

## **Newton Police Reform Task Force First update to Mayor Ruthanne Fuller- August 26, 2020**

Since July 8th, the task force has met weekly with a variety of stakeholders, including several members of the Newton Police Department. This included Captain Bill Spaulding and IT Director Stephen Smith, broadly covering a range of topics from NPD's record management system to how a call for service is received and dispatched; Detective Bureau Captain Christopher Marzilli on the general functions and assignments of the Bureau; Special Operations Captain Dennis Geary on a wide range of topics such as hiring and training. The 15 to 20-minute presentations were helpful and task force members appreciated, and took advantage of, the opportunity to ask questions and invited questions to the task force from the NPD.

Of particular note, we learned that there is only one African American police officer in the City of Newton. The task force believes this is critical issue and would like to explore potential barriers connected to Civil Service residency requirements and Newton Police recruitment and retention efforts among women and minorities. We look forward to meeting with more members of the police department to better understand the operational aspects of the agency.

The task force has created opportunities to engage with members the Newton community as we believe that learning from the community the NPD serves is essential to the process of creating meaningful recommendations. To date, we have shared resources online through our task-force tab on the mayor's website, shared recordings of zoom meetings with presentations from the (NPD) discussed above, gathered concepts of safety priorities from community members in a facilitated reimagining activity and held a public forum for the public to share positive and negative experiences with the NPD and corresponded with interested individuals through the email account established for us.

Throughout our engagement we have learned about some common themes and concerns which mostly point to a community desire for police to help enforce quality of life matters. Among the most common values that emerged around safety were mutual support, community trust, respect, unity, inclusion, compassion, and empathy.

The Task Force held several meetings over the course of late July and August to develop and then fine-tune plans for use of the funds set aside by the Mayor and city council to hire one or more consultants to assist the Task Force with its work. In determining what forms of consulting would be most helpful to the group, we were able to gain a sense of the leading issues on the agenda of police reform and also to understand some of the challenges that lie ahead in terms of working with state and local unions towards common goals. Additionally, in considering our goal of centering structural racism eradication, we gained a sense of the possibilities for identifying the different levels of analysis that are involved in creating meaningful organizational change.

Working closely with Assistant City Solicitor Jennifer Pucci to craft an RFP, we arrived at a consensus on three primary qualifications for the ideal consultant(s): (1) substantial experience working with or for law enforcement agencies; (2) expertise in the issues associated with systemic racism; and (3) demonstrated ability to advise complex organizations through periods of restructuring and/or organizational change, preferably in the public sector. We also agreed that the ideal consultant would have the ability to draft a report summarizing the Task Force's recommendations to the Mayor by the deadline envisioned in our charge. An RFP reflecting these comparative evaluation criteria is now undergoing review by the Mayor's Office and Purchasing Department and will shortly be posted on the City's website.

In the coming weeks, the task force plans to do a close exploration of the Tim Duncan case, continue to engage the community in additional fora, continue to learn from members of the NPD through dialogue and presentations, review relevant documents and meet on a regular basis. The task force is grateful to the city hall staff who have provided invaluable assistance throughout this process.