

Village of Tarrytown
New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative
Monday, December 21, 2020, 6:00 – 7:30 pm– Notes

Below are notes compiled from the Tarrytown Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative meeting 6 held on December 21, 2020 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm. Forty-eight people attended the virtual meeting. The topic for the evening was a discussion on the current draft plan. Chairman Zollo opened the meeting and welcomed the Committee. Assistant Village Administrator Josh Ringel gave an overview of the survey results and discussed a future meeting date that would dive deeper into the results. The meeting would be scheduled for January 4th. Village Administrator, Richard Slingerland then discussed the remaining timeline for the process, draft plan and recommendations. Facilitators asked participants whether they had any question regarding the process and then turned to having Committee members express additional recommendations, missing recommendations, and refinement considerations for the plan. Below are the notes.

Survey Results Comments & Questions

- *Data is cherry picking and provided best viewpoint and is not representative of the people we are trying to serve are small percentage of respondents.*
 - *When review on January 4th, we can look more closely at the data*
- *Significant efforts were made to reach every person in the community (postcard was sent to every address, posted by building managers, etc.*
- *We need to look at results from different perspective based on impact to minority communities and they are not the respondents*
- *Need more community outreach*
- *The data is informative, but need to understand the limitations of it. The response rate is good, but informs us where we need to do work to get a better representative sample.*
- *It is not that the notices did not reach them. It is up to the person to want to fill out the survey and be a part of it.*
- *We need to look at the data that we have and what are we going to do regarding the comments where people strongly disagree. Look at what we did get and not focus on what we did not get.*
- *We need to come up with another way to reach the minority community. There is a lack of trust and so there needs to be another way.*
- *Everyone was not happy at summer rally regarding the police.*
- *This was a first step, but more is needed.*
- *Diving deeper on January 4th.*

Questions and Comments Regarding the Purpose and Process

- *A number of the recommendations were just discussions and not necessarily recommendations, divide previous initiatives already underway that are continuing and new recommendations in how they are outlined in the report*
 - *Agree that five recommendations sent by Joe are what the Committee wants to recommend. We need to address the systematic issues and put safeguards in place.*
- *The five recommendations provided by the Committee should be the focus and the other 14 should be initiatives already underway*

- Why can't the committee meet in January to do a final review before going to Trustees and public comment? Given the timeline the outline suggests that we want to finalize by early March seems there is time.
 - *Matter of available time. If the Trustees want to convene another meeting, it is just a matter of timing.*
 - *Trustees will consider adding a meeting if needed*
 - *When draft is out to community, can the community continue to meet even as the draft goes through public comment?*
 - *The five additional recommendations, some roll up to the 14 listed and some do not. The ones that don't roll up to the 14, we need to discuss them on this meeting.*
 - *Once the recommendations go to the Board, does the Board have ability to eliminate things?*
 - *The Board steps policy, so they can change things*
 - *There could be recommendations in this report that the Board may choose not to act upon. It could be phased, etc.*
 - *Should the committee review the recommendations and prioritize them or weight them? This could help the Board when considering them.*
 - *Overall thought about goals: The issue is not so much with police in our community, but systemic issues with policing in American. We need to address these issues, so they do not become a problem here. Putting in place safeguards and measures.*
 - *The language of Executive Committee is focuses on need to address inclusion and racism and systematic issues.*
 - *We should be considering financial impacts and whether recommendations will raise taxes.*

Questions and Suggested Edits to Plan

What is recommendations are missing?

- *Dashboard is not included in the list of recommendations*

Comments on current draft plan:

The preliminary recommendations in draft report:

1. Review and maintain training to remain current with the times and the needs of our community
2. Pursue and finish up the accreditation process
3. Complete installation and implementation of body-worn cameras by Police Officers
4. Expand outreach from current "passive" level at retail/restaurant establishments to "active" meetings with HOAs or tenant associations, the Chamber of Commerce, other
5. Actively outreach to young people in the community to encourage their participation in youth education efforts and encourage them to pursue law enforcement careers
 - a. *Should we revisit DARE or something similar as a way to increase community engagement and involvement with the youth and schools*
6. Request County and State action to create/restore funding for mental health support in substance abuse, domestic violence, identified persons with histories of mental health issues. This is focused on addressing and filling the void created by the abolishment of the mental health focused Mobile Crisis Team that formerly operated out of the Westchester Medical Center.

- a. *St. Vincent's Hospital (Harrison) does still offer a service. Not sure how it is funded and whether Tarrytown uses it. Should be noted in the report*
- 7. Review department policies and methods of subduing violent offenders to ensure the safest non-lethal means and methods are being utilized locally.
- 8. Advocate for changes in civil service processing / requirements.
- 9. Advocate at the NYS level to de-criminalize minor Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL 511) violations.
- 10. Increased education requirements (w/ grandfathering in of current employees)
- 11. Encourage changes to civil service:
 - a. *Make it easier to remove or suspend an officer for willful misconduct (State law change)*
 - b. *Allow the ability to switch between local / county lists*
- 12. Issue an annual survey to the community seeking input and feedback on the Police Department
- 13. Stakeholder Committee Recommendation - Create a long-term Police Advisory committee
- 14. Stakeholder Committee Recommendation - Create a separate Citizen's Police Review Board

Members of the Committee sent a communication to all members of the Committee on Friday, December 18, 2020, asking that focus be emphasized on the following five recommendations:

- 1) The establishment of a dedicated citizens' advisory or review board (CCRB) within the village to provide independent civilian oversight
 - a. *This should be at the top of the list of recommendations. It is the single most effective and important thing that can come out of this Committee.*
 - b. *Robert Cannata shared a proposal for creating a CCRB. Volunteer group. The only cost is for hiring investigator as needed. It is not an exorbitant cost. Fairly cheap board to create.*
 - c. *Different thought on this and feel it sets up an adversarial environment, so instead have a human rights committee similar to the ethics committee. Could write a human rights code. Greater community involvement and feeling of safety. Will address racial issues that are harder to see. Allows transparency. Allows people a way to file concerns and complaints. CCRB is complaint based.*
 - d. *Could have both CCRB and Human Rights Commission since they have two different goals.*
 - e. *Only 7 complaints over last few year, but anticipate more if there was a CCRB. During the CCRB downtime, they could be reviewing policies and making suggestions.*
 - f. *Why is a CCRB seen as something adversarial? Getting the community involved where police can be held accountable, so more collaborative initiative. It would give people pause before they decide to do something because they know they will be held accountable.*
 - g. *Ethics Board, is there currently an ethics board and are you getting community members on the ethics board and are they involved in investigating complaints related to the police department?*
 - h. *Another comment to have both CCRB and HRC to look at broader issues.*
 - i. *Maybe an alternative, have it run by Village Administrative office. So out of Police Department, but still in Village hierarchy.*
 - j. *Make a complaint process for not only police review, but any village employee.*
 - k. *Minority people are not going to feel comfortable going to Village Hall to submit a complaint. Needs to be an independent board. We need these safeguards.*

- 2) New de-escalation, anti-bias and antiracist training and continuing education for all police personnel - on an annual or biannual basis
- a. Should be at the forefront of all this. If police are not guardians but are warriors, we will have issues.*
 - b. CCRB would not stop the actions, but de-escalation and anti-racist training will so this needs to be a focus.*

3) New programs initiated that would be dedicated to enhancing and maintaining officer wellness (including mental and behavioral health services)

4) The appointment of a professional Community Responder who could respond to mental or behavioral health and other calls

5) The establishment (or extension) of a policing committee for ongoing discussions and listening sessions with the community