

Broome County
Police Review Taskforce

Location: Zoom Video Conference Meeting

Date: February 2, 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, Mario Williams, Colleen Wagner

Members Absent: N/A

Others: Terry Carey, Mike Tanzini

Previous Meeting Minutes Approved

Panelist Amber Jennings proposal for consideration for a recommendation for the report.

Recommendation: Identify/reallocate resources to bolster the Community Policing function of the Broome County Sheriff's Office.

The U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division (2017) notes:

The heart of this approach is a focus on strong relationships and collaboration between police and the communities they serve; the application of modern management practices and organizational structures to create a culture of community partnership; transparency and accountability to communities and democratic government; and decentralized, proactive, community-based solutions to community public safety priorities (p. 26)

The services provided by the Community Policing function of the Highway Patrol Division of the Broome County Sheriff's Office include school resource officer (SRO), community outreach, and police traffic services. In addition to managing outreach programs and performing duties in eight school buildings, the SRO assists with four (4) social media platforms and recruitment for the Patrol, Corrections, and Civil Divisions of the Broome County Sheriff's Office (Broome County, 2020).

At present, there is one Deputy assigned to the Community Policing Division. It is proposed that an individual be appointed/reassigned to Community Policing to 1) assess existing initiatives to ensure they are meeting Community Policing objectives 2) develop and maintain an infrastructure for tracking community proposals and initiatives and reporting to the public on their status at regularly scheduled meetings.

Building upon the existing recommendation to *strategize ways to promote community engagement and to educate the public about programs the Broome County Sheriff's office provides to the community*, it is recommended that the Broome County Sheriff's Office consider the formation of a community advisory council. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Broome County Sheriff's Office coordinate a regularly scheduled (post-pandemic) community event in an accessible location that engages young people/families, is geared toward informal interaction among law enforcement and the public, and seeks the collaboration and committed presence of police departments within Broome County.

In tandem with the existing recommendation to *identify proven strategies to recruit more minority candidates for the law enforcement profession for the BCSO*, it is proposed that the individual(s) appointed to the Community Policing Division seek to identify and employ these strategies in all areas and divisions of hiring. Moreover, it is recommended that any individuals assigned to this Division be Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trained.

References:

Broome County. (2020). *2021 Broome County adopted budget*. <https://www.gobroomecounty.com/sites/default/files/dept/Budget/2021/2021%20Adopted%20Budget%20Final%20Reduced.pdf>.

U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division. (2017). *The Civil Rights Division's pattern and practice police reform work: 1994-present*. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/file/922421/download>.

U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). (2014). *Community policing defined*. <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-p157-pub.pdf>.

Discussion of Proposal:

Nancy Williams: Amber, I appreciate the thought that went into this, you are on the right track.

Kim Myers: The goal of this committee is to have actions for the public to see. The community is looking for some actionable items.

Captain Newcomb: I agree with Amber, but it is hard to be able to elaborate on the events we do, because we are in the community every day and are always doing something small that people might not notice. I want to mention that we are also involved in national night out and we sponsor an open house at the Sheriff's Office.

Sergeant Davis: Captain Newcomb and I have had discussion about this in meetings. We both agree it is a great idea and hopefully something will come of it. Amber, do you think this person should be an officer or a civilian?

Amber Jennings: I think the person should be represented by your department, whether it's an officer or a civilian working for you, but that would be up to you. My hope is to try and educate the public on what you do with an informal interaction so the community can get to know who you are as a person and not as an officer.

Kim Myers: Sergeant Davis, do you know if there is a way, we could measure this? I suggest it has a measurable aspect. I am not sure if students do or don't feel safe with an officer at school. We should be aware of how students feel about having an officer at school and is there an explanation set up for new freshman coming in so they can understand?

Sergeant Davis: I can only speak on behalf of the Sheriff's Office, sometimes the superintendent and staff will invite the officer into a class to explain what he is there for.

Mike Korchak: This is how the program is going. We provide the training for the SRO's and the school has total control over which officer they want for their school district. I think it's a good balance to get the school involved with which SRO will be at their school. We just supply the officer training and the school takes care of their pay and controls the program.

Kevin McManus: Are there any other objectives or strategies that you would like to discuss?

- 1. Mario Williams:** From last week's meeting, one of the things I wanted to ask about. Are there any questions on who decides when there is a mental health issue call that comes in? I heard from the community that some of these issues are not getting addressed. I think what Amber suggested, it is important to get the community involved. Training and education are so important, we need to have our community leaders go into the community and be seen, let people know that the police and sheriff departments are here for them.
- 2. Captain Newcomb:** 911 does get trained and we also will be training them further. I agree that the saying "Protect and Serve" and feel that is what we should try and strive to get back to. I also feel that the stake holders in this should be at the table for the meetings, especially the outlying areas.
- 3. Nancy Williams:** I will share the 911 Diversion flow chart that was developed in conjunction with Emergency Services, Broome County Mental Health and Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier.

Kevin McManus Meeting Closing/Look Ahead to Next Meeting:

1. Open discussion on what else to include in the final draft report

Questions/Comments:

Kim Myers: One of our overall findings is that we don't feel that this committee should be a one and done and needs to be an ongoing committee and dialog.

2. What's Next: Public Hearing Schedule by February 8, 2021

Kevin McManus: We would like to do this on the 16th and submit a draft next week.

3. Plan to Submit Report to Legislature

Next Meeting: 2/9/21 at 1:00 p.m.

MEETING ADJOURNED 1:57 p.m.