

Safety & Equity Task Force  
Meeting minutes 11/18/2021 (final)

Task Force: Clark Adams, Ben Cassavaugh, Margae Diamond, April Dunham, Gail Harbour, Marsh Hudson-Knapp, Lynn Mazza, Jim Vires, Sarabeth Ward, Lauren Wilcox  
In attendance: Stu Hurd, Brian Corr, CAT TV, 3 observers  
Notetaker: Lynn Mazza

## **1. Introductions**

### **2. Recap of last meeting:**

- ∞ There were no changes to me made to last meeting's minutes. Marsh moves to accept the minutes
- ∞ Amendments to tonight's agenda: correcting some typos. Postpone talking about Purpose and replace it with discussion of police Complaints Report
- ∞ Lynn moves to amend agenda, Lauren seconds, all vote to accept changes unanimously

### **3. Outreach Subcommittee Report:**

- ∞ Margae explains we will all take a turn reporting out on what we learned from interviews, being careful to remove names and identifying features so as to protect privacy. We will give them to Outreach Subcommittee to compile into report. Not everyone got time to meet with those to be interviewed, so we have extension.
- ∞ **Mon, 11/29/21 deadline for getting interview feedback to Margae so it can be compiled it for 12/2 meeting**
- ∞ Each member took turn reporting out, details available when report comes out.
- ∞ We should also check our results against the IACP report, which we were provided

### **4. Review of Complaint Report**

- ∞ Report seemed to confirm that not many people are filing complaints

- ∞ Speaks to issues around closure for people who file complaint
- ∞ Numbers are also low because of Covid. Police limited face-to-face interactions during that time, tried to take care of calls over the phone and fewer people were out, so overall interactions were down
- ∞ This complaint report only covers complaints formally submitted on the "Complaints and Complements" form- it does not include informal calls made to the station or emails or conversations that happen in any other format
- ∞ People frequently call in "just to let PBD know", but it is not formally recorded
- ∞ Where and how is it communicated to people that they must go through the formal process if they want a formal investigation done? Are people offered: "Do you want to issue a formal complaint?" when they call?
- ∞ People are entitled to a written response after they've filed a formal complaint
- ∞ Are people offered assistance to write a complaint if they cannot do it themselves for whatever reason? Yes. Someone from staff would sit down with them
- ∞ People often expressed that hearing an apology for police would give them some closure and satisfaction. This might be because saying sorry is admitting guilt, which would open them to a potential law suit, so they don't do it as a matter of practice
- ∞ Brain: It's more a cultural thing- an apology can be seen as losing control or showing weakness, but this trend seems to be shifting in some departments.
- ∞ These kinds of situations might be a good use for Restorative Circles
- ∞ Suggested to set up a sub-committee for the complaint process, and Scope committee offered to take that on
- ∞ If we would like to provide suggestions or feedback to a subcommittee that we are not part of, we should send it to one of the subcommittee members who will share it with the others, to avoid breaking open meeting law

## **5. Composition of final oversight committee:**

- ∞ Composition subcommittee: Ben, Sarabeth, Clark, Marsh
- ∞ Report assumes Select Board will be doing the interviews and will be doing their best to keep these under consideration when making their picks
- ∞ Brian: make sure Composition fits with Scope and matched complaint proceed. Keep in mind: How does Composition fit with the work that needs to be done?
- ∞ Can we have reps from each subcommittee meet to see how sections match each other? We cannot have a subcommittee made of representatives of other subcommittees as it would break the spirit of open meeting law which is that no decision making happen in closed session
- ∞ Concern about the attribute requirement of having "a working understanding of English" being discriminatory, not only against people with English as a second language, but also those who are Deaf or have disabilities
- ∞ Discussion of being able to read, write, understand is important to being able to function in the kinds of meetings an eventual board member would be expected to attend
- ∞ There are things that could be offered to make it possible for people to be at the table: translators, interpreters, in modern day there are lots of potential accommodations
- ∞ There was a question about the wording "No current or active legal charges or presently serving time". Needs to be discussed in more depth- what about people who still owe legal fees or fines? Are on probation or parole?
- ∞ We will take up this topic for additions next meeting

## **6. Scope subcommittee report:**

- ∞ Scope vs purpose?
- ∞ Brian: Scope covers the areas in which the work will be done, purpose is more about what its role will be in the community and in town government. Too detailed, go back to broader points and write in narrative form

- ∞ Concerns about whether a board can be an advocate and still be impartial. Objectivity is diametrically opposed to being an advocate where there is clearly on side chosen
- ∞ There is mistrust about bringing complaints directly to police
- ∞ Board can offer referrals to other agencies/organizations who can assist in filing the complaint and take advocacy role if needed
- ∞ Having board involved in initiating and following the process can call into question their objectivity. They should only be involved in review.

## **7. Public comment: none**

Next meeting: Dec 2, 2021 will be on Zoom

Dec 16 meeting changed to Zoom so NACAOLE can attend

Jan 6 in person at the firehouse

Jan 20 in person at the firehouse

Jim made motion to adjourn, Ben seconded, all voted unanimously "Yes"