

Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Feedback 12/17 – 12/31/2020

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

Received Thursday, December 17 via web form

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

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

Feedback Thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback. I first want to commend all involved in this effort, particularly as this important task comes in the midst of a pandemic, when resources are stretched to capacity. I appreciate the commitment of time, effort, and personal investment, as well as the civic responsibility that is being demonstrated from our elected officials & community volunteers, and public servants.

The explosion of awareness of and concern for racial injustice has justifiably called upon us as a community to reflect, examine and commit to improving policing wherever is necessary. I, personally, have not had any adverse experiences with police since moving to town some 30 years ago. My interactions with police are minimal.

Since the summer's vigil marking the killing of George Floyd, (and countless others before him) emotions have justifiably run high, and there is reason for the need of scrutiny of policing practices in our town to be made to ensure that our town upholds the highest standard of fair and just conduct. I believe that town officials, together with the police and the members of the collaborative are willingly and in good faith working to engage in a process that seeks to address and implement reforms. This effort is an opportunity to learn of individual experiences that will inform how to "reimagine" the work of community policing, and identify the areas that need further support and resources to create and ensure fair and equal policing, and law enforcement, when necessary. I see this process also as a way to educate and raise awareness of the many demands placed on policing, social services, and mental health services, and the real challenges of balancing need with limited resources, so that rather than place blame, we can work to prioritize and resolve community needs in the spirit of cooperation and equity.

Unfortunately, since the summer, our community has been wracked by angry voices bent on blame and shaming of others for not being anti-racist enough, of elected officials for a lack of transparency, and an unwillingness to conduct this process openly and sincerely. These voices are accusatory, they attack others, and resort to social media vitriol. The accusations are brash and offensive, personally targeted, and demeaning. Some of these voices consistently participate in the police reform community meetings. The tone and cynicism is exhausting. If participation in these meetings is low, I can attest to how I don't want to participate only to find my comments or words misquoted, misrepresented or put down on some social media rant.

I would like the collaborative to produce, in the end, a summary of clear, and explicit steps to address instances of inequitable, bias-related events, verified first-person accounts, rather than hear say, that form the framework for the reform of and monitoring of policies, practices, and behaviors within our policing community to ensure they are fair and equitable.

Received Friday, December 18 via web form

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

Hamlet (optional) **Delmar**

Feedback I've been following these meetings since they began. After the past three weeks, I am rather certain that the goals and discussions held during these meetings are no longer productive and are one-sided. The consistent outbursts of community participants and members, as well as the lack of preparation and education from those selected to speak, it is quite apparent that there is no end goal for these conversations. The Bethlehem Police Department is diverse, well-equipped, and involved in the community. I've witnessed officers, as well as the Chief, attend these meetings ready and prepared to discuss and reinvent their department. What I don't witness is that same expectation being held to members of this committee. Committee members come to the meeting with nothing but a list of complaints or issues to take up with BPD, rather than ideas or helpful discussions that result in a resolution. I'd suggest this group take a few weeks off and discuss their agenda, their expectations for community participants, and set up a few more guidelines that will attribute to more of a healthy and solution-based conversation. My strongest suggestion is to have short-term and long-term goal timelines for both BPD AND it's Police Reform Community Group, with the expectation that all goals will be achieved by both parties, not just left for the police department to handle. Simply put --- these meetings need more structure and need more attention to detail from it's leaders.

Received Tuesday, December 22 via web form

Name (optional) **Mary**

Hamlet (optional) **Delmar**

Feedback So last night I watched the taped police reform meeting and some things are popping in my mind. I try so hard not to take personal attacks on people but some of the people on these meetings are so rude and closed minded that they struggle to do anything except hear themselves talk.

A first questions is why isn't our police chief doing these presentations and leading the meetings - my sister is on a committee in Albany and said the police chief does the majority of the presentations. It seems every time a police question is asked the chief needs to ask someone else about it.

Second the young man who keeps yelling about the metoo movement should be removed from the committee. He strikes me as the type who would argue the color of the sky if he could. Why doesn't he get some of these people to come to the meetings? To the lady who says police shouldn't carry a gun- why don't you sign up for the job- cause I would never do it, but you seem to know way more about it than the police do- in your own mind.

I will admit I've only watched parts of most of the meetings but I don't see where there is a problem with racist policing in Delmar.

Final point- drop the topic of school resources officers it has been talked about three to five times and only five people in the entire town are against it- obvious you are out voted- now MOVE ON!! This has nothing to do with racism- why are we talking about it- correct me if I'm wrong but isn't one black man a school counselor? If there was an issue he would say it!! Move on for the love of god.

Received Saturday, December 26 via web form

Name (optional) **Transparency?**

Hamlet (optional) **Slingerlands**

Feedback Many people I know have been telling me about the police reform committee and how the meetings have a scripted political narrative to them. I watched one and have some questions on transparency. Why does the police chiefs continue to block people on social media? Why does the david VanLuven speak for the chief at the meeting instead of letting her explain her views. After watching her talk over multiple people and say "that's why I blocked you" it seems she is not very transparent. Of the police chief posted anything against Black Lives Matter she should be disciplined. Will these questions be asked and answered during the meetings or are these a blank form to submit comments?