

Below are notes compiled from the Tarrytown Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative meeting 3 held on November 2, 2020 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm. Thirty people attended the virtual meeting. The topic for the evening was Police Department Recruiting, Staffing, and Training. Police Chief John Barbelet first responded to the questions developed by the breakout groups at Meeting 2 on Social and Community Engagement Aspects of Policing. The Chief then presented on Staffing and had a Lieutenant from his staff present by PowerPoint on the variety of training that police officers receive. Breakout sessions were then held. Facilitators asked participants questions that they wanted addressed by the Chief and continued to discuss issues and strategies related to all topic areas.

General Questions and Thoughts for Chief/Executive Committee about this Process

Department Mission/Goal for this Process

- What does the Chief think are our (Tarrytown Police) weaknesses?
- What can the Tarrytown police improve on?
- Happy to hear that chief wants to work with vulnerable communities. Need the police to take that effort themselves and want to do it. Needs to come from within. Cultural shift.

Committee Organization/Process

- Would like to have more discussion among members of the committee
- Want to move through PowerPoint in small group to trigger ideas – need Powerpoints in advance to review for questions
- Hard to digest this much information in such a short time
- Sub-committees: Can we have them?
 - Community outreach
 - Community Policing
 - With opportunity to address a particular topic
 - Send out ideas of subcommittees and let people join the committees with homework
 - White Plains Subcommittees (policies and procedures, community engagement, transparency and accountability, training and equipment, qualifications/recruitment and retention)
- Need to build trust first and need to start with how they are viewing this committee. Do they feel represented? They need to know that they are represented.
 - Did they have a chance to be part of the committee?
 - Does the community feel the committee is being done for them?
 - Need to bring in early in process

Community Outreach

- Will the group have a chance to review the survey? They would like to have input.
 - If there is one thing to change about the department what would that be?
 - Ask each committee member and include in the poll.
- Can we build on relationship with the teens– part of our community outreach – Katie can assist with this
- Police in schools – need to hear more from the larger community on this issue and listen

Meeting 2: Ideas Social and Community Engagement Aspects of the Role of the Police

Racial Disparity and Building Trust

- Questioning of breakdown of arrests of black race arrests - missing a huge component of bias arrests— police chiefs response was too simplified. Can't just look at police initiated versus not community initiated. Why are certain people being followed (profiling) in the first place?

Police/Community Engagement

Questions/Issues about Police/Community Engagement

- Can we get more information on DARE program and why we should continue with it if it's not effective
 - Might be giving us a false sense
 - Maybe there is something more effective
 - How are you measuring success specifically in our community?
 - Does it continue after 4th and 5th grade?
- Students have described different approaches of police interactions due to their race
- What have the minority students been experiencing? What have the conversations with students look like?

Ideas regarding Police/Community Engagement

- Need to be coordinating better with Sleepy Hollow (511/512) – not enough to work in the high school. Need to work with on the community level. Look for solutions.
- Ring Program – good idea to have an internal network of residents – but what are they doing to advertise this to more people (Maybe an email to everyone to solicit)
- Spanish translation is essential – going to need to hire someone internally in the force.
- Ideas For Better Engaging with Marginalized Communities
 - Getting community people involved in getting others involved. Ambassadors
 - People can sponsor their own Coffee with a Cop and they invite their own friends
 - More involvement with the family and get kids to trust the police (take them to a ball game)
 - Pop up community BBQs in neighborhoods
 - Police to hold zoom meeting for families to learn what the police learned in the anti-bias training and they can answer questions

Meeting 3: Police Department Recruiting, Staffing, and Training

Recruiting and Staffing

Questions/Issues about Recruiting and Staffing

- What kind of testing happens before the training? Mental health? How do they vet who they are hiring?
- Who does performance reviews, what do they look like, and how are they measured?
- How are officers recruited and what are the requirements to begin training? Educational requirements?
- What is the organization philosophy of police department? How are we organized?
- With bodycam footage, who will be reviewing it?
- Junior police academy – how does that play into recruiting (sleepy hollow). Are there incentives to encourage applications?
- Do we have any women officers on the force? We should have them.
- Do we have any psychologists for police? It's a hard job. Health of police needs to be taken into consideration. It must have an impact on police, including bias.
- What is the transgender/LGBTQ policy/training?

Ideas regarding Recruiting and Staffing

- Bound to civil service and what Westchester County allows. Better to have more flexibility because locked into same list for four years.
 - Where is the directive about the lists and limitations on hiring?
 - There is some flexibility to move to the Spanish speaking lists

Training

Questions/Issues about Training

- Do they do defensive tactics? How often? Is it a group thing? Are they getting enough? Do they have an in house trainer? Do they train in these techniques?
- More details on anti-bias training and what is included (deeper dive)
- A lot of content covered in training and hours.
- Reference to 160 hours of field training. Is that part of the 705 or in addition?
- How was officer selected to attend the train the trainer program? What is their background and what is their background in understanding bias?
- More details about training in mental health crisis? How are they trained to deal with these calls?
- Great job in training but want the training to be increased. Needs to be embedded. Need to put hypotheticals into place when unexpected things happen. How would they react? Same old gets you same old. Need a boost of more.
- Fire arms training – how often are they doing this?
- Police officers shouldn't have to be paid for training. All professionals need to be trained.
- Racial bias/de-escalation process associated with it. Training needed. Police officer is setting the tone with his/her approach. This needs to be emphasized. Need approach with kindness and respect-regardless of race.
- Does training have to be through Westchester County? Does Tarrytown have control of the training?
- Need more information regarding what the content is behind each training
- What do the interactions look like and what does training look like between police with individuals with a substance abuse or mental crisis?

Meeting 4: Law Enforcement Standards and Strategies

- How do police act at the time of arrest? What are the procedures at that moment? Do they take information from both sides? Is one person put in a corner while questioning is happening? How are police handling? Are there any disciplinary actions because of these situations?
 - What are the protocols around discretion? How much are they able to give warnings? How do police teach each other about this? Is this something that they are trained on?
- How do referral to treatment/protocol structure that lead to treatment where it is feasible to do so, instead of arrest (look to different models) Opportunity to engage with mental health experts.
- What work can be done by medical community, teachers, mental health community – how do we reduce the burden on police – reduce the burden on police which benefit the community. Wellness of the police
- What is the current relationship with current mental health service organizations? How do they work with or call for these services?

