

## Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Feedback 1/16 – 1/29/2021

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

[Received Saturday, January 16 via web form](#)

**Name (optional)** DPM

**Hamlet (optional)** Glenmont

**Feedback** It is with great interest that I have been following the committee's meetings in hope that this project leads to reform or reinvention of a system that has been cited by many residents for many years as imbalanced. We are a caucasian LE family with over 30 years invested as residents in Bethlehem. Our demographic/occupations/longevity is an opportunity to offer a balanced viewpoint. Historically there have been multiple accusations and factual accounts related to racial slurs and a discrepancy of treatment and outcome. DWB Driving while black has been an acronym that was coined as far back to the time I was a child growing up in this town, used as the primary explanation why people of color were more likely than a white skinned person to have a negative outcome for minor infractions and interactions with BPD. So not only isn't this a new issue, it has historical roots that have in some cases been supported by factual events. I appreciate the effort, commitment of time and desire for change that committee members have devoted to this project. What is less encouraging is the demeanor of our new police chief during these meetings. Perception is everything. Perception may not be based in fact but doesn't make it any less powerful or destructive if not addressed. My perception is that the Chief appears physically disinterested at times, her visual attention is often directed away from the meeting screen and other times she appears to be invested in something else competing for her full focused attention. There have been a couple of occasions that the Chief has positively participated in a topic but there were many more times that she responded aggressively, appeared inflexible and non receptive to a topic under discussion. The Chief will be the most important influencing factor in the success or failure in meeting of the goals for this team. There is a perception that the Chief's appointment was pushed through our town board with some significant concerns unanswered with regard to her professional conduct and integrity. Her participation in this committee is an opportunity to alter that perception or to confirm the town board member's faith in giving her that opportunity. Perception whether fact or feelings informs a sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, individual and group actions or behaviors and creates an accepted reputation or label; for people, organizations and in this case the town of Bethlehem. There has been historically as well as currently a perception held by many that the BPD has inequitably treated people of color unfairly. There is a perception that the Chief of the BPD has not been deserving or has not earned the position of Chief. There is a perception that the Town Board neglected to seek public input or consider the other two candidates who did not have confirmed personnel issues or questions of integrity. Addressing perception is every bit as important as addressing factual

issues, maybe more so. If the perception historically has been that we are a town that tolerates racial discrimination policies, transparent documentation should have been in place long before this. It seems unconscionable that we are only now looking at gathering demographic information on forms that already had an area to document that information. We can not accept from the most influencing member of this committee any less than 100% investment, flexibility in thinking and the ability to be receptive to the idea that we have to work to change perception, even if it means that the current policies in place are still valid, productive and the most safe alternative for residents and LE members. While those policies may remain in place to the dissatisfaction of some residents, transparent documentation and statistical data will ensure that there is no question of its success or negative impact. Lastly, I think that the defund the police movement is often misunderstood and at times misguided. However it is important to recognize that ( 2020) Bethlehem Ny had a population of 34,861 residents, employed 39 officers and received a budget of \$8,550,000.00.( 2020) Guilderland NY had population of 36,536 residents, employed 39 officers and received a budget of \$4,511,005.00. While BPD is responsible for Walmart, GPD is responsible for Crossgate Mall. We have supported our police force well and generously. The discrepancy in budgets is mind blowing, especially in light of the most recent feelings of discontent expressed by a growing number of our residents. The BPD is employed by the residents of this town and has an obligation to serve all residents fairly and without bias as well as to work to change the perceived negative feelings of some by providing transparency, statistical data and documentation, increased positive interactions and when appropriate, changes in policies and procedures.

**Name (optional)** Elissa Myers

**Hamlet (optional)** Delmar

**Feedback** I have watched parts of many of the reform meetings. I would like to know why the police chief continually condemn the previous police chief. This is simply poor leadership. Leadership 101 says that you should not do that. It makes the new chief look bad for continually doing it. Can you ask her to be more respectful of other leaders? I have never met the old chief and don't recall of hearing of major long standing problems at the police station so I think she should have a more professional leadership approach to these meetings. I also have no idea why the committee keeps talking about school police officers. I want a police officer at my kids school and wish every school had one.

**Received Thursday, January 21 via web form**

**Name (optional)** Ted Hartman

**Hamlet (optional)** Delmar

**Feedback** Black Lives Matter

**Name (optional)** Joe Murphy

**Hamlet (optional)** Delmar

**Feedback** I request that the Town institute the following reforms:

1) Require our police to use body cameras. This will protect the police and those with whom they interact.

2) Create a community oversight board to review complaints.

3) Amend the use of force policy to change the standard from reasonable use to least amount necessary and only when absolutely necessary.

Thank you.

[Received Friday, January 29 via web form](#)

**Name (optional)** Andre Mitchell

**Hamlet (optional)** Delmar

**Feedback** (9999 characters max) It appears that the people on this committee were hand picked with a political agenda against the police. The police in Delmar are amazing they have helped me and my family twice. I've never heard of any racism in the police department, and I'm told the police chief used a derogatory word in a phrase. Hate to break it to you- that's doesn't make him a racist. I don't know him so I can't say if he is or isn't- but if that's all you got- you got nothing.

I've read parts of this document you posted and it appears to be very much anti police but I fail to see any problems listed in the department. There is one story in here - the report- that looks like it was told third party to someone else. Was this investigated- is it valid or is it made up like a lot of the political agenda is now a days?

Is it true that Jasmine is friends with Don Robbins wife and they work together? In the interest of transparency shouldn't we be told about this relationships!?!?! It looks like this whole committee is a political witch hunt against the police. I'm sure the police here like everywhere make mistakes. But really this is a lot of work when there is no problem.

Are all these decisions being made based on the 5-6 30 minute presentations by police at the start of the meetings? I haven't seen all the meetings but between me and my neighbor we have watched almost all of them. Please don't change our police or disenfranchise them by not listening to them or please show the community the problem you are trying to fix cause I don't see it in this paper or at the meetings I've watched. This seems more like a plot against the police then a group working to understand policing and working with them to make real change. Just my two cents and I'm sorry if some of the info is off a little bit I didn't watch all the

meetings- well I'll be honest- some people just like to grandstand and not say much. Sorry but it's true.

Best regards and please be 100% transparent.

**Name (optional)** Angela Rosano

**Hamlet (optional)** Selkirk

**Feedback** (9999 characters max) I would like to thank the Bethlehem police for the great job they do day in and day out. Through Covid I have seen the officers out there doing there jobs while all of us are working from home. They truly have a thankless job. Early I had thought about being on this committee but I realized I don't know anything about what police do, so that is my fault for not learning, but I would hope we don't hurt the police in what you are doing. They are really amazing here and I've seen it first hand. A few years ago I dealt with detective Adam Horneck and Detective Mike Whitely and I was so impressed with there professional demeanor and interaction with everyone involved in my sensitive personal case. I don't know how they do it everyday. God bless them and the other Bethlehem police.

**Name (optional)** Melanie Tobin

**Hamlet (optional)** Glenmont

**Feedback** (9999 characters max) I admit I don't know all of what is really going on with these meetings. I moved to Glenmont Center about five years ago. Having bi-racial children I have never seen any issues in the town or businesses about being against bi-racial or people of color.

I also don't know of any problems caused by our police force work. Maybe I should be doing more reading on them. I was so proud to see a woman become our police chief to provide a bright future for us and my girls. I remember reading the ambitious vision this chief has for the community and where I live. I just watched last nights meeting and instead of seeing that vision the chiefs at silently for two hours. This is a safe community and I don't want it to change. I want to know what the chief is going to do with the future of our police to keep our community safeS