



TONAWANDA REFORM AND REINVENTION COLLABORATIVE



MAIN COMMITTEE MEETING

February 4, 2021

9:30 AM

ZOOM meeting

MINUTES TRRC 2/4/2021

PRESENT

Councilwoman Jill O' Malley – Facilitator
Kenneth Martin – Community Rep
Kenneth Walker – Community Rep
James Chattam – Community Rep
Det. Darren Hearitt - Police
Tiffany Hamilton – Community Rep
Chief James Stauffiger - Police
Councilwoman Shannon Patch – Town Rep
Det. William Krier - Police
Supervisor Joseph Emminger – Town Rep
Lt. Corey Plateau – Police
Det. Todd Ciehowski – Police
William Laugeman - Police

ABSENT

Lt. Christine Milosich - Police
Reverend James Rozier – Faith-Based Rep
Danielle D'Abate – DA Rep

I. New Business –

- Jill O'Malley - Welcome to Detective Todd Ciehowski to the committee. Lt. Christine Milosich will no longer be able to participate. Detective Todd Ciehowski will replace her.
- Jill O'Malley - This weekend's forum is scheduled for (February 6, 2021, 1-3pm) The committee can participate to listen or join face to face.

II. Forum Discussion –

- A. Question: How can we get more people to participate and how will facilitators corral agitators?**

Jim Chattam – We should come up with a marketing strategy to reach out to community. Can Joe Emminger reach out to TV stations?

Det. Hearitt – Forum can handle 25-30 people, 40-70 people is too much. We won't be able to control which demographic participates.

Kenny Martin – We can reach out and interact with churches where we can reach out to kids.

Det. Hearitt – not going to include children in discussion yet. Demographics in town have more people of color than signed up.

Jill O'Malley – A reverend reached out via e-mail after the first BLM protest. Should we reach out to him, he may have contacts to our demographics.

III. Panel Discussion –

a. Question - How can your police department demonstrate a commitment to transparency in its interactions with the public?

Jill O' Malley – A lot of negative feedback was poor customer service. Do we mandate names on uniforms and officers carrying cards? Police Officers do not have own cards. Can we say on a simple traffic stop, this is why I'm pulling you over. Have respectful interactions.

Det. Hearitt - Customer service is not always easy or pleasant, with traffic tickets, perhaps but others not. Officers name and badge number are on tickets. All interactions with the public are recorded. They can always be looked up by time, date and address with specific information to the public, including call for service, dispatch records, and radio transactions. Average residents do not know that. Maybe we can let people know what steps to take to file a complaint?

Lt. Flateau– There are easy instructions on website on how complaint form works. The link is right on the homepage of the police website.

Lt. Krier – Police are taught at the academy to say hello, ask question, listen to response and then ask for license and registration.

Jill O'Malley – We can offer better customer service, we pride ourselves on open communication, head toward simplification for residents, not just have form to fill out, but explain the process, intent of reform.

b. Question - What police incident and complaint data should be collected and what data should be available to the public?

Chief Stauffiger - anything that doesn't infringe on privacy. Kenmore collects demographic information.

Det Hearitt – There is check box (on ticket) on demographic information, used at the discretion of the police officer. It can be easily changed.

Jill O'Malley – In high crime areas are there disproportionate stops targeting people. How do we collect that data?

William Laugeman- Arrest statistics are based on where you are working and the calls that day. Depends on the day and beat. Checking the box on race is not mandated, not sure how officers would feel about asking constituent what their race is.

Det. Hearitt – That information is normally done with a police report, making that assessment. If the demographic is 15% and arrests are 25% and officer is 50 or 60 percent, there may be a problem and needs to be looked internally. How would we compile that data?

Det Ciehowski.- Officers are familiar with demographics and geography, we want people to be familiar with that community.

Det. Hearitt– If someone far and away exceeds the average numbers, that may be indicative of a problem, but it is not conclusive.

Jill O’Malley - Are beat assignments random?

Will Laugeman – some have preferred beats, per seniority, but mostly random every day.

Jill O’ Malley - If inner city come to get gas on Niagara Falls Blvd what is the percentage of stops from the inner city. That data is not collected.

Will Laugeman – we can collect how many stops on Niagara Falls Blvd, not where drivers live.

Jill – have to have a conversation with union about the plan.

William Laugeman – All police are union members with the exception of the Chief. Regarding collecting data, they will do what is asked of them. The Union is here to facilitate as well, not to obstruct.

Jill O’ Malley - As a total outsider, getting to know police, police club is strained between board and club. Need to hear opinions of everyone. Boots on ground should inform leadership how policies affect them. Would person of color be offended if asked what their ethnicity is?

Shannon Patch – Does perception of officer matter? If they think they are white, but they’re not? Should we look at the data from perception of officer?

Det. Hearitt – The only way to get clear and definitive answers would have to be on driver’s license identification.

Lt. Krier – Nationwide people are collecting data. Reach out to other departments to see how they are collecting data.

Jill O’Malley – Marty Floss collected some data, has access through charms, will follow up with him.

IV. Questions/Answers to State Guidelines for plan. In Determining how your agency should collect and use data, consider the following questions:

1. Q. - What policing activity data should be collected by your department, including data regarding shootings by officers, firearm discharges, civilian injuries, use of force incidents and officer stops, searches and/ or arrests? A. – The Town already collects this information.
2. Q. - Should this data include demographic data, which can be used to detect racial disparities and biases? A. - Yes – Concern is if offering this information how does this make residents feel. Number of calls, 43000 a year, 19 complaints many were about customer service, not use of force complaint.

Det. Ciehomski – has been doing with neighborhood watch for over 30 years. There are hard copy print outs per beat and calls for service. There is a demand from neighborhoods to see information. Use of force is not handed out, but calls for service are.

Jill O'Malley – Is there an easy way to get that data. As for complaints, have a separate procedure not made public. Investigate complaint by internal affairs, oversight committee. Don't give out all the information regarding the complaints and disciplinary action.

3. Q. - Beyond disclosures required under state and federal law, what other policing data should be disclosed and made public? Should this data be aggregate data or individualized data? Should individualized data be anonymous and redacted? A. - Yes
4. Q. - Should the department make available to the public aggregate data on its review of use of force incidents, such as number of incidents reviewed, number found to be inconsistent with department policy or number referred for prosecution? A. - Yes and mostly provided, mandated by law.
5. Q. - Should the department make available to the public aggregate data about the number and disposition of citizen complaints, including the nature of any discipline imposed? A. – Yes, it is done through foia requests now by media and individuals.

V. Next Steps – Write the plan

Meeting adjourned 10:37am.