

City of Richmond - Reimagining Public Safety Community Task Force
Meeting held via Zoom: https://richmond.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=38

MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021, 5:30 PM

**video recording available*

I. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL - AGENDA REVIEW

Meeting called to order by Johann Fragd at 5:33 PM.

PRESENT: M. Cantú, L. Chacon, D. Gosney, R. Joseph, K. Killian-Lobos, A. Lee, M. Njissang, J. Schlemmer, D. Small, A. Soto, B. Therriault, T. Walker, L. Whitmore

ABSENT: E. Chacon, D. Joseph, J. Lee, S. Leslie, L. Mangels, N. Syon, D. Tucker, B.K. Williams

II. MEETING PROCEDURES

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

No written or oral public comment was submitted or made.

IV. STAFF REPORTS

1. Johann Fragd asked the Task Force to continue outreach for the next Community Round Table Conversation Series on Police Policies and Alternative Methods on Thursday, March 18, 2021.
- 2.

V. PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSIONS, & ACTION ITEMS

3. [Presentation by RPD - General Budget](#) - Police Chief Bisa French, Police Captain Timothy Simmons, Steven Linderman, Louie Tirona, Bert Young
 - a. Member Comments
 - i. D. Gosney asked why the police department just cannot provide the services that that many of us have come to expect. He brought up a recent event from January where unsheltered people came into his yard and stole \$2,500's worth of tools. He further added that people are disheartened to report the crimes and data becomes skewed. He raised concern for more police officers to be able to get stolen items back.
 1. Police Chief French mentioned it was a common belief in Richmond. She stated people go online and write a police report, but believe they are not capturing the true crime numbers due to the process.
 - ii. A. Soto asked about questions about plans for obtaining dash cams, the shredding of documents and if documents are back up electronically, a \$300,000 contribution to RPAL but not places like RYSE, funding for festivals, and presence of police and no alcohol at the Cinco de Mayo Festival and lack of presence of police and but alcohol at the Pt. Richmond Music Festival.
 1. Police Chief French clarified RPAL was previously fully funded by the RPD and then became a 501(c)3 organization and established the \$300,000 in annual funding. She also mentioned that they have previously funded RYSE. She added that the shredding of documents has been backed up. She is looking into the cost of outfitting police vehicles with dash cams. PD spends about \$500,000 in festivals typically. She also acknowledged the discrepancy of the presence of police at some music festivals. She

also said that Cinco de Mayo was planned by community members. J. Schlemmer added that the Pt. Richmond music festival people apply for an ABC alcohol permit.

A. Soto added that the Cinco de Mayo festival used to sell alcohol when it was located at the Civic Center plaza.

- iii. D. Small asked what are the things that are currently being done by law enforcement that could be done better by other groups by other agencies. She highlighted the number of mental health calls to RPD. She said this is an issue about allocating resources in a way that allows our PD to meet the needs. The City Council voted to establish this task force and gave us the charge to come up with ways to reallocate money that would be less reliant on law enforcement and have us be more service oriented. She urged everyone to think differently that reducing police is not going to combat the community. She wants to talk about ways to reallocate money that would improve the effectiveness of the police and address some of the community concerns that led to the formation of the task force.
 1. Police Chief French stated she disagreed on some points. She is providing information on where they are using their funding at this time and impacts of reallocation. She wants all of the same things called but the budget has been significantly reduced over the last five plus years but also wants to have better services. D. Small stated that cities have become accustomed to having large police budgets. She said the charge was to make those recommendations to be allocations. Police Chief French said that they cannot cut from the police department and not have anything in place to replace it but they can find other funding within the city to put programs into place and then slowly reduce the police department.
- iv. R. Joseph asked about the number of frozen PD positions. Police Chief French responded that 34 positions were frozen. R. Joseph followed up with clarifying questions on allocations. Police Chief French clarified some more. R. Joseph asked about equipment costs and gear costs. He also asked why PD pays for animal control services and Police Chief French stated it was a mandated cost from the County.
- v. J. Schlemmer stated that not everyone in the city has the same opinions on reallocation of funds and cautioned against assumptions and agrees some things can be done outside of the PD. He also added about providing customer service as a PD as a balancing act. It is a huge lift to accomplish.
- vi. D. Small said she only considers what is told in group and charge from the City Council.
- vii. L. Chacon highlighted the need from community members to be more involved in the Task Force.
- viii. M. Milam talked about objectives and to consider those that are not police-oriented such as her neighbor-to-neighbor disputes in crime prevention. She mentioned neighborhood conflict resolution as an example. She believes that a balance can be found without calling the police for everything.
- ix. B. Therriault asked if the department was cut by 20% what would that look like. Police Chief French said it would cut 60 police officers. He asked about private requests for bids on private animal control services. Chief French replied that cities doing their own animal control is hard but will look at partnering with other cities or private foundations. She added that it also involved dealing with dead animal carcasses. He also stated that the Cinco de Mayo festival is a big festival and alcohol permits depend on the organizers. He said that it is

difficult to do services and think about reductions. He said the issue has been politicized by politicians and that they put the blame on the Police Department. It is a difficult challenge to maintain services.

