

Chairperson
Aaron Richman



Members:
Lilian Chukwurah
James Kobialka
Edward G. Robinson
Tracey Weeden

Vice-chairperson
Jacqueline Yang

Clerk
Elizabeth O'Callahan

**City of Worcester
Human Rights Commission**

**Monthly Meeting Summary – Monday June 3rd, 2019, 6pm
Worcester City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber, 3rd Floor, 455 Main St., Worcester, MA**

Present: Lilian Chukwurah, James Kobialka, Elizabeth O'Callahan, Aaron Richman, Edward G. Robinson, Tracey Weeden, Jacqueline Yang

Staff: Jayna Turcek

Guests: Chief Steven Sargent, Lt. Sean Murtha, Lt. Carl Supernor, Tiana Antul, Sgt. Lee Boykin, Capt. Ken Davenport

1. Call to order and introductions

A quorum was established and Chairperson Richman called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. The Chairperson welcomed the Commissioners and those present, and introduced members of the Worcester Police Department: Police Chief Steve Sargent, Captain Ken Davenport Bureau of Professional Standards, Sergeant Lee Boykin Diversity Officer, Tiana Antul, Principle Crime Analyst, Lt Sean Murtha and Lt. Carl Supernor.

2. Approval of May 6th and May 9th, 2019 meeting minutes

Commissioner Chukwurah motioned to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Robinson seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

3. New Business - Annual meeting with Worcester Police Department

Chairperson Framing of the Meeting's Events

Chairperson Richman provided background of the meeting, explaining that part of the mandate of the Human Rights Commission is to assist in efforts to foster police-community relations. The chairperson also reviewed the plan for the evening, informing members of the public of additional time allotted for questions following several presentations and updates.

3A. HRC report out: Conclusions from Survey of Neighborhood Meetings

Background



OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS & DISABILITIES, CITY HALL ROOM 101
455 MAIN ST., WORCESTER, MA 01608
TELEPHONE (508) 799-8486 | FAX (508) 799-1218



July 2017 - Discussed Police Community Relations Initiative as part of annual Public Safety Work Plan. Created following action steps:

- Attend meetings to understand their process and makeup
- Research best practices/case studies
- Design tools to gather additional information
- Develop recommendations to enhance facilitation, attendance, effectiveness and other aspects

September 2017-May 2018 - Commissioners/Volunteers distributed surveys to Neighborhood Watch Meeting attendees in 17 meetings

June 2018 - Presented preliminary findings during joint meeting with WPD

- Identified initial recommendations based on available data

July 2018 - Strategies to address limitations: increase sample size, ensure implementation fidelity

Overview

May 2018- May 2019: Additional Data collected: Ultimately reached 31 of ~41 active meetings (75%)

- Qualitative data collected over a series of meetings, discussions and listening sessions:
 - Worcester Police Department Neighborhood Response Team, Meeting Organizers, Leadership Worcester, Roundtable Discussions with Holy Cross students
- Brought 2018 findings and proposed 2019 process to Worcester Research Bureau
 - Asked for feedback and additional ideas
 - Proposed mapping meetings, creating interactive map available on city website
 - Residents unfamiliar with the meeting names could identify their meeting visually. Users could select meetings for additional information

Purpose:

- Compliment and elaborate on survey data
- Evaluate and improve survey process
- Identify additional questions, stakeholders, information not captured in survey data

Methods

- Observers/Survey Administrators: Combination of commissioners, students, interns and city employees attended meetings and distributed the survey
- Survey distribution methods
 - Standardized written procedure for survey distribution
 - Each survey administrator provided in-person training
- Sample size: 322 total responses
 - 301: meeting attendees; 8: WPD Neighborhood Response Team; 14: Meeting Organizers
- Sample Selection
 - 9 not sampled due to cancellations and schedule conflicts
 - 9 not scheduled during final quarter of the survey period
 - Survey went to entire Neighborhood Response Team (80% response rate)
 - Organizer surveys distributed at last 14 meetings attended
- Attendee Survey Format: Unchanged from 2018, Added “African” as option under demographics

Survey Format

- Survey items captured various types of information: Basic meeting information, How long and how often they’d attended, Additional offerings they’d like to see
 - 12 statements presented in a Likert scale format measured individual attitudes
 - Voluntary demographic information (Age, Race, Gender)

