

Saratoga Springs Police Task Force Minutes: 1/20/21

meeting start: 5:33pm

Approve Meeting Minutes

- No minutes to talk about

Approval of Agenda

Terry moves and Chuck seconds

Albany Taskforce has posted recommendations on their website; might be useful/helpful to check those out

Subcommittee Presentations

1. Deviations from Police Policies and Cooperation with Other Agencies (Camille, Terry, Andrew)

What conditions exist for outside agencies

Process

- Review all the policies and looked to identify polices more closely related to topic
 - o Went from 8 to 3 polices

Recommendations

1. Clarify what policy governs interagency cooperation
2. As policy sspd will not initiate no-knock warrants
3. SSPD will not inquire about immigrations status and will cooperate with federal agencies only at limited level

Goals:

Protect individual rights, increase transparency, avoid liability

Deviations

- July 30, 2020
 - o Pepper spray used on demonstrators in Saratoga springs
 - o Cooperating agencies: SSPD, Saratoga county sheriff
 - o Looked at control devices policy and outside agency assistance policy
 - Looked at this example as potential deviation and how that related to cooperation of other agencies

Recommendation #1

- Clarify what policy governs interagency cooperation
- edit to an amendment on mutual aid and external resources
 - o `the incident commander shall be responsible for ensuring that the policies of their agency govern the conduct of the incident
 - Provides consistency and clarity
 - Wasn't clear before on how/when to decide whether to involve an outside agency

- Reviewing language around requesting outside assistance
 - Language homes in on underlying theme of rebuilding with community, that this area is not full of arbitrary whim

Recommendation #2

- We are proposing that SSPD will not have a policy of requesting no-knock warrants but recognize in the policy that the SSPD may cooperate with other agencies in serving no knock warrants
 - These requests are rarely served and when used are in tandem with other agencies according to Crooks
 - This language of cooperation recognizes importance of public safety if no knock warrant is used with other agency

Recommendation #3

- SSPD will not inquire about immigration status and will cooperate with federal immigration agents only under limited circumstances defined in policy
 - We saw how it worked with Lexipol, it could be questionable
 - Already so much distrust between immigration community and the police
 - Immigration groups working with this community rather than the police
 - If ICE has judicial warrant with person in question
 - There is a distinction between criminal and civil violations of immigration law
 - It's very complicated
 - Asking SSPD to handle these could easily go into violating individual rights
- An officer shall not perform the function of a federal immigration officer and will not perform an administrative ICE task

Resources consulted

- New York state attorney general
- ACLU Annotated version of Lexipol policy

Tompkins County Sheriff's Office

Comments

Kim, Is this a complete ban on no knock warrants?

- Terry, intended ban is on SSPD
- What you are saying is regardless of the circumstance, the SSPD can never request a no knock warrant--Is it to limit?
 - I can see many instances and I'm sure you all can where this could be necessary
 - General consensus the public and the task force that this is antiquated thinking

Jason, in regard to deviation page --would be helpful to see an "if this happens then do this"

- Nothing still has happened since July 30
 - Terry, they would file a complaint
- This is where police are lacking, there is nothing in there forcing the chief to hash it out with the county police, right now there isn't a process to review

Winston, is there a way to tie in work with the work of the subcommittee who worked on community review process so moving forward a community review group could structurally weigh in?

- Important for the community itself in a formal way to raise concerns if something happens again

Jason, Chief what do you think of no knock warrants?

- Crooks, we focus on strict criteria for executing
 - o I wouldn't do an all-out no request, might put officers in danger
- Kristen, how often do we use them in Saratoga?
 - o Crooks, I don't know
- Daesha, have any been executed while you have been chief?
 - o Crooks, I believe so
- Kristen, how does this keep officers safe? If someone breaking down door to my home I am going to react
 - o Crooks, these warrants are for high risk people. If they know we are coming, we are putting us at risk
- Kim, When I was DA at drug unit there were times when it was useful
 - o The element of surprise is key vs knocking on the door
 - o There are bad people all over
 - o I've been personally involved in criminal cases in Albany and Rensselaer that least amount of notice was the safest way to go
 - Kristen, from public perspective that logic doesn't make sense
 - Daesha, I would argue according to Robin Dalton, over 70% of the police calls are for homeless community so we are dealing with Saratoga
 - To Kim, sounds like you are making an argument for gun control
 - Kim, we would be putting police officers at risk and you are not thinking of totality
- Steve Boxley, I understand both sides and I think we need to think about how and when this strategy is used

2 Training and Education (Kristen, Kimberly, Chief Crooks)

We will reconvene when we get more recommendations from other subcommittees that may involve additional trainings for officer

- City does robust training outside of the academy
 - o Looking to budget on training

Comments

Crooks, trainings added this year: procedural justice, implicit bias, de-escalation, cultural trainings

- Jason, given budget constraints going forward these are the trainings that are most likely going to cut--are there innovative ways we could suggest training given a limited budget?

Kristen, Police officer doing training on shift works on slow night but if getting a lot of calls? what is the actual benefit of the training?

Winston, Basic question of how long the standard training in Albany at the academy is?

- Crooks, about 6 weeks and then in Saratoga we do 13 weeks after
 - o For those online trainings, we would rather send them away to do it and then come back and put it into practice in real time
- Kim, I can't believe when you get out of the academy there is no more requirement for training ever
 - o Crooks, I would support that of going back to school. Continuing education is very important to me
 - If you want to meet standards for accreditation there are different hours we have to meet
 - Steve, are there financial incentives for getting degrees?
 - Crooks--Yes

3. Public Survey (Jason and Steven)

Survey designed to get a view of the community

- Questions of trust, accountability, can we count on the police, fair treatment, confidence in action
- Hoping to distribute this to all parts of Saratoga both electronically and via paper
 - o Want as many people as possible to take this

Comments/ Questions

Daesha

- Adding pacific islander to questions #2
- on three change "underrepresented" to historically excluded
 - o Intentional exclusion vs innocent mistake
- #9 suggest focussing on training or reallocating training hours
 - o Move money from defense tactics to bias and/or de-escalation tactics
 - o Not alluding to investing more money into the police

Terry

- Reworking the civilian review board question

Steve

- I think we should at least get an understanding of how this community feels about this police department

John

- It would be interesting to see how people answer yes vs no answer question 7
- Interesting to group people together to how they look at police as well
 - o Specifically, SSPD vs police at large

Jason

- We want to send this out in a couple weeks and get their response by end of February
 - o Ceci, could put surveys in the grocery store
 - o Terry, Plan to make copies available in Spanish?
 - Jason, we should do this thank you

Kim

- How will final report be presented
- Not everyone may agree with everything
 - o Winston, might be better to bring something in total package to council (we talked about this)
 - I think it's better to bring forward issues that have a consensus but see where Kim is coming from

Meeting done: 7pm