

**APPROVED on 12/16/21**  
**Safety and Equity Task Force**

**Composition of the Safety & Equity Board:**

**Expected Attributes of Board Members**

- a high level of objectivity - impartial decision making
- ability to think in balanced, unbiased ways
- able and willing to function independently of influences outside of the board itself
- a strong commitment to strengthening police-community relationships
- a readiness to help community members be heard
- demonstrated experience maintaining confidentiality
- a willingness to learn
- communicates effectively (listening as well as speaking - support provided as needed)

**Qualifications:**

- A resident in the town of Bennington or a strong, long-time relationship with the Town of Bennington

**Expectations:**

- Completion of initial training below before service on the board begins
- Readiness to meet at least once a month, and carry out other needed work.
- Active members of our police force and officers of the town government will not serve on the board until 4 years after their service is completed.
- Person with current or active legal charges or presently serving time will not serve on the board.
  - Appointees must attend 75 % of the meetings of the board (in person, or remotely); multiple unexcused absences in a year will be considered as resigning.

**Seek qualified candidates while seeking diversity** in the group's members, for example by Age, Gender - Sexual Identity – Sexual Orientation, Ethnicity and Race, Socio-economic Status, Education (formal and informal), Disability, or other identity.

**Seek Awareness, Experience, and/or Training-Practice** including but not limited to the following:

- Behavioral Health
- Substance Use Disorder
- Skill to review reports and identify trends that will inform board recommendations to, and work with the BPD, and/or skills with data and statistical analysis
- Mediation and conflict resolution experience
- Experience with restorative justice
- Knowledge of the law - judicial system
- Experiences with policing both positive and negative
- Experience with the criminal justice system
- Experience with discrimination, unequal treatment, or preferential treatment
- Mental Health,
- Domestic Violence

**Promotion:** Application for membership on the board will be widely promoted and the Select Board will make appointments.

**Number of members:** 5-7 members.

**Term Length and Limits:** initial members will be appointed for 3- or 4-year terms to allow for rotating appointments. Future appointments will be for 3 years or to complete the term of a person they are replacing. No one may serve more than 7 years consecutively. After three years not serving, a person may be reappointed.

The Select Board will require references for applicants to verify attributes of applicants and their experience, training and practice in preferred areas.

**Training of board members:**

**Initial Training**

- how the board functions: reviewing completed internal and external complaints and reporting conclusions to the community through the Select Board, developing and reviewing BPD policies, recommending police training, and community collaboration, supervising the gathering and analysis of data.
- open meeting laws
- the elements of a thorough investigation including a review of actual case files from a closed investigation
- an overview of and access to BPD policies and procedures and applicable town policies and ordinances
- community resources available to the BPD

- review of confidentiality
- structure and operation of the local and regional police
- basic understanding of the collective bargaining agreement and its parameters

**Ongoing training:** Each member will participate in

- one four-hour ride-along experience or dispatch observation per quarter to better understand the work of the BPD
- at least one training with members of the police force a year for the purpose of evaluating the training experience
- training in other areas recommended by the board, or the chief of police, or other regulatory, community organizations, or legislative agencies

**Removal:** a person may be recommended for removal by the select board if they no longer meet the expectations and qualifications of membership.

**Vacancies before expiration of term.** If a seat on the board becomes vacant, it shall be filled in accordance with the procedure outlined above in this ordinance. The appointee who fills the vacancy will serve the remainder of the term of the person whose seat they are filling,

**Compensation:** Members of the board shall be compensated at the same rate as Select Board members.

### **Community Resource**

Our sub-committee did not prefer to have non-members (from the police or agencies) as regular participants in deliberations on complaints.

The board may request outside help through a town staff member to address areas of concern or to understand issues and options for addressing them.