Results: Demographics

Respondents were most likely to be: White (84%), Female (59%), Over 55 years of age (67%)
Changes from initial sample:

- Decrease in racial diversity (77% to 84% white)
- Increase in gender diversity (65% to 59% female)
- Slight Increase in age diversity (75% to 67% over 55 years of age)
- Majority of increase in representation among 45-54 age group (10% to 15%)

City of Worcester Demographics

- Gender: Men 49%, Women 51% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011)
- Race: White 57%, Hispanic 21%, Black/African American 12%, Asian 7.1%, Bi-Racial/Other 3%
- Age: Median age: 34 (Worcester Research Bureau, 2018)

Results: Representation- Breakdown by age compared to the general population:

- Over 55 age group overrepresented in data by twice as much
 - Respondents over 55=67%; Share of adult population=31%
- 45-54 age group well-represented in the data
 - Respondents 45-54=15%; Share of adult population=17%
- 35-44 age group underrepresented in the data by half
 - Respondents 45-54=7%; Share of adult population=15%
- ≤ 35 age group underrepresented by a margin of 4 to 1
 - Respondents under 35 =6%; Share of adult population=20%

Results: Racial Representation - Breakdown by race compared to the general population:

- White respondents overrepresented in responses by 20%
 - Share of Respondents=84%; Share of population=57%
- Hispanic and Asian respondents underrepresented by half
 - Hispanic: Share of Respondents =11%; Share of population=21%
 - Asian: Share of Respondents =3%; Share of population=7%
- Black/African American respondents underrepresented by three quarters
 - Share of Respondents =3%; Share of population=12%

Results: Respondents divided into 3 groups: Attendees, Organizers, WPD Neighborhood Response Team
Where available, 2018 limited data compared to 2019 larger data set to measure changes evident in the larger sample size

Results: Likert Responses (Attendees)

Similar to smaller 2018 data set; Increase in agreement 2018 to 2019 for “Meetings are well-attended”

- Reflects potential sample bias from 2018 data set
- More “well-attended” meetings (based on NRT feedback) were surveyed in 2019 data

Results: Likert Responses (Attendees)

Statements scored 2 or more standard deviations below the total average rating of all individual responses:

- “It’s easy to find information” (2018: 3.97 average score; 2019: 3.99 average score)
- “Meetings are well-attended” (2018: 3.58 average score; 2019: 3.62 average score)

Results: Attendee Feedback

Most requested item continues to be access to more information about meetings:

- 61% of respondents requested information (N=102)
- 27% of respondents requested social media updates (N=80)
- 26% of respondents requested email updates (N=22)

Organizer Surveys

- Included with letter explaining purpose of surveys
- First Page – Asked about meeting format, length of time, diversity, etc.
- Likert questions included:
 - “There are signs directing people where to go”
 - “Meeting attendees reflect the diversity of my neighborhood”
 - “I have enough resources to run meetings”

- Second Page – optional demographic information, resources, information for city

Results: Organizer Feedback

The following questions scored an average rating of 4.5 / 5 across organizer responses:

- “The location is convenient and easy to find”
- “Community members are invited to share concerns”
- “I have enough resources to run meetings”

Statements scored 2 or more standard deviations below the total average rating of all individual responses:

- “There are signs directing people where to go”
- “Meetings are well-attended”
- “Meeting attendees reflect the diversity of my neighborhood”

Organizers reported wanting to increase attendance and diversity at meetings

- Most frequent response for “ideal vision” referenced increased attendance
- Most frequent responses to what they are “most struggling with” referenced outreach and increasing attendance/diversity
- Most frequent response to question on “one thing you could change”

Officer Surveys

Distributed to members of WPD Neighborhood Response Team

- First page - questions about meetings overall
 - Second page - questions specific to each meeting
- One copy of the second page completed for each individual meeting

Results: Officer Feedback

Neighborhood Response Team Officers spend 1 to 5+ hours per week preparing for meetings and conducting follow up: 63% reported spending an average of 2-4 hours per week

- All reported avg 5-10 formal requests, questions or problems requiring follow up per meeting

Results: Officer Feedback

Universally reported positive quality of life issues are addressed through Neighborhood Watch Meetings

Changes to perspective from running meetings included:

- “Better understanding of what the public finds important”
- “Positive interaction with the community”

