

Broome County
Police Review Taskforce

Location: Zoom Video Conference Meeting

Date: January 19, 2021

Time: 1:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Meeting Called to Order 1:02 p.m.

Members Present: Kevin McManus, Sammy Davis, Michael Baker, Sandra Felton, Kathleen Newcomb, Amber Jennings, Mike Korchack, Scott Baker, Nancy Williams, Kim Myers, Colleen Wagner

Members Absent: Mario Williams

Others: Terry Carey, Michael Tanzini

Previous Meeting Minutes Approved

Kevin McManus: Agenda Overview

Current recommendations:

- Identify law enforcement in community
- Identify proven strategy for mental health recommendation in community with law enforcement
- Positive that share
- Identify opportunities for those arrested for drug and alcohol
- Internal opportunity program or having the county looking into that

Comments:

Mike Baker: Concerned that local jails are becoming mental health and drug holding places, will submit some language to that effect. Also, courts are putting off arraignments.

Kim Myers: I agree to both sides with bail reform and drug court. We need to make sure there is access to treatment and motivation. Many will select release because they are motivated for the need of drug or whatever their addiction is. We need to have treatment available, so they are able to pick

Mike Baker: Lead program in Albany and Buffalo, tried to look at all these different things for alternative to get us to where we want to be. There are a number of strategies out there.

Mike Korchak: We don't always have the funding to do these programs.

Mike Baker: I can put something together for down the road.

Input on Zoom Listening Session:

Kevin McManus: We have also given an opportunity on the website for members of the public to submit a form with their comments/recommendations.

Comments/Ideas:

Sandra Felton: We might in the future, tell the attending people, who is on the panel and what they bring to it. In terms of law enforcement, what is Broome County and what is Binghamton?

Mike Baker: There is a lot of frustration out there, obviously concern over the jail. At some point just listen and get their concerns heard.

Amber Jennings: I had some questions as I was listening and hope we can talk through them. I have question/comment about concern with mental health conditions, how its handled or treated by officers. Are there any precautions for someone that might have a language barrier?

Captain Newcomb: 911 keeps a list of who can speak different languages and will find an interpreter.

Amber Jennings: Just a question of where we are with this panel, are the interpreters in house?

Captain Newcomb: No, there is a list of people that can help out. Trying to work our way through this.

Amber Jennings: When it comes to an individual that has physical disabilities, are there different procedures for those people to be transported?

Captain Newcomb: Yes there is, based on what happened, at that location where someone is disabled, we can utilize the handicap van and we do work towards providing resources.

Amber Jennings: I have a follow up question. On the listening session, there was a comment made, I was surprised that everyone didn't turn on their camera at 5:00 p.m., is it a safety issue thing? It might be hard to create trust to someone you can't see.

Amber Jennings: Is it possible or not to include statistics, as part of education for the public? It would be helpful if you could show a demographic of ex: Sheriff County. I had difficulty getting that information, but someone pointed it out. It might be helpful to encourage the community to attend other panels' meetings and put the information out there somewhere so people could attend.

Mike Baker: To my knowledge I don't think that has been scheduled yet at least for the Binghamton Police Department committee but can be shared when it is.

Kim Myers: Amber, you bring up some great points to this committee. I agree it's a better element of trust and will rectify it for myself the next meeting. Would it be possible for Broome County to get common thread?

Kevin McManus: There will be a public hearing after recommendations are finalized. Does anyone else have questions/concerns regarding the listening session?

Kim Myers: We should check with other law enforcement agencies in the Southern Tier and see if there is any common thread that runs with all the different agencies.

Kevin McManus: We are in the middle of our initiative, not sure about the other committees, Johnson City, not sure if everyone in the area has caught up to us.

Sergeant Davis: I just want to add we try to teach officers to respect people and they do a good job. This is a forever changing world and we also use a lot of technologies and talk amongst ourselves. The translation apps are crazy, some officers have even learned sign language to help people.

Mike Baker: We hear different complaints and sometimes find the people that are speaking the loudest do not directly reach out to us when they should. It's perceptions. An officer stated he gets judged because he is an officer, how do we bridge the fact and not judge people?

