



REQUEST FOR COMMISSION ACTION
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
August 27, 2020

Department Police

Director Approval Jerry Harrison

AGENDA ITEM Consider setting a Special Commission Meeting to discuss the police department's response to the Chamber of Commerce's subcommittee, the Diversity Task Force (DTF), Policing Subcommittee concerns regarding police reforms.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION Set a Special Meeting for September __, 2020 at __: __ M

BACKGROUND At the June 22, 2020 DTF meeting the DTF formed a Policing Subcommittee to create a list of items to discuss with the Independence Police Department. Chief Harrison and Sgt. Stafford are members of the DTF, but neither were present due to a department meeting. After sending a request to work with the subcommittee on 7-20-2020 Harrison was not invited to participate and was not provided the subcommittee's questions in advance. On 7-27-2020 Harrison attended the regularly scheduled DTF meeting and was able to answer four questions before the meeting adjourned due to time. Harrison was notified that evening that the DTF had conducted a poll regarding IPD and published the results. Harrison received the full list of concerns on 7-28-2020. Harrison received a copy of the DTF survey from another staff member on 7-29-2020.

Staff are requesting a Special Commission Meeting for several reasons. These topics are important to the community as a whole and a Special Commission Meeting will foster transparency and share accurate information. Due to the number of concerns presented a special meeting will allow for most if not all the DTF's concerns to be formally addressed. A broad audience may be reached through cable access, Facebook Live, Microsoft Teams and public attendance. A special meeting will provide the DTF an opportunity to address the City Commission directly with any concerns. It is Chief Harrison's intent to provide a written response of the DTF's concerns to the DTF and City Commissioners so that all parties may adequately prepare for an open discussion. Chief Harrison's goal for the meeting is for IPD to share publicly what IPD is doing to improve the relationship with the community and to collaborate on a plan with the community on what areas IPD needs to work on to embrace meaningful, evidence-based reforms that will improve transparency, public trust, and quality of life as well as lower the fear of crime in Independence.

BUDGET IMPACT N/A

SUGGESTED MOTION I move to set a Special Meeting on September __, 2020 at __: __ M to discuss concerns of the Policing Subcommittee of the Diversity Taskforce, subcommittee of the Independence Chamber of Commerce.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. Diversity Task Force Policing Subcommittee Questions email
2. Diversity Task Force Policing Subcommittee Report
3. Diversity Task Force Survey

Subcommittee questions and request for a copy of the IPD policies

Jeri Hopkins

Tue 7/28/2020 9:38 AM

To: Jerry Harrison; Barb Emert

Jerry,

Please see the questions below that the subcommittee came up with. The DTF would also like to receive a copy of the IPD's policies before our next meeting on August 24th so that we might be better informed.

Thank you for being so forthcoming at our meeting last night. I personally learned a great deal!

Best Regards,

Jeri Kay

Jeri Kay Hopkins, Director

Independence Public Library

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What are the written policy and procedures?

Is there a policy against chokeholds?

Can the Code of Conduct and all other policies be placed on the city website?

Is there a policy on the duty to intervene?

Is there a policy against using no-knock warrants?

What are the school resource officer policies?

Do the officers have qualified immunity?

If a report of a suspicious person is received by dispatch, what is the policy or procedure before an officer is sent?

Where is the line for engagement with a citizen by an officer on a report of a suspicious person? When do you not engage the citizen?

What is the procedure for transferring information from dispatch to officers?

What is the process for investigating misconduct and complaints?

Do we have an independent civilian review board for misconduct and complaints?

What are the training methods?

How often do they train on weapons?

How frequently do they require qualification for weapons?

How frequently do they train on soft skills like de-escalation, anti-bias?

What is the budget of the department?

How much is spent on training?

How much do we spend on firearms and bullets

Is it possible to design a mental health team to respond when a military response is not immediately necessary?

Is there disparate treatment of subgroups?

Who is the liability insurance provider?

How can we help?

Diversity Task Force | Policing Subcommittee Report

The Subcommittee on policing met twice in the last month. We conducted a survey on attitudes to the police department from students at Independence Community College and on the DTF Facebook page. We discussed police interactions with members of the Family of Christ Church. We also did research on issues and solutions to problems experienced in other communities. The following is a report of our findings and next steps that we recommend the Diversity Task Force take.

FINDINGS

1. Attitudes toward the police: The survey showed that 90% of the people in Independence have a positive attitude toward the Independence police department. Only 2% have a negative attitude with the remaining 8% being neutral. Although, the survey methodology is not scientific. Also the hispanic community does not report having significant encounters with the police department and they generally have a positive attitude toward the police department.
2. Community Oversight Boards: Other communities in Kansas have an impartial community board with oversight of complaints against the police department, police training, code of ethics and the overarching system. This would allow for transparency and confidence in the system. There are three different models for this process:
 - a. Investigative model: external impartial body that does the investigation
 - b. Review boards: review the internal investigation done by the police department. This is the less expensive model
 - c. Auditor monitor: This model requires professionals in policing to serve as auditors. This type of model also has jurisdiction over police training, the code of ethics, and overarching system. This is usually the most expensive model
2. Mental Health Crisis Response team: A team with extensive training on responding to people in mental health crisis. There is a strong need for such a team in Independence whether it is part of the police force or another organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Invite Police Chief Harrison to the next DTF meeting to ask him questions about the police department's policies and procedures, budget, training methods, community oversight board for complaints and a mental health crisis response team.
2. Address Commission to change policies.
3. Courageous Conversations.
4. Book Club: Scheduled for September 1 @ 6pm either virtually or at the library.
5. Diversity Task Force members read books on race relations.
 - a. [10 Books About Race To Read Instead Of Asking A Person Of Color To Explain Things To You](#)
 - b. [62 great books by Black authors, recommended by TED speakers](#)

Diversity Task Force Perception Survey

This survey is completely anonymous. Answer the following below.

* Required

How old are you? *

Your answer

What is your ethnicity? *

Your answer

Gender *

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other:

Where is your hometown? *

Your answer

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Do you feel comfortable talking to law enforcement? *

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

Would you call the police if you were in trouble? *

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

Do you believe calling the police will make a situation better? *

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

How would you describe your views of the police? *

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative



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How would you describe any encounters you have had with the police? *

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

In the box below, please describe a time when you had an encounter with law enforcement. (negative or positive)

Your answer

Do you feel that racism is a problem in the United States? *

- Yes
- No

Do you feel like you have been discriminated against personally? *

- Yes
- No

Since living in Independence, what has your overall experience been? *

- Positive
- Negative

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If negative, please explain:

Your answer

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