Responses to “most important thing for city to know” included:

- “Meetings build a relationship with the community,” “build trust,” foster “personal connection”

Analysis: Perceptions Between Groups

Some of the same questions were asked of attendees, organizers and officers

- Purpose: to measure whether perceptions were the same or varied between each group
- Meeting organizers more likely to agree with statements:
 - “The meeting location is convenient and easy to find”
 - “Community members are invited to share concerns”
- Officers and organizers more likely to agree with the statement:
 - “Meetings are effective at helping people solve problems”
- Attendees less likely to agree with mirror statement:
 - “Meetings have helped me with a problem”

Analysis; Perceptions on Diversity Between Groups

- Organizers and Officers both noticed when groups were observed to be very homogenous in terms of age and race
- However, perceptions of diversity appear to differ between groups
- Officers appear more likely to notice a lack of age and economic diversity in meetings
- Organizers appear more likely to notice lack of racial and gender diversity

- Qualitatively, observers (survey administrators), who tended to be young and more racially diverse, nearly universally reported lack of diversity in terms of both age and race, but were less confident in identifying economic diversity

Limitations

Sample size: Not all meetings were attended (75%); Not all organizers were surveyed

Potential for maturation: Survey period occurred over more than one year

Incomplete surveys: Decreased sample size of some variables

- Decreased ability to identify meeting-specific trends
- Decreased potential to identify additional trends in data set

Potential for inhibited responding: Some survey responses did not match qualitative data

Follow-up: Data Collection will continue

- Will continue to partner with WPD and organizers
- Multiple baseline design across participants: Systematic dissemination of door hangers and measuring meeting attendance over subsequent 3 months
- Goal: Identify strategies to increase survey attendance and diversity of meeting attendees

Conclusions

Meetings have positive effects on the community:

- Improved relationship between WPD and community members who attend
- Play vital role of informal social control and community policing

All stakeholders identified continued areas for growth:

- Residents want more information
 - On city website, in public spaces, on social media, via email, via newspaper
 - Organizers, officers and residents want to see attendance increase

Organizers/attendees requesting help of police department

- In Lieu of other avenues, WPD has been conducting outreach on behalf of residents
- WPD conducting outreach alone contributes to confusion these are WPD-run meetings

Meetings lack age & racial diversity of neighborhoods they support

Information is not reaching all community members

- Organizers lack resources to meet these needs

Systems are needed to help organizers access existing resources

Additional resources are needed to address existing problems

This initiative raised additional issues and questions:

- No identified stakeholder / liaison within the city to partner with meeting organizers and WPD
- Who is ultimately responsible for providing resources?
- How are / will identified resources be funded?
- Who is the Human Rights Commission providing these recommendations to?
- Who is responsible for implementing recommendations?

Responsibility and Accessibility

Is the city obligated to provide officers at Neighborhood Meetings?

How can stakeholders ensure meetings are inclusive and accessible?

If community member's meeting is not accessible, how does the city ensure the community member is able to alternatively access the resources provided at neighborhood meetings? If the city does not also support meetings created due to lack of accessibility, this could be considered discriminatory

Recommendations

Increase Inclusivity

1. Change name to "Neighborhood Meetings"
2. Continue to work to identify causes of underrepresentation

Increase Information

3. Identify one universal name for each meeting (eliminate “aka’s”)
4. Create map of meetings with times and locations for each pin
5. Ensure all attendees are able to access information

Increase communication between city and organizers

6. Create contact list for business associations, liaisons within each city department, local social service agencies, etc.
7. Create voluntary contact distribution list to allow city to send announcements to organizers to share at meetings

Increase City Integration

8. Remove schedule conflicts with City Council meetings
9. Create workflows for organizers to request municipal support
10. Create mechanism for accountability for city assistance

Increase Resources

11. Make public spaces available for meetings
12. Make training and reference materials available to organizers
13. Create written reference materials for organizers to utilize
14. Hold semi-annual organizer meetings

Improve Outreach

15. Post signage in nearby public spaces and in meeting locations
16. Create and distribute master list of meetings, including times, locations and contact information
17. Provide municipal support to current WPD and organizer outreach efforts
18. Make information searchable and easier to find on city’s website
19. Advertise on city’s Facebook page
20. Ask city councilors to spread awareness among constituents