Amber Jennings: As a member on the panel I feel comfortable asking you to turn on the camera but just coming to the meeting I would not feel comfortable. The frustration I think a lot of people expressed, is frustration over time. Maybe a monthly session to give people access, maybe it wouldn't be so forceful.

Mike Baker: Amber, you bring up some good points. How many meetings did it take for you to feel comfortable with us? I am glad you felt comfortable bringing these things up.

Nancy Williams: We have to acknowledge, they are responding to us in our role as having the power, so we can't take offense to that.

Captain Newcomb: Sherriff Harder did call in to listen to the zoom. I want to clarify when I am out in the street dealing with the public, people do know the difference between the law enforcement agencies. The demographics on the stops, we keep data on our stops, we don't keep the demographics. We are not hiding the data, we just don't collect that data.

Kevin McManus: People that called in the other night, are very focused on the subject of the jail. What they think should happen at the jail, they are very passionate about that.

Those who called in for recommendations or comments, is there anything you feel would be good recommendations?

Captain Newcomb: Barbara's input was well said and thought out. She brought up the part of providing police officers with support as well, to help them when they have been through trauma.

Nancy Williams: DSS has on contract a therapist that comes in to help all of the case workers, it is important. Her point is spot on, if we don't help them with the trauma, they need someone they can relate to, like someone in law enforcement.

Captain Newcomb: It wouldn't hurt to have professional on retainer.

Kim Myers: A first responder not in the Sheriff's Department said, when I have to respond to the same apartment for the fourth time to give Narcan what is the purpose. Should we rotate the people?

Mike Baker: These are huge issues and we all deal with that, you become numb after a while. Everyone should be trained on this.

Nancy Williams: We have a lot of resources available.

Mike Baker: It's compassion fatigue, when you are doing the same thing over and over again.

Scott Baker: I have experienced that fatigue, you see the same person over and over for the same problem.

Kevin McManus: Any other suggestions, is it worth having a follow up conversation?

Amber Jennings: Suggested the therapy, more routine. I wasn't just speaking to Johnson City or Binghamton, I was speaking to all of them. Law enforcement equals police. Is it a plan for police to educate the public? Those people that were previously discussed that could have the compassion fatigue

Kevin McManus: The four plus years I have been here, that's been communicated, they don't like the answers and that seems to be the issues. Not sure they want to understand the law and how they perceive it. Have seen a lot of frustration on their behalf.

Mike Baker: I put myself out there and found no one wanted to talk to my office, it was single minded thought. The same people talk about the same thing.

Captain Newcomb: I echo with Kevin, some groups are not open to listening to reason, some who were on that listening session. We are all ears if anyone has any suggestions.

Kim Myers: We have to be careful not to refer to them as “those people.” We need to continue to put information out there. We never hear from ones that say, “oh, I didn’t know that”, there is a population out there that has learned something from it.

Kevin McManus: Is there anything else as a government that we could do in Broome County besides a listening session?

Kim Myers: The jail, the sheriff does not have the power to do that. Maybe when it is relative to people, they will use the information that is out there.

Ambers Jennings: There is an opportunity for us do be able to do something. Listening sessions are helpful, and I think it is helpful to have an agenda. Also having more lead time.

Sergeant Davis: Amber that is a great way to open those doors. If they have concerns or questions, we get a lot of phones calls as do other departments.

Sandra Felton: The listening sessions are so big for example, health care, education etc. for people to ask questions.

Nancy Williams: Having a dialog with structure and an agenda to keep the dialog going.

Scott Baker: What if we worked with a writer and have them put it in a story form to send out to media to show how we are having this discussion?

Amber Jennings: When recommendations are final at the hearing what does the public do?

Kevin McManus: There will be ample time in March to get this on. State funding will be in jeopardy by April. We are working on finalizing the timeline.

Scott Baker: Put forth the resolution when we put that out there. We will put out what it is we plan to do and design for people to make comments/changes and if need be, we will make changes and bring it to a vote.

Kevin McManus Meeting Closing/Look Ahead to Next Meeting:

Will continue dialog on recommendation.

What are other things that we need to discuss?

How can we engage other municipalities and keep the other groups engaged?

MEETING ADJOURNED 2:25 p.m.