



ATTLEBORO COUNCIL ON HUMAN RIGHTS

MEETING MINUTES

MEETING INFORMATION

Date: Tuesday, July 14th, 2020

Location: Zoom virtual meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87080837936?pwd=aVQxQ1VxMERKblRrVUFOK2pNZGZBQT09>

Time: 6:30-8:30pm

Meeting Type: Council on Human Rights Monthly Meeting

Attendees: ACHR members: Ellen Parker, Mary Flaherty, Stephanie Gray, Steve Berdos, Barbara Clark; Chairperson: Laurie Sawyer; City Councilors: Cathleen Desimone and Ty Waterman; Guests: Stanley Estime, Katherine Lee, Ashley Stewart, and Mac Borgellas.

Business:

1. Chairperson Laurie Sawyer opened the meeting
 - a. Attleboro Zoom webinar
 - b. Welcome other public attendees
2. Reviewed Laurie and Stephanie's meeting with Mayor Heroux and Chief Heagney
 - a. Established rapport with Chief Heagney
 - i. Explained our mission, objectives, and agenda on topics relating to preventing racial bias in our police department
 - ii. Created dialogue about community and council concerns and requests
 - b. Discussed police use of force policies in APD
 - i. There is no official ban on chokeholds, though the chief indicated that "this is not taught" in training, which he said negated the need for banning outright.
 - ii. There is no official policy requiring officers to intervene when a colleague uses excessive force. There is an unofficial policy called "tap an officer out", which encourages officers to take over when another officer is displaying excessive frustration or force when interacting with a subject.
 - iii. Recommended updating our policies to be in compliance with the 8 Can't Wait national campaign; Chief Heagney indicated he was willing to do this.
 - c. Body Cameras
 - i. Mayor Heroux said, "No obstacle to body cameras is insurmountable."

- ii. Both Mayor Heroux and Chief Heagney stated they are in favor of body cameras and have discussed implementing a pilot program.
 - iii. Stipend request/union negotiations have been a barrier to moving forward with including body cameras in the budget sent to city council.
 - iv. Chief Heagney voiced officer concerns about body cameras
 - i. Officers are concerned about data being available on site long enough for them to review the footage for their incident reports.
 - v. Public record law and privacy of citizens
 - d. Training
 - i. Chief Heagney has made it clear to the mayor that he prioritizes training for his officers and is protective of his training budget.
 - ii. Mayor has increased the training budget by \$50k since taking office with plans to increase it another \$50k next year.
 - iii. Officers are required to complete 40 hours of training per year. Chief Heagney indicated that our officers exceed the minimum, though he did not provide specifics.
 - e. Data
 - i. Hispanic and Latino populations were counted as white in the 2019 traffic stop data released by Chief Heagney in June.
 - a. APD is not required to collect this data
 - b. APD is not allowed to ask motorists their ethnicity for this data collection
 - ii. Discrepancy in data – 3% Black residents vs 13% traffic stops
 - a. Chief Heagney stated that he believes the percentage of Black residents has increased since that census
 - b. Chief Heagney indicated that visitors on Route 1 and higher minority populations in neighboring cities contribute to higher percentages of Black motorists being pulled over in Attleboro
 - f. Heagney’s goal is to get the APD accredited, which he says has strict requirements on training and data
 - g. Social worker
 - i. Chief Heagney indicated that APD once had a social worker on staff, made available through a grant but that the administration did not prioritize keeping the social worker once the grant expired.
 - ii. He indicated that he would be in favor of hiring a social worker to do follow up community work, but he was clear they would not be involved in active calls due to security concerns.
 - h. Paul indicated during the meeting that the ACHR would be welcome to contribute a guest column in the Sun Chronicle in order to communicate our work to residents.
- 3. Discussion items/questions that arose
 - a. What are the consequences to officer misconduct? What happens now if an officer violates a use of force policy?
 - b. Is it typical for other departments to pay officers a stipend to wear body cameras?
 - c. Request line item itinerary of training topics and courses our officers are offered.
 - d. Could a community oversight committee review video from body cameras?
 - e. Why do officers need to review the footage from body cameras when writing incident reports?

- f. Ty Waterman mentioned that the police department hasn't used their full training budget from last year due to the pandemic.
 - g. Question – what does it mean for a police department to become accredited?
 - h. ACCESS TO DATA – we only know if there is evidence of racial bias by reviewing and analyzing data. We need to be able to measure progress over time.
 - i. Cathleen Desimone informed the council and guests of the Be Heard Coalition, Attleboro Interfaith Alliance, and Attleboro Public Library virtual forum on racism on July 22nd.
 - j. Discussed potential of engaging the community by way of a petition
4. VOTE: Write a recommendation letter to the mayor and request monthly meetings to collaborate and keep him informed on our work. Passed with 4/4 votes.
 5. Tabled items
 - a. Vote on forming anti-racism subcommittee
 - b. Approve meeting minutes from June 9, 2020 and June 26, 2020
 - c. Discuss letter of complaint from resident

Action Items:

1. Write recommendation letter to Mayor Heroux regarding anti-racism action items
2. Review letter of complaint from resident

Next meeting: Tuesday, August 11th at 6:30pm