Increase Accountability

21. Identify who is responsible for following through with recommendations
22. Identify municipal stakeholder to partner with WPD and organizers
23. Determine who is ultimately responsible for funding and other resources

3B. Worcester Police Department Presentations

2018 Annual hate crimes statistics

Tiana Antul discussed hate crime statistics for 2018:

- 140,000 total incidents
 - 7 incidents met criteria for a hate crime, with a single incident involving multiple officers
 - 4 types of bias
 - 1 anti-male homosexuality
 - 3 anti black
 - 1 anti white
 - 1 anti asian
- 4 - Officers responding to incident meeting criteria for hate crime
- 3 - Officer was assaulted, offender directed hate speech toward officer
- Majority of offenses were categorized as low levels of crime, meaning to be not violent

Captain Davenport presented the 2018 Annual Bureau of Professional Standards (BOPS) Report
davenportkj@worcesterma.gov

Occurrence of Complaints: 44 down from 71 in 2017; 7 year average= 72 Complaints
2018: Began tracking comments - 10 commendations

Discussed unknown factor; don't include then data will be skewed
Since last year, added portion on email to ask if they'd like to self-identify

- Gender Breakdown:
 - 16 female complainants
 - 23 male complainants
 - 1 unknown (anonymous)
 - 4 complaints were generated within the department that did not involve citizens

Top 3 routes highest frequency of complaints

- Rt 4 - Belmont, Bell Hill to Shrewsbury St
 - 4 complaints / 7,727 incidents
- Rt 5 - Downtown area
 - 5 complaints / 11,793 incidents
- Rt 14 - Western portion of Worcester
 - 5 complaints / 5852 incidents

Citywide:

- 5,558 total arrests / 16 unnecessary force allegations
- 145,038 incidents / 44 complaints; .03% incidence of complaints generated
- Out of the 44 complaints for 2018, 38 (86.36%) were generated by citizen complaints and 6 (13.63%) were generated within the dep. by the Chief, Deputy Chief, or a Commander.
- 7.63 % of the allegations were sustained
- 33.86 Avg. Unnecessary Force (UF) Allegations over 7 years/ CY 2018 had 16 UF allegations

Sgt. Lee Boykin Presented the Annual activities report of the WPD Diversity Liaison

Outreach to multicultural divisions of area colleges and high schools

- Opportunity Fair - Chief Diversity Officer Airport Drive dispatch center for the City of Worcester
2019 Exam - opportunity fairs at all schools worked with Superintendent and Chamber of Commerce
- Spoke to director of civil service out of Boston, Worcester zip code past exam
- 383 people who took 2019 exam; Broken down by race and gender; No pass rates available yet
- Questions for diversity: Are there protections in place for individuals of color who may face racial tensions / discrimination once they join the force?
- Sgt. Boykin working with CDO to set up Affinity groups***

Barriers to recruiting officers of color

- Perception of "bad cops going after people of color"
- Civil process itself can be a barrier; \$250 to take exam, populations targeting may not be able to afford to take test, access information to take test;
- Discussion of process for ability for fees waived for people good candidate
- Media can also be a barrier

Diversity has improved in the department, but there are still 0 black female officers and 0 asian females. Each nationality overall has increased, and 7 females of color in academy right now

Update on pilot of body cameras

Lt. Sean Murtha and Lt. Carl Supernor

- Pilot started May 1st, will go for 6 months with ASSA as vendor
- No cost during pilot program
- Participants:
 - 20 officers across 3 different shifts

- Also in operations division neighborhood response team, traffic division
 - Officers all volunteered - more volunteers than could accommodate
- 1700 videos generated
- Policy available online
- Body cameras are utilized every time officers dispatched to call with some exceptions
 - Exceptions:
 - Enter private residence for non-emergency situation - will ask first
 - Issue in hospital
- When they are turned on, capture previous 30 seconds of what happened
- Audio and video, high definition
- Limitations: only pick up what eye picks up, no night vision
- If they turn their head sideways, can only pick up facing front

Goal

- Community relations - show public good work WPD is doing
- Address complaints
- De-escalation - officers able to remind person of body camera during an incident
- Identify Training Needs - look at videos for mistakes officers may be making

Since start of program:

- 1658 videos with 20 officers
- 271 hrs of footage
- 1000 GB of data
- Avg of 48 videos each day
- 8 hrs video & 30 GB video / day
- 81 have captured arrests
- 6 have captured uses of force, including OC spray, Taser, Show of force (display baton)

Questions/Public Comment

“Does City have ICE policy? Are officers required to ask about immigration status?”

