on the 2nd prior to the public forum since now the common council will be voting on the plan following public comment, what is our plan for that off week, will that be an opportunity for adjustments to be made or are we planning to leave it alone? We will meet on March 3rd and possibly March 10th depending on how the common council meeting ends. If they are voting on March 16th do we need to meet further? Thinking March 17th but after that does not know what rules are is after that date. Lynn – Attorney Natoli said that Council will decide on how to proceed. Most likely we will not be meeting. Questions were asked on how to proceed once the council decides what parts of plan are being accepted and what parts are not being accepted. The answer is unclear, and we are hoping that there are clearer answers after the March 2nd meeting.

Final Review of Procedural Justice and Community Policing.

Procedural Justice – Four pillars 1. Being fair in processes 2. Being transparent in actions. 3. Providing opportunity for voice 4. Being impartial in decision making. Opening the floor for discussion. Adrienne - #3 we are making progress with feedback forms on the police department website, she thinks what we have outline for the future of CAB that will provide an opportunity for voice, but we need to put some thought around that more, will get to this later.

Community Policing – Tenets of community policing 1. Create a comprehensive community policing strategic plan. 2. Train all personnel on community policing-including overcoming distrust. 3. Foster an atmosphere of openness & transparency. 4. Adopt procedural justice as a guiding principle. 5. Prioritize

law enforcement safety and wellness. 6. Engage the community in a true partnership to address crime and disorder issues. 7. Treat every contact as an opportunity to engage positively with a community member. 8. Measure social cohesion and work to develop relationships. 9. Re-evaluate metrics of community policing success. 10. Incorporate community policing measures into the performance evaluation process. Adrienne – this goes along with principals of policing, is that right Chief Marsh- Yes, it is included in the training. Pastor Jen – these tenets of community policing along with the 4 pillars of procedural justice would be great touch points for the continuation of CAB to consider, we have touched on these but we can't say we are totally satisfied because there is so much there, we are heading in the right direction with all of those but doesn't know if we can cross them off our list and say we are totally set in all these area, it is going to be a continuation of monitoring that success. Adrienne – agrees especially #9 when it talks about the metrics of success obviously the surveys on an annual basis will be part of that and everything is a work of progress and we cannot cross it off our list or say that we have a police department that has community policing as a fore front, but we have touched on everything except #10. Pastor Jen – the 4 pillars and tenets of community policing should be in our plan in the section where the continuation of CAB recommendation is placed. Adrienne – it needs to be called out somehow. Pastor Jen - this is a part of our rationale for continuing, and if the group ends up morphing to include additional people, some current members will step back and having this information in the plan in one document is a key aspect of work in past, present and future.

Review original plan, go through the notes and comments, and make sure we have addressed most of them.

Adrienne – we have discussed everything but is still unclear or unsatisfied with one specific item which is reducing racial disparity and she wants the teams thoughts, we do have things that will help build trust but don't have any thing that is about racial disparity but then again I don't think we even know if those even exist because we don't have the data, she is putting it out there because she thinks this work is unfinished and is looking for input from others. Pastor Jen – we did include the bias-based policing and added a required training for officers on an annual basis for culture and diversity training. Asst Chief Burlison – that was going to be one of our topics for training throughout the year. Pastor Jen – those are two steps that are in the plan for racial disparity. Pastor Jen – does any other team members have input regarding racial disparities? Adrienne – final thoughts we don't know if disparities exist if we don't have the data, so her recommendation would be that we add something to the plan that talks about the collection of that data, she thinks we are already seeing collection of data but she is not entirely sure so it may not be a problem for us and that would be amazing but we can't address any problems if we don't know what the data is, does that make sense to everyone. Missy – yes it makes sense. Chief Marsh – is that the information that all courts are now going to be required to do via executive order with all the arrests and ethnic background and case dispositions? Adrienne – it could be but she doesn't know enough about it to know for sure, she knows some departments in larger Cities have more demographic information in their reporting, she doesn't know if that is feasible for us or something that is already being collected but is not being reported anywhere, if it is going to be reported to the courts and maybe that is sufficient, she doesn't know enough to have a suggestion one way or another and maybe this can be something we add to the continuation. Officer Clarke- was there any concerns brought up in the surveys? Adrienne – does not recall reading anything specific but we saw answers to the questions about trusting the police and the respect questions, there was a disparity between minority and caucasian responses again we did not have that many minority responses but there definitely was a difference. Chief Marsh – when he does his monthly UCR to DCJS that information is in there and he is required to report the data. For 2020 we had over 500 arrests and we had 23 minority out of those arrests. Adrienne – so the information exists we need to figure out how we are more transparent with the information and if there is a huge disparity then that would be information that CAB would need if it continues, again maybe there is no problem that would be amazing however this needs to be addressed for her there needs to be a plan going forwarded whether or not it is added to the annual report or its done some other way she would just like to see

