

Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Feedback 12/3 – 12/16, 2020

*** If you supply your name and/or hamlet, it will be shared with the Advisory Committee as well as online. ***

Received Tuesday, December 8 via web form

Name (optional) **Joe Murphy**

Hamlet (optional) **Delmar**

Feedback I support reforming how we do public security, by having trained professionals, volunteers or other non-police personnel respond to the majority of calls where an armed officer is not required or can attend as backup. And other progressive reform best practices, including training and equipping as guardians.

Received Wednesday, December 9 via web form

Name (optional) **Field not completed.**

Hamlet (optional) **Glenmont**

Feedback I've only lived in the Delmar area for a little over a year, but I had to call the police once for a noise disturbance. That seemed to be handled well and quickly.

Name (optional) **Field not completed.**

Hamlet (optional) **Selkirk**

Feedback I think the police are doing a good job from my perspective but mine is a white perspective. I have not heard much negative about the police force except for some that have said they were victims of racial bias. I would like to hear the explanation on the fact that people of color have received 40% of the traffic tickets when people of color only represent 10% of the Bethlehem residents. I think the main problems police will have to deal with are illegal narcotics. I hope the police don't concern themselves with minor marijuana infractions and instead focus on hard drugs like heroin and opiates.

I would also like the captain of the police to address the town on a monthly basis and take questions. I think this would benefit the police and its residents.

Received Thursday, December 10 via web form

Name (optional) **Field not completed.**

Hamlet (optional) **Glenmont**

Feedback I believe that police reform is not a suitable option; we need to take actions that move in the direction of police abolition. Attempts at reform only pour more money and resources into the police department, which is antithetical to supporting Black community members. Instead, we should take decisive steps that limit the resources and scope of power of the police department. This means removing officers from schools, disarming officers, ending community policing, etc.. Reference 8toabolition.com for more information on specific, actionable items that limit the power of police in our community, and direct efforts and resources to our marginalized community members at most risk of experiencing violence at the hands of police.

Name (optional) **Field not completed.**

Hamlet (optional) **Delmar**

Feedback I was stopped by a Bethlehem Police Officer on my street a couple of years ago. As I approached the end of the street, at night, a car turned on to my street with high beams on. I quickly flashed my brights at them to let them know they had their high beams on. They did nothing--very bright lights filled my view, so I quickly tapped my brights again. Right after, the car passed me and did a quick U-Turn--it was a squad car, and he turned his red lights on and pulled me over.

The officer came to my window, took my license and registration and told me that I had flashed my high beams at him even though he'd turned off his high beams already. I apologized and said I didn't know that--because they were very bright and I didn't notice them getting any dimmer.

He went back to his car with my license and detained me for about 5 minutes or more. When he returned, he said "you have a clean record so I'm going to go ahead and let you go." I asked him whether it was illegal to flash my high beams at a car and he told me, "Yes, it is." Of course this is an outright lie but I didn't argue with him. (See the NYS DMV Driver's Manual, <https://dmv.ny.gov/about-dmv/chapter-10-special-driving-conditions>: "If an approaching driver does not dim the headlights, flash your headlights to high beam for a second, then return to low beam. To help avoid the glare of approaching high beams, move your eyes to the right".).

I was angry that a town police officer would pull me over simply because he was annoyed and not because I had committed any kind of offense AND then proceed to lie to me about the law. I am a white, middle-aged woman and was driving on my own street with my family. We all

immediately talked about what that interaction might have been like if I'd been a person of color, alone.

Even though this interaction made me feel unsafe and angry, I didn't complain to the police department because that didn't feel safe, either. You have an officer who abuses his power over something so minor as, I guess his ego being bruised? Who knows? I don't need to have an armed person who has all my information mad at me. There needs to be a way to make a complaint against a police officer without feeling like you're endangering yourself. I know this is very minor compared to high profile stories from around the country but I still think it's outrageous for an officer to pull a citizen over who has not done anything wrong and then lie to them.

Even though I know there are fine police officers who mean well, I worry that the ability to abuse power and carry a gun must also draw some people who don't mean well.

Name (optional) **Field not completed.**

Hamlet (optional) **Field not completed.**

Feedback I watched tonight meeting, as I do every meeting just on the video feed, I do not sign up to watch or speak. Maybe there is not a lot of community joining these meetings because they do not care. Most people just go about their business and pay no attention to what is going on if it does not affect them. We have a very good police department and I think most people that live here know that and are leaving well enough alone. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Received Friday, December 11 via web form

Name (optional) **Brian J.**

Hamlet (optional) **North Bethlehem**

Feedback Good morning , I wanted to tell you thanks for all the time you have put into taking care of all of us ! Like all the Police force & department personal . I can only hope the rest of Bethlehem grows to feel the same . However I just finished watching the video from the traffic enforcement dated Dec. 3 ! Seems more like a platform designed to undermine the well being of our Police , especially the patrol officers. Allow me to take their defense ! The young man with the baseball cap made some remark of discrimination (due to the 15% tickets issued and only 5% residents) by our officers is really offensive to me , He needs a better understanding of what really goes into a traffic stop , AND ITS NOT BASED ON DISCRIMINATION

that prompts one of our officers . Its a traffic law infraction . Lets stand up proudly and loudly against these kind of ill informed people who are looking only to tear down , instead of built up , they should get to know our officers like Pete Resnick- Tim Travis - Mike Cozzy - Frank Muller - Dave Coputo - Andrew Hines- all example of good- honest - trustworthy- dedicated - to all the people of our town what ever the color race creed is.