Chief Sargent: The job of the Worcester Police Department is to enforce laws in place, it is not under jurisdiction to enforce ICE detainers, it is up to the clerk at the courthouse if they will detain person

The Worcester Police Department does not and will not ask about immigration status

Need residents to trust the WPD so that they will come to them if they observe or are a victim of a crime

“ICE Detainer - If person was scheduled to be released from custody at, say, 1 pm, would officers hold person past that time because of ICE?”

The Worcester Police Department does not detain; The courts would make that decision

Use of Body Camera Footage:

- Reviewed for serious incidents, an assigned review team sits and watches, makes recommendations during arrests, but do not review every call
- Length of time to store: keeping all footage during pilot
- Will keep footage for length of time determined by type of incident
- Usually 3 year minimum; civil suit statute of limitations; as Boston has implemented
- Footage Stored by the vendor, ASSA, data security is handled by them
- Program administrators have access, officers have access to their own data
- There is a record of each access of footage
- Footage could be shared through records request
- Changes to policy would be made in response to complaint of policy failure

Gordon Davis- “When pilot program is over, how is it evaluated, what is process, do you sit down with community, internally, city manager, etc. What are the criteria for evaluating success for body camera program?”

Chief Sargent: “All of the above”

When the pilot is completed, there will be a gap for an evaluation period

Christin Tosh- “What does WPD have in place to support responses to trauma, responses to addiction?”

- Officers of critical response team will be dispatched, and will call to speak to individuals
- Biggest problem is opioid addiction - addressed through Quality of Life Team within department
- Training provided to each commander, with a program addressing secondary trauma experienced by officers

Michael Hirsh, Medical Director for Division of Public Health for City of Worcester

- Annual gun buyback program deserves recognition and praise
- Union of white coats at UMass Trauma Center and WPD; found it’s been very unique and special
- Hartford, New Haven and other municipalities marvel at statistics that come out of this program
- Giving people the agency to bring in a weapon that may not be legal, or may not be a weapon that’s been uninvolved in crime is not something other departments do
- The police department has taken back 3600 weapons over the last 17 years here
- Not nearly as causal to very good firearm death rate reduction
- Medical school has picked up curriculum, educating medical students; Medical professionals now trained to ask questions about weapons storage, identifying suicide risk
- Once students done with buy back they ask to do ride-alongs, gang team coming in to educate trauma center on latest trends in tattoos, hand signals, etc.
- Boxing matches staffed by residents and attending physicians
- WPD Collaborated in every way on community public health improvement plan, reaching out to homeless, vaccinations, human trafficking, sexual trade, opioid problem

Chief Sargent: 3,600 guns off the streets have saved lives

Gang Unit camp with annual boxing match involves all volunteer medical professionals from UMASS, couldn’t happen without their support

Rev. Jesse Gibson:

- Information not getting around to everyone
- Worcester is diverse
- Recruitment - must have a cultural perspective
- How does WPD address diversity in terms of language speaking backgrounds?

Chief Sargent: Trying to address this problem via cadet program; 90-100 languages spoken in WPS, can only cover so many. Trying to cover largest language-speaking groups

Dispatch systems has language bank to call

Yatta Yeawolo

- There should be accommodations for people who struggle with testing due to cultural background

Sgt. Boykin referred comment to staff from civil service in Boston

- The lack of diversity among black Africans and Asians is probably also due to awareness; There are lots of female black African willing to join the police department
- Elderly people in community have fear of police department, when something occurs with kids going to jail; They don’t understand why officer coming to door
- Suggestion to put a group together - listening parts of to meet with community
- Referral to Deputy McGinn who oversees police- clergy meetings

Public comment-name not identified-

Purpose of license plate readers in the city - not for issuing tickets

If incident in area but need plate itself, if there was a crime and it went by there, there would be another

Have handheld one

If crime was committed, the license plate readers can confirm whether the was in the area

“Do other agencies have access?”

These records have never been accessed before

5. Location of next meeting (July 1st, 2019): City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber

6. Adjournment at 8:34pm