

Police Equity and Use of Force Advisory Group
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, February 11, 2021 7:15 – 8:45 pm

In attendance:

Committee members: Ariel Elan, Maddox Sprengel, Richard Kuklewicz (Selectboard Chair), David Bulley, Faith English

Not in attendance: Richard Hall

1. Facilitator opens the meeting, announces the meeting is being recorded; takes roll call.
2. Approve Police Equity and Use of Force Advisory Group Minutes: January 28, 2021 meeting
 - Committee decides to vote on the minutes during our meeting next week.
3. Discussion of our Interview on Thursday, January 28 with Lt. Chris Bonnett and Chief Chris Williams of the Montague Police Dept. (MPD).
 - These interviews serve as transparency of operations within the MPD for the community. What are some ways to continue transparency after the two subcommittees finalize their reports?
 - Outstanding questions: We didn't get an answer to the questions about the thought process around how the patrol routes are created. Would like more information about the use of pepper spray on a noncompliant prisoner.
 - How do we work with the department to foster a culture of continuous improvement?
 - Response to the formation of a new Commission, per the MA police reform bill: Oversight committees should be made up of nonbiased/impartial people in order to have check/balance.
 - Conversation about body cameras needs to be continued, additional information is needed regarding how other towns/cities in MA handle the wiretapping statute.
4. Work on this committee's report to the Selectboard, including framing and context
 - We are working on framing the report, the introduction will discuss our charge and goals for continuous improvement. It will include some recognition of the positive things we have seen.
 - We are also looking at best practices nationwide to reduce use of force, reduce workload and stress for MPD.
 - Comments about our first policy recommendation regarding the complaint process: Do we want to recommend that the Selectboard no longer serves as Police Commission so that the Commission might be a separate entity that people can file complaints with?
 - Response from Rich K.: The role of the Selectboard as the Police Commission has dealt with higher level issues such as hiring command staff, ensuring exams are administered, etc. We have conducted a couple of investigations.

- The committee explored the idea of using an Ombudsmen or creating a separate department that field complaints, we could form a volunteer group (such as this committee) that meets periodically to hear from the community about what isn't working. We could offer a public survey asking for input about our recommendations.
 - Deborah will send a draft of the report to all committee members so we can make edits/comments to bring to our next meeting.
5. Other thoughts or information pertinent to our work that have not come forward under previous topics.
 - None
 6. Invitation to sit in on Finance Committee review of the FY2022 police budget, including quorum considerations.
 - Chair of the Finance Committee will have a joint meeting on 2/24/21 6-8:30 PM which will include police budget requests. Members from this committee are invited to attend.
 7. Plan Agenda for next meeting
 - Review draft report.
 8. Topics not anticipated within 48-hour advance-notice posting requirement.
 - None
 9. Adjournment
 - Deborah makes motion. Maddox seconds. Motion passes unanimously.