something else done to make sure we are keeping a pulse on it. For minorities they said that 57% thought that the police are slightly to never transparent compared to 36% overall, she thinks that is a wide margin and there were no specific comments about specific actions.

Collaborative Improvement Plan Comments

Cost of the DEMS position- we have job duties – do we have a suggestion about the cost to the City? A hyperlink will be added for the DEMS position. Secretary II position was added in google drive. With the job duties that Chief Marsh typed up and we reviewed is that captured in the Secretary II document or is it a separate paper? Pastor Jen – it is separate. Pastor Jen – do we combine the two documents? Lynn- we cannot combine the two it is a civil service position that is standard, the document would be job duties specific to that position. Adrienne – it could be a separate document, Secretary II with job duties attached. The plan will have Secretary II with a list of duties. Pastor Jen – that is good, she will put PDF of both documents into document drive. Lynn - Secretary II position starting salary \$16.27 per hour with benefits it would be \$35,000 per year. Pastor Jen – should that be in the plan? Lynn – it is not on the job description; do you want to put in plan or say it? Adrienne - say the amount while discussing the position. How much does a new Officer cost the City? Lynn - A new officer costs the City \$57,461.00. Pastor Jen – are we adding the amount for the Parking Reinforcement Animal Control position? Adrienne – yes. Lynn – starting salary \$28,112 up to \$37,224 non-union position. Uploading job description for that role into the common council documents folder.

Adrienne had a question on part time police officers – Pastor Jen – lots of comments with this section. Chief Marsh expressed his concern adding part time officers, ultimately, we can put it in the plan and leave it in the hands of the city common council to decide. Adrienne – they had questions about overtime versus part time and she does not know if we can answer those, maybe we think about updating it to explore adding part time or expanding the number of police officers. Officer Clarke – if the department is fully staffed not counting sick or injured the overtime budget goes down dramatically, bringing on additional part timers he does not know how that would fill a void and if the value you would get from a part time police officer. It is just that a part time position in a full-time career would not be worth the overall effort. If the focus stays on keeping the department fully staffed then training goes up, the morale of officers goes up. He thinks that is more of a bang for the buck when it comes from the money aspect. Adrienne- We are just fully staffed should we re-evaluate in three years of being fully staffed so we should suggest moving the time frame to re-look at part timers to two to three years. Asst Chief Burlison – looking at the part time officers when talking about community policing a pillar of procedural justice, a part time officer will not be dealing with the problems that a full time officer will deal with every day so you will get a hit and miss of what is going on with a part time officer versus a full time officer who is there working the different shifts knowing the people and the problems and working to find a solution. Pastor Jen – what she is hearing from our police department they do not feel this is a value-added piece in the plan. She wants to turn it back to the group for consideration. Adrienne – when we first developed the plan, we decided that there were not enough staff to supplement the department with sick leave, etc. so if that means we need more full-time people then so be it but we will not know until we see how things work over the next two years, but we need to have the thought our there like any other service more is always better. We need to re-evaluate our staffing in two to three years.

