

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

**(NO PHYSICAL LOCATION)**

**CM JOYCE MORGAN CM BOYLAN**

**SAFER TOGETHER WORKSHOP MINUTES**

**APRIL 5, 2021**

**6:00 pm**

Meeting Convened: 6:00 pm Meeting Adjourned: 8:12 pm

Attendance: CM Morgan, CM Boylan, CP Hazouri, CM Dennis, CM Freeman, CM Priestly Jackson, CM DeFoor

Also: Peggy Sidman, Office of General Counsel; Heather Reber and Jeff Rodda, Auditor’s Office; Richard Distel and Yvonne Mitchell, Council Research; Dr. Tammy Hodo and Dr. Brian Van Brunt

CM Morgan called the meeting to order and introduced CP Hazouri who stressed the importance of this committee and listening to the community.

The meeting continued on from the end of the last meeting, where they had been discussing police officer training - specifically, response to resistance training and mental health training.

Chief Adam Pendley talked about the Baker Act and its impact of mental health responses by the Jacksonville Sheriffs Office. Chief Pendley said they are most proud of the Co-Responder Program which was a pilot program that they are looking to expand upon. Currently there is just one clinician that is a part of the program and working in Zone 1. Chief Pendley talked about the various trainings that officers go through over the course of their time working at JSO. There are state trainings as well as localized trainings which help educate officers on dealing with mental health issues.

Maria Machin talked about issues regarding officers responding to people with limited English skills. Chief Pendley explained that there is a policy to relay to dispatch if another language is needed. He said that technology and having a diverse workforce are the best ways to overcome those issues.

Wells Todd asked about the funding for mental health issues in the city, the availability of services, and the need to raise both awareness and additional funding for these services. Director Mike Bruno talked about possible grant funding and a desire to expand on the Co-Responder Program to add more clinicians. Director Bruno said this is about having a community discussion on where to look for the funding and find the best places to spend the City’s dollars.

Assistant Chief Travis Cox went over the resistance trainings that are given to officers and the Field Training Officer program. This program allows a recruit to learn from different training officers. CM Boylan asked about the difficulty of the program and how many officers make it through the program. Assistant Chief Cox went over all the areas that are tested and said the top two reasons for failure are from academics or firearms. He also said there is a psychological profile done before the hiring phase.

Eunice Barnam said she believed that the Mental Health Department should be the agency focused on mental health issues and that the focus of the police should be on serving the community. Assistant Chief Cox said that all trainings have a focus on the practices in the real world. Stanley Scott suggested that he has knowledge of an officer that has a swastika tattoo. Assistant Chief Cox said that they make all newly hired officers disclose all tattoos. Director Bruno said he would be happy to work with Stanley Scott offline to discuss if there is a specific officer he was referring to.

Dr. Tammy Hodo said that there are 10 counties in Florida that have Citizen Review Boards. CM Dennis gave an overview of the Citizen Review Board legislation he is proposing. The makeup of the board would be 15 members, 14 chosen by each district Council Member and 1 chosen by the Sherriff’s Office. Each member must have at least 6 hours of JSO ride-along experience and the appointment would be for 2 years. The aim is to foster community input and the board will only be reviewing completed cases. Steve Zona, President Fraternal Order of Police Lodge, voiced his opposition to the Civilian Review Board and said he believes it will be political in nature. He said that this is not about collaboration, but about control. CM Dennis said this board will be diverse and about representing the community. He emphasized it will not be a radical group, but a cross section of members from each Council District. Wells Todd said that there have been calls for more police accountability worldwide. Dr. Hodo explained that the city of Jacksonville is not a full integrated city.

Poppy Fitch a member of the Civilian Review Board in San Diego gave an overview of what kind of work the board does. The board in San Diego recently moved from a review board to an independent commission. She went over the Sheriff’s budget and population of both San Diego and Jacksonville. Ms. Fitch said this proposed board would be like the review board which existed in San Diego before it transitioned into an independent commission. Ms. Fitch outlined research and references for the independent commission regarding police review. Ms. Fitch talked about the national landscape that has been impacted by COVID-19 and the push for racial justice. Ms. Fitch detailed a personal story in her town regarding a case in La Mesa, California where a police officer detained a black man unlawfully. This resulted in protests with buildings in the downtown area being looted and vandalized. CM Boylan asked what the trust level is between the community and police in San Diego. Ms. Fitch said the move towards an independent commission was a positive sign of that relationship and a move towards more transparency. Steve Zona said that there are zero protections for police officers and that there are already many places which review their actions. Director Bruno said he would be curious what the return on investment there will be in a Citizen Review Board and what would happen if the review board has different findings of police misconduct. Ms. Fitch said that their findings do normally match the findings of the internal review board and that is a part of building the civilian trust.

Dr. Hodo said at the next meeting the discussion will cover the budget for JSO.

Minutes: Richard Distel, Council Research

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