- x. LaShonda White suggested the Task Force consider applying for the Measure X commission with 17 members and \$80 million in funding. She also stated some of this county funding will go to mental health services and other types that will flow into Richmond.
- xi. R. Joseph disagreed that the group thinks reallocation will reduce services but instead will just move it. He said police officers do things at a high price point and some programs will do it at a lower price point for the community. He added that they have been losing officers since 2015 but, except for this year, crime has gone down with that reduction of police officers. He said that he wants to find a more Community focus for certain things like mental health and homelessness, and youth services.
- xii. J. Schlemmer added about a mental health care call center that Dublin and Livermore have created and Richmond should consider similar ideas. He reiterated that they need to figure out the status of the old pension tax fund and it is possibly bringing in \$20 million a year. He wants to consider thinking outside of the box.
- xiii. J. Nantell wanted to clarify about the Measure X funds and COVID-19 funds. L. White clarified it was \$80 million and that the COVID-19 funds are about \$20.8 million. First half is available and second half is available 6 months later.
- xiv. Capt. Simmons added that the City utilized freezing positions so there was actually no money to reallocate for any new services. There is no general public safety budget that covers all of public safety in the city of Richmond. There is the police department budget and there is the fire department budget.
- xv. J. Schlemmer added that one of the other ways that previous administrations dealt with budget deficits and closing the gap was reducing the amount of equipment that was due to be replaced specifically like police cars.
- xvi. Police Chief French added that it is budget time and they are looking at ways to possibly reduce their budget in consideration for other City departments.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. La'Tanya Dandie asked about why police officers are still needed for mental health calls. She mentioned an incident she had with a community member. She called for County mental health services and drove away until a police officer arrived.
2. Jan Mignone stated that most County mental health funds go to East County and that it should be redirected to West County. She is applying for the Measure X board to help.
3. Helen Burks requested for more accessibility on budget line items. She asked the Police Chief French what programs she would like to see supplemented.
4. Phone Caller Edith commented on adhering to the core values of the purpose of this body and not to pin up against people who are trying to clarify their opinions. But agrees that the budget needs to be looked at.
5. Angelica Delgado commented on the belief that the community would be left without resources with reallocation. She wants to challenge that and stated there is a presentation by a community group sharing different types of resources that already are doing this type of work.

VII. MEMBER COMMENTS

1. A. Soto thanked public commenters Angelica Delgado and Edith and D. Small for speaking their mind and encourages others to do so. They have a charge to do.
2. R. Joseph asked about receiving a more detailed line-by-line budget item. Police Chief French replied that the Task Force received one. J. Nantell said they possibly have one but provided the adopted budget. Police Chief French said that they will work with their accountant to get one.
3. M. Cantú asked about an itemized budget for the last 5-20 years if available to understand the police budget more and asked the Police Chief to attend the Smart Budget sub committee meeting.
4. D. Small mentioned that there were presentations made by community groups working on alternative programs and services that should be augmented to address the needs that they are talking about. She does not want to continue police involvement for which there are no alternative services in place. She reminded the Task Force at a previous meeting the Budget Committee made a suggestion around a funding formula that was not reliant on reallocating money from police, but that made suggestions for other potential sources of city funding.
5. B. Therriault mentioned the savings from County animal services if they were to discontinue that. He wants people to say outright the number of positions they want to be reduced. The County does not provide Richmond its fair share of services.
6. A. Soto mentioned an event next Thursday, March 18 Communities for a Better Environment and Asian Pacific Environmental Network and the Richmond Our Power Coalition are hosting a town hall meeting on decommissioning the Chevron refinery and other details involved. He mentioned another event Monday at 9:00 A.M. with the Stationary Source committee of the Bay Area Quality Management District about equipment on the catalytic cracker units of the refineries.

VIII. ACTION ITEM RECAP

1. Outreach for final two Community Round Table Conversation Series on March 18, 2021 and April 15, 2021.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Johann Fragd at 7:28 P.M.

X. SCHEDULED MEETINGS

Community Round Table Conversation Series - Police Policies and Alternative Methods - Thursday, March 18, 2021 at 6:00 PM via Zoom

Reimagining Public Safety Community Task Force Regular Meeting - Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at 5:30 PM via Zoom.