

Town of Montague
Meeting of the Community Engagement Police Advisory Group
Meeting Minutes
Meeting Held Remotely VIA Zoom Conference
May 10th, 2021

Link to video: <https://vimeo.com/547789349>

Attendees:

Community Engagement Advisory Group: Kwamane Harris, Colin Mitchell, Michael Nelson, Chris Pinardi.

Absent: Denise Aiken, Natan Cohen, Kathleen Burek, Thomasina Hall

1. **Meeting called to order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:20pm. Roll call was taken.
2. **Discussion:** Rich Kuklewicz announced that the next selectboard meeting would be dedicated to public input to both groups working on policing issues, with Paula Green as moderator. He thanked both groups as well as Chris Williams and Chris Bonnett. Chris Pinardi spoke for some time about our work, and where our results overlapped with the other committee. Kwamane thanked the Board for making the work possible. Colin echoed his statements, thanked Chris, and said that he hoped that the town takes this as an opportunity to continue having a conversation about policing. Mike thanked the group for having an open, respectful dialog.

Rich asked Chris to provide a quick summary of our work. Chris spoke about our work generating the survey. He mentioned that we struggled with getting responses but ended up with over 400 responses. He also mentioned that about 20 people asked for followup interviews, but that no one actually showed up to the evenings we had scheduled for that. Chris stated his opinion that neither group found a systemic problem with racism in the MPD. He further stated that the findings of both committees suggested that the MPD was understaffed for some of the work that people in the town want them to do.

Kwamane said that he believed the town would benefit from having an independent organization do this work for us. Colin said that he was concerned we didn't hear from people who didn't have faith in our process and might have had problems with policing.

At this point, Ariel and several members of the Use of Force Committee spoke about their work. Then, the Chief of Police and Chris Bonnett spoke.

Steven Ellis mentioned that the town was cooperating with Greenfield and Deerfield to add a mental health professional to respond to calls.

Mike Naughton asked for breakdowns by ethnicity in the Community Engagement report. Chris and Colin responded that those breakdowns were available but maybe got lost in the final report. He also mentioned that there wasn't much significance when breaking down the data but race, but when breaking down the data, we start having sample size issues, and that any breakdown of a small subset of our respondents should be treated with some skepticism.

There was some conversation about translating both reports into Spanish.

Because several members left the meeting, the meeting ended without an official vote to adjourn.