

**Community Safety Working Group Meeting Minutes**  
**March 24, 2021 via Zoom**  
**via Zoom**

**Present:** Paul Wiley, Chair, Brianna Owen, Vice-chair, Tashina Bowman, Darius Cage, Debora Ferreira, Pat Ononibaku, Russ Vernon-Jones, Elisha Walker

**Absent:** None:

**Others Present:** Paul Bockelman, Town manager, Jennifer Moyston, Staff Liaison

**1. Call to Order:**

Meeting called to order at 5:32 pm

No minutes to approve

**2. Reports and Comments:**

Public Comment: Mr. Vince O'Connor made it clear what his thoughts of the division of labor that should be instituted between unarmed and armed police officers. Thinks that there should be a subcommittee evaluating the applicants to be consultants. There should be evaluation of police officers and define which activities belong to armed and unarmed police officers overseen by someone who is not a member of the police. Encourages the committee to listen to the Supreme Court Ruling. To provide community safety you must be very thorough to what should be assigned to which group.

CSWG Report: DF talk about the racial equity conversation from the LWV put on yesterday. Had close to 200 people. A few of our members. Very good conversation and a shout out to Monica Cage and Phoenix Ford Ferreira they were wonderful and clear and brought up some important. Diversifying our Town our businesses and teachers etc. White allies should speak up. Listened to see how it can help the work that we are doing.

**3. Action and Discussion Items:** D. Shabazz thanked CSWG members for the work they are doing. Agreed that the young people are leading us and she will follow.

Next week we will be able to flush out more information, but we have been busy mostly with Part A. Dee has been working on recruiting and has spoken to folks in the community starting community conversations. The Community is excited about having their stories heard. The Community is interested in the youth having a place to go.

Katie: we have recruited 6 community ambassadors collectively they speak 4 languages and has had the honor of working with Dr. Anderson to create 4 workshops they have completed one and will continue with 2<sup>nd</sup> tonight. They will be ready to head out into the community after tonight. In a weeks' time they will be happy to answer any questions.

Terry Received data and all email correspondence and has sorted it and has a good sense of where the CSWG is at. He has narrowed down municipalities from what he has heard from Jennifer Moyston and the group. Gave a sort presentations on the Municipalities that he has studied.

Showed comparable cities and Towns Newton, Cambridge, both larger populations but similar demographically both Newton and Cambridge have significant budget differences for PD Cambridge ranks middle with their review board and power. Other Review boards have full power and the ability to fire Police Chief with cause. There is a board that is oversees and documents review boards

Ms. Ferreira thanked Terry for the presentation as it breaks the info down. We are comparable not by size, but by demographics.

RVJ: It sounds like you're going to give us info on review boards. Is this dependent on which municipality we ask for.

Terry chose the municipality as measurement as opposed to the services. If we want to see how well the programs are doing then we should use the services as the measurement as opposed to the municipality.

DF is more interested in the services and what ones are successful.

EW more wondering about process then content. For example if Cambridge has a Youth center has it decreased the interactions between police and the youth and how?

RVJ all for programs and services rather than municipalities. But wants policy reform information as well.

EW I have done research on Cambridge and the Police Oversight Committee has three members and remaining seats are empty.

Terry Oakland has a strong review board and with an amazing community that is very active with great supporting organizations that support the work and work with the PD.

Ms. Bowman Oakland's history of police and the trauma that has been caused by their PD how you acknowledge what they are doing now without talking about the history and trauma.

Dee if you are looking at the municipality then the history of Oakland is relevant, but if we are looking at services and what works and what doesn't then Oakland's history isn't relevant, but the services are.

Terry One question is how the models do from other Towns fit into Amherst.

EW: We shouldn't recommend anything small and I hear Tashina's frustration and Terry should bring us the information and we should work together.

PO thank you7Gen for presentation and we should think about whatever we recommend as a pilot program. For about a year and then reevaluate it.

DF Bring us the information in terms of different services not just cookie cutters, and then the CSWG needs to figure out how to make it work for Amherst.

Terry I will put together a list of service that are out of the box cutting edge and send to you all for Friday.

