



Charlotte City Council  
Safe Communities Committee  
Meeting Summary  
September 29, 2020

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**COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS**

- I. Update on Community Input Group - Informational and Input
- II. Continued Review of Police Transparency and Access to Information - Informational
- III. Community Input Group Feedback – Informational and Input
- IV. Committee Considerations of Initial Recommendations – Action Requested

**COMMITTEE INFORMATION**

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**Committee Members Present:** Larken Egleston (Chair), James Mitchell, Jr. (Vice Chair), Dimple Ajmera, Renee Johnson, Victoria Watlington

**Additional Council Present:** Mayor Vi Lyles, Mayor Pro Tem Julie Eiselt, Tariq Bokhari, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Braxton Winston

**Staff Resources:** Marcus Jones, City Manager  
Johnny Jennings, Police Chief  
Federico Rios, Office of Equity, Mobility and Immigrant Integration

**Meeting Duration:** 11:09 a.m. – 1:01 p.m.

**ATTACHMENTS**

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- 1. Agenda
- 2. Safe Communities Committee Community Input Group Report
- 3. Follow-Up Information from September 15, 2020

**DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS**

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The meeting was called to order at 11:09 a.m. by the Chair, Larken Egleston. The Chair explained that the next step in the process will be an all-day strategy session on Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. A large portion of the meeting will be dedicated to the work around community safety. He reminded members that the Committee had made a recommendation to the full Council in August to update the City Ordinance to enable Neglect of Duty Violations to be reviewed by the Citizens Review Board.

City Manager Marcus Jones noted that Safe Communities is not the only Committee working on items related to violence reduction and safe communities. Workforce and Business Development,

Transportation, Planning and Environment, Budget and Effectiveness and Great Neighborhoods Committees will also be reporting out on this framework.

Budget Director Ryan Bergman spoke about the work taking place in the Budget and Effectiveness (B&E) Committee. The Committee has been focused on equipment purchases and staffing in CMPD's FY20 operating budget. A detailed look at the call data was undertaken, in conjunction with CMPD, to see what work law enforcement officers are doing that could be completed by civilians. These Priority 5 calls add up to approximately 67,000 officer hours per year. At the B&E Committee meeting later in the day, CMPD will be recommending concepts to address these calls.

Chief Jennings provided an update on two new policy changes that are taking place within CMPD. CMPD will no longer pursue or initiate No Knock Search Warrants. It had been a practice that CMPD did not typically use, however, it was within their policy to conduct No Knock Search Warrants. CMPD took into consideration what they were trying to accomplish with the use of the policy, community trust and possible citizen endangerment in determining to remove these types of warrants from the policy. The second policy change was the withdrawal of CS gas for riot control and crowd dispersal. After discussions with subject matter experts CMPD concluded they will have OC canisters or aerosol form (similar to pepper spray sold to citizens) for dispersal. This is a natural agent made from peppers and does not travel as far when administered. This policy change should be finalized this week.

#### **Update on Community Input Group (CIG)**

Federico Rios provided an overview of the Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) report received from Jarrod James, an Independent Policy Analyst and Researcher. Mr. James' presentation stated that Crisis Intervention Teams were a primary response in North Carolina and that people are in favor or tended to favor a co-response model. The presentation responded to questions CIG members had regarding how to establish a unit that addresses the needs of individuals experiencing mental or behavioral health crises; how to support law enforcement while offering additional mental health crises units beyond CIT staff, and in so doing, help them to better suit individuals they come across; how to fund and tract initiatives without threatening the administration of emergency management services to citizens; and how to find a way to utilize this while still maintaining the funding of the police. The presentation also included some data points from the mental health incarceration report that stated 17% of the total prison population in North Carolina had mental health issues and in 2019, 47% of CMPD's patrol officers were certified in CIT (820 CIT trained officers) and 911 operators can dispatch CIT officers. Mr. James also spoke about Mobile Crisis Intervention Teams. Mr. Rios stated that CIG members also received presentations from Ryan Bergman on CMPD and the budget, and Sergeant Chris Bostick on CALEA, the accrediting body for CMPD and the 400+ standards that CMPD is accountable to.