Pastor Jen – suggestion of adding opportunities for more specialized training such as canine, narcotics, plain cloths street team to deal with load music, house parties, quality of life issues, that is not represented currently in plan should we feel it would be value added to insert a long-term goal that would recommend exploring the possibilities of more specialized training. Adrienne – yes. No one was opposed to the idea. Pastor Jen – added to plan to consider opportunities for specialized training for police officers with examples. Adrienne – does plain clothes mean literally plain clothes or soft clothes. Asst Chief Burlison – it will depend on the type of detail or what type of enforcement action would be taking, that would dictate

on what you are trying to accomplish and what type of clothing will need to be worn. Do we need to attach a specific deadline to each long-term goal? This needs to be determined quickly.

Continuing the Community Advisory Board – we recommend the community advisory board continue to meet regularly to ensure implementation of the plan, review stake holder roles, add or remove members as needed to best serve our community, depending on the role of CAB it will be important to consider how members are selected keeping in mind vetting, training, etc. Review relevant department policies making recommendation that will be shared with the public safety committee and common council. Review PD union contract making recommendations that will be shared with the union pd leadership and HR director. Continue to survey community members and police officers yearly. Explore the possibility of CAB fielding community member's feedback. Oversee community engagement initiatives. Pastor Jen – The compliant part will need to go with the community members feedback, so looking at the agenda we have captured in these points what the agenda reflected. Adrienne – She does not know if we can definitively say that CAB should be fielding complaints, she thinks that because they are recommendations and if it does continue, she would want that to be part of plan, but does not know how to state it otherwise. Does not think we will have time to flush it out anymore then we have. Pastor Jen – that is an interesting question because in her mind one of the things that you might find is that current members may not want to continue if CAB is fielding complaints and potentially responding to complaints. Adrienne – does not think that CAB should be responding to complaints, her objective is having some entity beyond the police department and City for voices to be heard that is her only objective. Pastor Jen – add continuing of the email option? Adrienne – yes, we should.

Action items

Bias based policing and body-worn camera policies have been added to the website.

Publicity for the public forum for 3/16/2021, we all agreed that the CAB email was what we were going to use so that community members can email feedback. Lynn – yes.

No updates on violent behavior but she thinks that if CAB continues, we do have that information in there about reviewing the union contract, she does not think we need to go any further with research.

Plan Input

We need to put something int the plan about the website, it will be similar to the section where we talk about what has already happened in the department culture section, doesn't know where it would go but we need to point out that this has been completed. Pastor Jen – Page 7 put a note that since the inception of CAB the City PD's website has grown to include the following: a community feedback form with commendations, and complaints, posted policies to include use of force, bias based policing, and body-worn cameras. Asst Chief Burlison – wanted to add that the committee has not really addressed the mental health and the law enforcement involvement component. We are dealing with these folks every single day; he uses the example of what happened in Rochester. We had a situation at PD today and the police is not getting the assistance they need when it comes to mental health and trying to get help for these individuals. It seems to drop into NPD hands, and no one wants to help. He knows Dr Harper is working on it but there must be some type of progress or something in CAB and we should go back and check to make sure we are on the cutting edge of this. The customers that the NPD sees 95% of them have some type of substance or mental health issues and we need better tools in our toolbox to deal with this. Pastor Jen – on pages 3 and 4 we do have under a short-term goal continue community action group focus on pursuing telemedicine options for mental health evaluations, utilizing existing connections with Chenango County behavioral health that includes representatives from the police department, Chief Marsh, community members and possibly elected city officials, there also maybe collaboration with other