PW spoke with D. Shabazz that we have carved out this time in every meeting for Consultant updates.

b. Cress Feedback.

EW I did not contribute as I had a busy week and suggest that we go one by one

RVJ read first question transfer of two police transfer to additional positions from APD

DF Assessment needs to be made the CRESS program needs to be fully funded so it does not fail.

PO What does it mean for staffing part full time there are a lot of if's not enough staffing

PW we need to know and create the ideal program and figure out a price for it

EW Agrees and I think that this is a good basis uncomfortable with just two staff

DF we need to look at the recommendations where we need to get the budget from either the PD and or the Town. In order for us to create a successful program.

RVJ when created this form was thinking of pilot program and would endorse 6 to 8 staff. Taking money from PD and in parallel a rethinking of the police department. The police Department will change as well.

EW Supports moving money from anywhere but has a question for TM about budget and if a Town is given a budget and then realize they need more money can they take money from somewhere else

TM Town get most revenue through tax and then from there we use the revenue and look at schools if there is a need for additional funding they seek it but it takes from our savings

PO I was thinking three shifts morning evening and overnight shifts and two to three personnel looking at 10 to 12.

EW. What about dispatch would the caller call 911

DF This is going to have to be something that the budget will have to be looked at if we are really true about making changes and address what is going on than it will take some money and it will go beyond. We need to think outside the box for services and budget

PB there is a financial reality I have to present a balanced budget we are a ¼ million dollars in debt so we are looking at cutting to maintain services. 10-12 staff is a million dollars the fiscal realities we have to have a balanced budget.

EW Then can we apply for grants as we currently know what we need money. Have we ever applied for grants?

Yes we do get grants and DV grants which funds the officer that is the DV advocate.

PO Property taxes and what about the marijuana revenue.

PB Tax that comes in and community impact fees that would be a logical thing to look into.

EW Could the DV grant money be used to fund a DV advocate instead of a police officer?

PB Not sure it is a Mutual Agreement with other Towns.

TB agrees with Pat if we are doing this work we are trying to defund the police then defund the police we have to be serious about this. Otherwise what are we doing here?

AS the Town Manager you need to be ready to tell the Chief that he will be losing staff.

DF Again if there is no money in the budget then it needs to come from somewhere. What is the amount that we are playing with? What is this about what money do we have to budget from.

BO Interested in knowing how invested the Council is.

PW: we need more resources. Sounds like we are not sure if there is money on the other side. If other municipalities are doing this especially ones that look like ours how are they funding their programs? Create program and structures that work for our Town.

PB We do need to look at what we want. It is a value as it is a goal and that something like this will be implemented into the FY22 budget. Fair to ask me about the marijuana money.

BO We will need to know about our budget in order to know how much money

DF has always said that we need to have assessment. I get that there are budget constraints, but we were given a charge because our community has been hurting. We need change know.

EW Piggy back on what Brianna said how committed is the Council. The Council needs to work in collaboration with us. And yes we can start a pilot services but people will fall through the cracks. Can we meet with the Council?

RVJ: We need to know or get better data about the number of call and what time of day the call comes in we are not in a place to present this program with a full implementation.

PO. Be careful about wanting to collect data. Some BIPOC won't call the police. Remind folks that the PD has the highest budget due to their OT. They have too much budget.

PW This is what our program looks like and here is the estimated cost. WE talk about exactly what we need, rather than what someone else has or doesn't have

EW to RVJ I think we have that data so we need to review. Also that if we can't get budget from anywhere else with over funded police department with under

TB Ask UMass for Money UMass affects the Town in ways that the other Colleges do not.

The members are extremely concerned about where are funding forces coming from. How can they proceed or give recommendations without knowing there is a funding source. Strong thoughts of receiving the funding from the PD.

EW, BO, DF, and PW to draft letter to present to Council about CSWG recommendations and resources/funding.

**Motion to adjourn by Russ Vernon-Jones**  
**Seconded by MS. Pat Ononibaku**

**Meeting: Adjourn 8:10 pm**

**Minutes approved 4/7/2021**