



Mayor's Task Force for Racial & Ethnic Equality

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE **MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

1:00pm

Zoom Meeting

Call to Order & Attendance Quorum

Alexcia Cox, Subcommittee Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm. Kayla Elson, of Justice & Sustainability Associates, took attendance of the participants for the meeting record. She then reviewed the meeting agenda.

May Meeting Minutes

The May meeting minutes were reviewed. The date of the next meeting on the meeting minutes was changed to reflect the correct date, June 23rd, 2021 and the minutes were then unanimously approved.

Discussion: Policies and Operating Procedures in West Palm Beach Police Department

The subcommittee members reviewed four of the West Palm Beach Police Department's standard operating procedures (SOP) including their Use of Force SOP, Unbiased Policing SOP, Code of Conduct and Ethics SOP, and Internal Affairs SOP. No comments were made about the current Code of Conduct and Ethics, and Internal Affairs policies.

With respect to the Use of Force policies, Alexcia Cox inquired about whether the results of the Use of Force Board were memorialized and published for the public to access. Chief Tameca West, Subcommittee Member, responded that the findings of those investigations are not currently made available. As a result, she suggested that one of the subcommittee's recommendations could be to require the Use of Force Board to publish a report that shares the results and the reasoning behind the decision with the public. Alexcia Cox also clarified that the Use of Force Board can only offer three recommendations: no further action, more training, or further review of the case. Lastly, Chief West shared that there are SOPs for body-worn camera use that she will share with the subcommittee.

Regarding the SOP for Unbiased Reporting, Ruth Mageria, Subcommittee Member, sought clarification about whether the subcommittee would look to include the measurement tool for the effectiveness of the racial bias and cultural sensitivity training into these SOPs. More generally, Justice Ira Raab, Subcommittee Member, asked if there are escalating punishments for officers that violate these policies multiple times, and how many violations an officer is allowed before termination. Chief West stated that yes, there is progressive disciplinary action and depending on the severity of the



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violation, the Chief can decide how many violations there are, if any, before suspension. Justice Raab also inquired about whether officers are required to certify that they have read these policies and how often they are required to re-read and re-certify their commitment to the policies. Chief West replied that while they cannot make sure that the officers have read the policies, they do sign a form accepting the policies which holds them accountable if they violate them. Chief West suggested that the subcommittee could make it a recommendation that police officers are required to re-read and agree to certain policies yearly.

Jeff Zephirin, Public Attendee, asked how often the policies are reviewed and updated, to which Chief West shared that they are reviewed yearly and as issues arise. Jeff Zephirin also inquired about whether officers are offered leadership courses and if officers are seeing mental health counselors. Chief West stated that officers are not required to see mental health professionals unless there is an incident. Lastly, Ruth Mageria recommended that the subcommittee devote a portion of every meeting to deep dives into each policy to look for areas to promote greater equity.

June 12th Action Summit Outcomes

Kayla Elson shared the outcomes of the Action Summit and subcommittee members shared their initial reaction and ideas for moving forward. Subcommittee members Alexcia Cox and Ruth Mageria both expressed their appreciation for the insightful conversations and the number of people that were involved. Alexcia Cox found that the participants in her Criminal Justice breakout discussion agreed with the direction and priorities of the subcommittee. Justice Raab noted that they will have to divide policies based on what the mayor's office can do versus the police department and police unions. Ruth Mageria noted that mental health and the well-being of officers was a large topic of conversation.

Discussion: Assessing Priorities

Next, the subcommittee members reviewed the current Criminal Justice priorities to assess whether they were still relevant and if they should consider amending them. With respect to priority one, subcommittee members discussed the nuance between calling the civilian board a complaint, advisory or a review board. Delray Beach has an advisory board that operates as a liaison between the community and police, and reviews policies. Tallahassee has a review board that provides recommendations. The subcommittee members decided that they would want a review board that allows members to make recommendations to law enforcement, the city commission and the community. The subcommittee will next decide whether they want to make the policies and procedures for the review board or just its blueprint. They will also decide whether members of the review board will be chosen by an application process or appointed. Alexcia Cox suggested a hybrid, as is done in Tallahassee, of community volunteers and members appointed by the city commission.



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With respect to priority two, Alisha Singh, Subcommittee Member, noted that mental health training and counseling seemed to be a new priority addressed at the June Action Summit. It was suggested that mental health training such as how to identify someone who is having a mental health crisis and de-escalate the situation, be included under priority two as a part of training. At the conclusion of this discussion, subcommittee members agreed to take more time to review the data from the June Action Summit and think more about new priorities or new sub-priorities to add to the current ones.

Alexcia Cox also noted that a new salary contract was negotiated for police officers in West Palm Beach, moving the West Palm Beach Police Department to offering one of the top 3 highest salaries in the county, and addressing one of their ideas for priority one.

Public Comment

No public comments were made at this time.

Next Steps: Developing Draft Recommendations

Before the next subcommittee meeting, subcommittee members will review the current West Palm Beach Police Department operating policies as well as the list of current ideas and strategies for policy recommendations. Subcommittee members agreed to devote the next subcommittee meeting to drafting policy recommendations.

At the next Criminal Justice Co-Chair Meeting, the co-chairs will begin narrowing down the ideas list to provide the subcommittee members with the first set of ideas and priorities to turn into draft recommendations. JSA will also circulate the current ideas and strategies list and consider making a survey form for subcommittee members to submit ideas before the next meeting.

Adjourn

Alexcia Cox adjourned the meeting at 2:34 pm. The next meeting will be on July 14th, 2021, 1:00 pm on Zoom.

ATTENDANCE

Public Attendees:

Jeff Zephirin

Present:

Alexcia Cox, Subcommittee Co-Chair

Bryce Graham, Subcommittee Member



WEST PALM BEACH
City Administration

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Ruth Wanjiru Mageria, Subcommittee Member
Justice Ira Raab, Subcommittee Member
Alisha Singh, Subcommittee Member
Tameca West, Subcommittee Member

Kayla Elson, Justice & Sustainability Associates
Milena Almetica, Justice & Sustainability Associates

Absent:

Daniel Eisinger, Subcommittee Co-Chair
Chauncey Alexander Graham, Subcommittee Member
Tiffany David, City of West Palm Beach