Received Monday, December 14 via web form

Name (optional) **Field not completed.**

Hamlet (optional) **Delmar**

Feedback First, I want to thank everyone on the committee. It is not a simple task, yet it's an extremely important one.

I have been watching and listening for at least 3 meetings so far. Last week became heated a few times. There was a lot of value in a few comments after the exchanges - one said that many people's passions are coming through and encouraged fellow members to have grace with one another. I could not agree more. In addition, I ask that you all continue to be open-minded with each other and to changing your own belief system.

A few weeks ago, The Chief talked about the officers on the Bethlehem Police force being good people. I know many of them personally and I know they are good people. Being a good person does not mean you may not hold racist beliefs that are embedded in our history, our culture, our education system and our government. This is critical to get past in order to create positive change in the Town of Bethlehem. The positive side is that we can change and become a more inclusive, equitable community by truly listening, by including others in the process, through training and education and by changing some of our old policies.

I don't have the answers of what policies to change and the specifics of how to do it, but I do know that it starts with opening our minds and hearts to those who are different in any way. I have lived in this town for most of my life and I am white, so I see things from a very different lens than someone who is not white. I want everyone to feel welcome to live here, drive through here, work here, and I know that is not the case.

We must continue this process of pushing each other to be better and make positive changes in our government, specifically in our police department.

Name (optional) **Barb Riegel**

Hamlet (optional) **Elsmere**

Feedback Community based policing exists in Bethlehem to a degree but I also believe there should be a concerted effort to be transparent and open about bias. Our town is very white and I have witnessed students/people of color treated differently. Clearly, holding up a Black Lives Matter banner brought a level of hatred toward me and family members who joined me.. saying that means they matter no more but no less than any other life, police, teacher, homeless, health care worker, the poor, the wealthy. I do support our police men and women in our community and hope that we can include mental health care workers into the mix. A disturbing story on the use of ketamine to subdue a “suspect” on 60 Minutes made me wonder if we would use such tactics here. I’m concerned about the hate all around us and glad this conversation has begun. It needs to work for the good of all of us.

Name (optional) **Field not completed.**

Hamlet (optional) **Delmar**

Feedback Having a resource officer is important for school safety. I feel better knowing there is someone on campus that is trained to help should an emergency arise. Having an officer who knows the youth in our community and has built a positive relationship with them is a huge asset to our town.

Received Tuesday, December 15 via web form

Name (optional) **Field not completed.**

Hamlet (optional) **Delmar**

Feedback I was a little taken aback by the title of this meeting: “Why do we have School Resource Officers, and what roles do they play in our schools?” Does this mean we're being provided a lecture on armed presence in schools, or are we given an ability to question the need for such officers? I would hope the latter, otherwise it would appear minds are made up and not welcome to feedback that includes scaling back school policing.

I would strongly recommend the Committee read this article from NPR:

<https://www.npr.org/2020/06/23/881608999/why-theres-a-push-to-get-police-out-of-schools>

. Specifically the research abstract which is highlighted here:

<https://twitter.com/BenFisherUofL/status/1268965060849868801/photo/1>

"For children of color, we see that this leads to a hyper-criminalization and a way that people perceive them to be criminal, even if they are just being children,"

"New research shows that police in majority white and affluent schools are more likely to think of their job as protecting the school from outside threats, such as shootings. But in schools that were lower-income and majority students of color, they are instead looking at the students themselves as threats."

Furthermore on June 18 the American Federation of Teachers, one of the country's largest teacher unions, passed a resolution calling for the separation of school safety and policing.

Our teachers are against school policing.

"There isn't much evidence indicating that police officers in schools make schools safer," says Dominique Parris of the research organization Child Trends. "What they do do is increase the likelihood that Black and brown children are going to be involved in the legal system early and often."

Please consider this, and how unfortunately titled this session is given the weak link between school policing and prevention of violence, and the strong link between school policing and discrimination.

Received Wednesday, December 16 via web form

Name (optional) **Liz Grisaru**

Hamlet (optional) **Delmar**

Feedback I have not participated directly in this collaborative. However, I understand the role of the police vis a vis the public schools has been discussed. I would like to express my strong view that that police officers should not be present in our schools. In particular, the police should not be allowed to conduct generalized searches in the schools.