#### **Continued Review of Police Transparency and Access to Information**

Rev. Corine Mack stated that the Sub Group reviewed three different areas: 1) *Concerns and Improvement Opportunities* – She said that CMPD isn't being truthful to residents of Charlotte about incidents. That they say one thing publicly, but the released videos say differently. They are requesting that the City lobby for changes in the video release policy for videos that may result in public outcry. 2) *Issue of CMPD Keeping the City Shut Out* – The Sub Group members feel that it has the appearance of covering for an officer or the department. They understand CMPD's position that releasing too much information may compromise an investigation, so they are proposing the structure of a Fatality Review

Team. The team would review the incident details when a fatality occurs. The police would not be part of the team. 3) *Bias and Racism Training* – Members of the Sub Group would like more diverse and experienced officers in the black community. They would also like aggregated data on officers who have been involved in incidents. Violators should have monetary discipline and disciplined swiftly.

### **Community Input Group Feedback**

Rodney McGill gave the viewpoint of the community and the CIG. He emphasized that CMPD can manage their books themselves. However, they would like to see how the money is allocated to the programs and the success of programs implemented. They question why there cannot be an external audit if nothing is wrong with the budget. Additionally, they have no problems with the youth programs, but are disappointed that there is no community participation in planning and implementation of the programs. He stated that the only program the community is familiar with is the PAL program so better efforts should be taken to include the community and to market the programs.

Temako McCarthy discussed the management of persons with mental illness/extreme distress. They are suggesting the implementation of a pilot program in one of the hot zone areas like Beatties Ford Rd. They are recommending mental health clinician/service providers staff the calls and free up CMPD to help in other areas. CIT trained officers should be the primary responder and they should coordinate with the mental health providers. They also suggest that CIT services should be categorized as nonviolent, non-criminal events.

Kass Oatley spoke for the Sub Group reviewing the criminal process. They proposed removing the cash bail system by making the following changes:

- Reforming pretrial practices
- Replacing criminal summons and allowing a person to appear in court before going to jail, and
- At the felony level, make accommodations for petitions for new trials for ineffective counsel, jury tampering, or jury nullifications.

They requested the process of making someone admit to a crime before they can get treatment be eliminated. They also would like for CMPD to define what “reasonable” for probable cause means.

Council Member Bokhari provided a summary of the vast information being reviewed by the NC House Select Committee on Criminal Justice Reform. The Committee is comprised of bipartisan representatives from across the state. He noted that bail reform is being reviewed as an equity related item.

The City Manager shared the five pillars for the framework to address violence: Intergovernmental Collaboration, Community Collaboration in Priority Areas, Interrupt Violence, Invest in Community-Led Efforts and Use Data and Evidence. This framework will be the foundation for October 5<sup>th</sup>'s Strategy Session. All of the Sub Group analyses will be used as a baseline moving forward. Based on the input received, he suggested that Council allow staff to incorporate the feedback into a strawman proposal to serve as a framework to begin work on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

Feedback from the Committee and other Elected Officials present:

1. Recommend expanding the Crisis Mobile Unit.
2. Consider having someone trained to address invisible illnesses accompany the fire department instead of the police. The Police would serve as back up.
3. Work with staff to prepare a report that acknowledges the context in which the work has been done, as well as the different groups who participated in the process, and the efforts put into creating the framework. The document should have the recommendations approved by Council,

but also recognize all that were made. The report should also state what things can be done immediately and what things might take longer to accomplish. A dashboard of metrics should also be included.

Additional information was requested for the following items:

1. Consolidate CIG recommendations by topic in a digestible format by Monday; utilize the policy recommendation format but retain the unedited version language; provide a hard copy of the recommendations.
2. Members of Council should work with staff to document what they committed to do.
3. Have an outside party review the youth programs and establish a means of tracking progress to measure outcomes.
4. Hear from DA Merriweather on lessons learned from the Philadelphia DA on their bail system.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:01 p.m.