entities like MCAT, Catholic Charities, Friends of Recovery, and municipalities. There was supposed to be a meeting slated for late January. Chief Marsh did that happen? Chief Marsh – yes it was Dr Harper, Ruth Roberts, Sheriff, Undersheriff, Lt Gould from Sheriff department and another individual from mental health. Pastor Jen – does it seem like that group is going to continue to meet and come up with some sort of solution? Chief Marsh – yes, there is a lot to address and explore, it was left open that we will continue to meet and come up with a solution. Pastor Jen – update note in plan that says: an initial meeting did take place and the group will continue working on a solution. Also, Ruth Roberts continues to work with the consequential intercept model and is going to examine how individuals with mental and substance use disorders come in contact and move through the criminal justice system that is under short term and under long term implementation. This will be a more streamlined approach to addressing the needs of community members and substance abuse, this would be measured by less frequent trips to Binghamton General and less frequent calls to the PD. The exact approach and logistic would be explored and discussed in the two groups above. While that does not give a quick fix to the issue do you feel that address' your concern? Asst Chief Marsh – yes, he just wants to make sure it does not fall off the radar and we should continue to work to find a solution, he knows there is no easy fix to it but also this problem is not going away he just thinks there needs to be better resources out there. He understands we are a rural community but 85-95% of the customer base has either mental, drug or alcohol dependencies and they all foster/feed off each other. Adrienne – should we add something that speaks to checking in with the two groups for accountability? We tried to bring up having a social worker on hand and she is sure there is other options that exist but when we were talking about that early on that wasn't something that was going to be feasible, we came up with the best band aid to make sure it is pointed out, but we don't have a clear vision on how it gets fixed. Pastor Jen – the good part is that the experts are at the table.

Last week Melody mentioned the community seminars to focus on de-escalation strategies should we move this to short term goals? Adrienne – yes. Pastor Jen – it will be a matter of who is going to spearhead the training, and she will move it up in the plan.

Adrienne – does not believe we need work sessions – she thinks that Pastor Jen and herself could continue with the behind the scenes work but she wanted to discuss with the committee on their thoughts. Pastor Jen – the good news is it seems that what remains is going to be straight forward and does not believe there is a lot of research. Adrienne – there is no research that needs to be completed there is just word smithing and figuring out where things go, she is comfortable taking it on with Pastor Jen but she wanted to open it up if others wanted to help with the process. Everyone was OK with the above.

Pastor Jen – whistleblower policy, there is one in place correct? Lynn – was voted on last night. Pastor Jen – that is another item we can say this has already been accomplished. Accreditation – Do you agree that being accredited is a positive thing? Asst Chief Burlison – yes that is the overall goal. Pastor Jen – making a note that is an overall goal, is that a long-term goal, longer then 18 months? Asst Chief Burlison – yes longer then 18 months. Pastor Jen – are there specific supports that are going to be needed to make that happen, is there anything you want the City Council to know? Asst Chief Burlison – No, Lexipol will help with 95% of the process the other 5% will involve personnel and sitting down with state to complete accreditation. Chief Marsh – Scott are you scheduled to train on accreditation in the next month or so? Asst Chief Burlison – yes, it is a program for agencies that are interested in having their department accredited, it is a program manager training he will get a rough idea of what this is going to entail and what type of resources it will take, and he will be able to start building a timeline.

Annual report additions - We have a recommendation to include annual report additions of a compliant table. Officer Clarke is the union going to see any issue with having the table that we reviewed last time, do you recall that table? Officer Clarke – I do yes. Pastor Jen – Do you perceive the union would have concerns with including said table in the annual report. Officer Clarke – The idea of it absolutely we should be on board with but again without seeing the final addition he does not want to say yah or nah but

the idea I don't think is anything that would be opposed. Chief Marsh – Pastor Jen last week you asked for wording. Pastor Jen – can you email it to me? Chief Marsh – yes. Pastor Jen- need to verify with union regarding wording and the answer will probably come post plan submission.

Business Cards for Officers – Does anyone have an objection for officers to have business cards? Adrienne – they have an option to purchase business cards with their clothes allowance, however, her recommendation is that they all have them now without having to pay for them. Pastor Jen – any suggestions? Chief Marsh – some officers have purchased them using their cloth allowance, and might say “I had to buy mine can I be reimbursed”? Chief and Asst Chief have had conversations on how to ensure that this is done fairly.

Next meeting February 24, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom