

Town of Montague
Meeting of the Community Engagement Police Advisory Group
Meeting Minutes
Meeting Held Remotely VIA Zoom Conference
October 21, 2020

Attendees:

Community Engagement Advisory Group: Denise Aiken, Kathleen Burek, Natan Cohen, Thomasina Hall, Kwamane Harris, Colin Mitchell, Chris Pinardi.

Montague Selectboard: Michael Nelson

Town Staff: Town Administrator Steve Ellis

1. **Meeting called to order:** The meeting was called to order at 6pm.
2. **Previous Minutes:** Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
3. **Group Organization:** There was some discussion of group organization, which led to a general agreement that it makes sense for someone to be group facilitator. Chris offered to do that work. Colin offered to take minutes. Natan moved to appoint Chris as the lead facilitator and Colin as the lead scribe. A roll call was taken and all voted in favor.
4. **Review of Group Charge and Vision for Report to Selectboard:** The group reviewed its charge by splitting it into three questions and discussing focusing on each part separately:
 - a. What are MPD policies and practices relative to community engagement,
 - b. what is the impact of these practices on key sub-groups,
 - c. how might those practices improve?

What are MPD policies and practices relative to community engagement? Chris let the group know that the Chief of Police will make himself available to the group if requested. Thomasina asked if we can get policy documentation from the MPD. A number of members suggested that some documentation and statistics would be very helpful, including any documents/manuals related to community engagement, recordings of meetings/trainings, etc. Kathy suggested thinking about possible interaction scenarios we should ask about. Natan pointed out that community engagement is about how police approach people when there hasn't been an obvious crime committed, and it's important to understand how that interaction plays out. We should be trying to find policies that minimize negative interactions.

What is the impact of these practices on key sub-groups? The group spent some time identifying subgroups within the community that should be focused on before ultimately deciding to focus on two main groups - minorities, and youth. While a number of other groups were suggested, given the limited time that the group has, it was agreed that focusing on these groups would benefit the community as a whole. Kwamane mentioned that equitable policing for black and brown people would translate into equitable policing for everyone. There was some discussion about getting more details about if and how the MPD works with ICE. Kathleen moved to accept the two subgroups, which was seconded by Kwamane. A roll call vote was taken, and all voted in favor. Chris suggested talking about how to approach the groups at the next meeting.

How might those practices improve? Kwamane suggested that data on calls, use of force, vehicle stops, pedestrian stops, as well as breakdowns by locations of where the MPD is actually policing would be very helpful. A number of members asked if we could speak to the school resource officers for TFHS and the tech school. Chris mentioned that if the police are doing something that is working, he wants to hear about it, and same thing for bad experiences.

5. Next Steps

- a. Preparing questions that we want to ask subgroups
- b. If we get them in time, reviewing data and documents from the MPD

6. Next meeting date: The next meeting was scheduled for Oct 28 at 6pm. A rough agenda was set:

- a. How to work with our two subgroups
- b. How to accomplish our goals within our timeline
- c. Reviewing data and documents from MPD
- d. Preparing questions for subgroups
- e. Establishing a way for members of the community to share experiences with policing via anonymous online form.

7. Adjournment: the meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm