

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

MINUTES*
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 2021, 5:30 PM

**video recording and meeting transcript available*

I. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL - AGENDA REVIEW

Meeting called to order by Johann Fragd at 5:35 P.M.

PRESENT: H. Burks, M. Cantú, E. Chacon, L. Chacon, D. Gosney, D. Joseph, R. Joseph, K. Kilian-Lobos, A. Lee, L. Mangels, M. Njissang, J. Schlemmer, D. Small, A. Soto, B. Therriault, D. Tucker, T. Walker, L. Whitmore, B.K. Williams

ABSENT: J. Lee, N. Syon

II. MEETING PROCEDURES

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were 7 emailed public comments (ATTACHMENT A) and six (6) speakers.

1. Erin Wheeler emailed in support of the proposal of reallocating police funds towards public safety initiatives. They highlight personal experiences in youth programming. They want investment in the community instead of the police.
2. Michelle Bolanos emailed to express concern over the large budget of the police department due to the 2016 sexual case with a young woman. She compared police salaries to teacher salaries and argued for better compensation. She is in support to reallocate police.
3. Stephanie Figueroa emailed about her experiences in high school with school resource officers and her feeling unsafe. She highlighted the 2016 sexual exploitation of an 18-year-old sex worker connected to the Richmond Police Department.
4. Yenny Garcia noted her support for the Smart Budget and Resource Allocations subgroup proposal.
5. Sara Cantor noted her concern with Jim Nantell's discussion to postpone a vote on recommendations to push to the City Council. She wants it to be scheduled for discussion.
6. Cerita Dowdry spoke about her support of reducing the police budget. She highlighted some resources she would like for her daughter and housing for the community.
7. Harrison Blatt spoke in support of reallocating the police budget. He mentioned it is a system rooted in white supremacy and releases violence in the community and that they need to reimagine public safety.
8. Yvonne Marroquin commented on her support for reallocating police funds. She mentioned a lot of root causes would be addressed by reallocating these funds.
9. Elsa Stevens appreciates the police but agrees they need a Miles Hall type of response. Police are not qualified to deal with mental health calls and there is a need to reallocate funds to do this.

IV. STAFF REPORTS

1. Johann Fragd reminded the Task Force on not using the chat feature on the Zoom platform. She also discussed in more detail about the status and ability of voting on the recommendations and Brown Act concerns that were brought up during the current meeting. Jim Nantell provided clarifying information. Discussion ensued.

V. PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSIONS, & ACTION ITEMS

1. Sub-Group Committee Reports and Recommendation Discussions

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2. A motion was made to vote on all subgroup proposals separately and if changes are made with the proposals in the future, those changes will be voted on then by M. Cantú; seconded by A. Soto; approved by the following vote:

Ayes: H. Burks, M. Cantú, E. Chacon, L. Chacon, D. Joseph, R. Joseph, K. Kilian-Lobos, A. Lee, L. Mangels, M. Njissang, J. Schlemmer, D. Small, A. Soto, B. Therriault, T. Walker, B.K. Williams

Noes: D. Gosney, D. Tucker, L. Whitmore

Abstain:

Absent:, J. Lee, N. Syon

Public Comment:

There were four (4) speakers.

1. Elsa Stevens said to not give in to obstructionists and wants the Task Force to vote.
2. Harrison Blatt urged the Task Force to move on the motion made.
3. Denny commented that materials were transparent to her.
4. Francisco Andres Salas Tamayo encouraged the Task Force to vote yes on the motion and that the work of the Task Force has been transparent.

a) Accountability as Safety

An update of the subgroup's [recommendation](#) was provided by subgroup member L. Whitmore. Discussion ensued.

Public Comment:

There were four (4) speakers

1. Jeff Kilbreth spoke about the overtime reimbursement issue for police services. He believes the City should not reimburse overtime funds automatically to the police department versus trainings.
2. Elsa Stevens spoke in support of this proposal and its recommendations and would reflect what was discussed at the last meeting.
3. Fern expressed concern about the conformity to the Brown Act and the changes in poll voting, documents not being available to the public, and transparency issues.
4. Sara Cantor encouraged the Task Force to change existing training and reduce gun training with other de-escalation training. She mentioned that AB988 support was already given by the Mayor.

A motion was made to accept these recommendations by A. Soto; seconded by B. Therriault; the motion failed on the floor by the following vote:

Ayes: D. Joseph, J. Schlemmer

Noes: H. Burks, M. Cantú, E. Chacon, L. Chacon, R. Joseph, K. Kilian-Lobos, A. Lee, L. Mangels, M. Njissang, D. Small, A. Soto, T. Walker, L. Whitmore, B.K. Williams

Abstain: D. Gosney, B. Therriault, D. Tucker

Absent:, J. Lee, N. Syon

b) Health & Safety

An update was provided by subgroup member M. Njissang on their [public safety initiatives recommendations](#). Discussion ensued.

Public Comment:

There were twelve (12) speakers.

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1. Elsa Stevens echoed a previous comment by H. Burks and hopes it gets yes votes here but also with the City Council.
2. Jeff Kilbreth also echoed what the previous two speakers said. It is the heart of the whole issue and commended the subgroup for their work. The police department has to help decide with how to reallocate funds based on the stimulus funds or department funds.
3. Carlos Lemus is proud to see these recommendations and noted other similar Task Force groups have more progress. He noted that the City of Richmond gets caught up in budget deficits. The City and County need to address these social problems.
4. Sadie Egan strongly urged that these recommendations be approved. She hopes to have the investment in the community as the police department is not serving them.
5. Jamie McBean is offering his full support for these programs to reimagine public safety. He noted how much progress is being made in Richmond. He would like to see this come to life.
6. Sara Cantor wanted to express support for all three of these recommendations. She noted that it cannot be one department to do all of the work and that it is a communal effort.
7. Harrison Blatt expressed strong support for these proposals. He commented that this is the right way to spend money in the name of public safety and the right programs to undo the web of oppression of oppression and violence by the police department.
8. Francisco Andres Salas Tamayo wrote a poem about resources in the community, violence in the community, social inequality and urged the Task Force to vote yes on the recommendations.
9. Rebecca Martinez commented on her support for these three recommendations. She commented on the County's inadequate ability on mental health calls. She highlighted a recent experience of a failed mental health crisis.
10. Patricia Aguilar is happy to see how advanced they are in these issues but has not heard about removing police from the schools and asked if that was considered in their recommendations.
11. Raquel gave props to Luis and Eddy Chacon for their support in their workshops. The nation has been focused on punishment and its time for a new step forward in a direction and abolishing police in general.
12. Yesenia Martinez wondered why anyone would want to work for the City of Richmond. She noted that people do not appreciate their police. She asked about whether they have heard about the blue flu.

A motion was made to adopt these recommendations by A. Soto; seconded by H. Burks; approved by the following vote:

Ayes: H. Burks, M. Cantú, E. Chacon, L. Chacon, R. Joseph, K. Kilian-Lobos, A. Lee, L. Mangels, M. Njissang, J. Schlemmer, D. Small, A. Soto, B. Therriault, T. Walker, L. Whitmore, B.K. Williams

Noes: D. Gosney

Abstain:

Absent: D. Joseph, J. Lee, N. Syon, D. Tucker

c) Community Based Solutions

An update of recommendations was provided by subgroup member E. Chacon. These [recommendations](#) are the YouthWORKS proposal and the Traffic Violation Protocols and Procedures proposal. Discussion ensued.

Public Comment:

There were seven (7) speakers.

1. Harrison Blatt spoke in favor of the proposal and appreciates justice and equity. He noted it is a privilege when the police when someone feels safe. He noted an illegal strike known as a 'blue flu' is not in the best interest of the community.

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2. Jovanka Beckles noted things have been pulling and tugging at pride and commended the Task Force for their work. She urged the Task Force to vote in favor of these proposals.
3. Sadie Egan puts her full support behind these proposals. She shed light on the need of youth employment to reduce juvenile rates.
4. Evelyn Perez wanted to say thank you for the hours that have gone into this. She noted it is important to support our youth and community so that they can succeed.
5. Stephanie Diaz commented that youth are our future and noted that this proposal puts that at the forefront. She noted also the second proposal can prevent people being murdered by the police.
6. Jeff Kilbreth noted this is a great proposal and commended its boldness and seriousness. He agreed that jobs are needed for 1,000 kids. The \$2.2 million needed for this program can be raised through grants and other sources and does not need to be a general fund issue.
7. Denny Khamphanthong expressed support for these proposals. He highlighted work he has done with the SPYC program. He also highlighted negative personal experiences with traffic stop protocols.

A motion was made to adopt both the YouthWORKS and the Traffic Violation Protocols and Procedures recommendations by T. Walker; seconded by A. Soto; approved by the following vote:

Ayes: H. Burks, M. Cantú, E. Chacon, L. Chacon, R. Joseph, K. Kilian-Lobos, A. Lee, L. Mangels, M. Njissang, D. Small, A. Soto, T. Walker, L. Whitmore, B.K. Williams

Noes: D. Gosney, J. Schlemmer

Abstain: B. Therriault

Absent: D. Joseph, J. Lee, N. Syon, D. Tucker

d) Smart Budget & Resource Allocations

An update of the subgroup's [recommendation](#) was provided by subgroup member M. Cantú on a Richmond Police Department budget analysis and reallocation proposal. Discussion ensued.

Public Comment:

There were eighteen (18) speakers.

1. Elsa Stevens is a big fan of the police and hopes the current police chief is not run out. This proposal will improve quality of life for everyone, it will save lives, reduce overtime costs, prevent officer burnout, reduce lawsuits, and improve officer health
2. Shawn Dunning made a plea to consider Police Chief Bisa French as a unique opportunity and to consider the impact of reducing her budget. She shares their values and true partnership would look different. He supports their values but finds their methodology flawed.
3. Emily Ross thanked the Task Force for their work on the budget reallocations and sources and supports the proposal to seek reallocations from the Police department. There are 82 officers making more than \$300,000 so it makes for RPD to be the funding source
4. Sebastian Dalvin wants to reallocate these funds and wants to move away from traditional ideas from policing. This is more community service driven work. He thinks it will go away with overtime pay and will have better equipped people to deal with mental health calls.
5. Audrey Shields supports this proposal and believes they need to lead with what they believe.
6. Jeff Kilbreth thinks they need to break it down and let the Police Chief get comfortable with it and start working with it. He believes the changes will reduce the need for officers and believes there is too much management within the Police Department. The RPOA drives overtime. He wants them to look into everything more.

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7. Sadie Egan fully supports reinvesting funds into community activities. She expressed concern with the white men of the group and the charge of the Task Force and no concern for the high salaries for police with little education and training. She urged the Task Force to vote yes.
8. Jocelyn commented that people in Richmond already do not feel safe and it is the police that make them feel unsafe and fully supports this proposal.
9. Nancy Peace is concerned. She acknowledges that change is scary and hard but is needed to get to the next level. They may not have the detailed answers but agree with R. Joseph that they need to figure it out. She also expressed support for this proposal and removing officers from schools.
10. Stephanie Diaz discussed what violence means and how it is Chevron being in our backyard and not loitering. She noted the education and salary differences between teachers and police officers. She agrees that these funds need to be taken from the police.
11. Ozmar Huerta noted that police officers are public servants and work for us. He noted Police Chief French's \$260,000+ salary and how that means she should work for them and adapt to them. There is heavy support for folks who feel safe with the people but not those who feel unsafe with the police. There is a focus on utilities and not the lives of the people. It is not funds taken from the police but funds going towards organizations and the community. He expressed strong support for this proposal.
12. Charles Woodfork noted it only has been eight months of work with this proposal and how he has been waiting for something like this. Why poke holes when it has been 300/400 years of a system of policing that has failed people. They need to address the root of the problem that has not been addressed successfully.
13. Jamie McBean wants to push back on the notion of zero sum. When people in your community feel safer, it is not a loss but a gain. It is a renewed commitment to make people's lives better. He hopes it is supported.
14. Sara Cantor noted repeat concerns about calls when police are needed. She commented that they arrive after the harm has happened. She commented on the RPOA MOU, staffing requirements, and a provision that allows them to negotiate at any time.
15. Marina Zubareva emailed in support of funding programs that will keep citizens safe, healthy, and alive. This is not what policing does. She supports the community crisis program and wants to invest in youth and safe sources for unhoused citizens. She also supports addressing traffic protocols that kill our people. She supports investing in citizens and future, not a system that allows oppression and murder.
16. Chandra Davies emailed in support of this proposal. Delegation is important and would allow a better distribution of responsibilities and funds and mentioned that programs like SOS, ONS, and YouthWorks are oriented around solutions and saves lives. There is distrust with police and having specific people trained in a health crisis would help.
17. Sadie Egan emailed in full support of this proposal to reduce RPD by 25 officers and wants the Task Force to vote yes as these programs have reduced crime, poverty, impacts of systemic racism. RPD is not the most effective to deal with the issues they deal with. No amount of training will make them capable of handling these situations. We must restructure our public systems and recreate systems that support and care for people.
18. Jessica Cortes discussed the killing of Ma'Khia Bryant as a reason to reallocate funds from our police department to the community. We do not need more policing.

A motion was made to adopt both this recommendation by A. Soto; seconded by L. Chacon; approved by the following vote:

Ayes: H. Burks, M. Cantú, E. Chacon, L. Chacon, R. Joseph, K. Kilian-Lobos, A. Lee, L. Mangels, D. Small, A. Soto, T. Walker, B.K. Williams

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Noes: D. Gosney, J. Schlemmer

Abstain: B. Therriault, L. Whitmore

Absent: D. Joseph, J. Lee, M. Njissang, N. Syon, D. Tucker

VI. ACTION ITEM RECAP

1. Johann Fragd discussed information on packaging recommendations and materials from subgroups for presentation to the City Council. Jim Nantell provided input on agenda scheduling. Discussion ensued. The Task Force agreed to receive a report from Jim Nantell relative to best date options for presenting recommendations during a special meeting to the Richmond City Council and to discuss the possibility and strategy for a term limit extension of the Task Force for the April 28, 2021 meeting.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made at 7:26 P.M. to extend the meeting until 8:00 P.M. by M. Njissang; seconded by L. Chacon; approved by the following vote:

Ayes: H. Burks, M. Cantú, E. Chacon, L. Chacon, D. Joseph, R. Joseph, K. Kilian-Lobos, A. Lee, L. Mangels, M. Njissang, J. Schlemmer, D. Small, A. Soto, B. Therriault, T. Walker, L. Whitmore, B.K. Williams

Noes: D. Gosney, D. Tucker

Abstain:

Absent: J. Lee, N. Syon

A motion was made at 7:54 P.M. to extend the meeting until all the subgroup presentations are completed by L. Chacon; seconded by D. Small; approved by the following vote:

Ayes: H. Burks, M. Cantú, E. Chacon, L. Chacon, D. Joseph, R. Joseph, K. Kilian-Lobos, A. Lee, L. Mangels, M. Njissang, J. Schlemmer, D. Small, A. Soto, B. Therriault, T. Walker, L. Whitmore, B.K. Williams

Noes:

Abstain: D. Gosney

Absent: J. Lee, N. Syon, D. Tucker

A motion was made at 9:36 P.M. to extend the meeting by 15 minutes by D. Small; seconded by L. Chacon; approved by the following vote:

Ayes: H. Burks, M. Cantú, E. Chacon, L. Chacon, R. Joseph, K. Kilian-Lobos, A. Lee, L. Mangels, D. Small, A. Soto, B. Therriault, T. Walker, L. Whitmore, B.K. Williams

Noes: D. Gosney, J. Schlemmer

Abstain:

Absent: D. Joseph, J. Lee, M. Njissang, N. Syon, D. Tucker

A motion was made at 9:52 P.M. to extend the meeting until 10:00 P.M. by L. Chacon; seconded by M. Cantú; approved by the following vote:

Ayes: M. Cantú, E. Chacon, L. Chacon, D. Gosney, R. Joseph, K. Kilian-Lobos, A. Lee, L. Mangels, D. Small, A. Soto, B. Therriault, T. Walker, L. Whitmore, B.K. Williams

Noes: J. Schlemmer

Abstain: H. Burks

Absent: D. Joseph, J. Lee, M. Njissang, N. Syon, D. Tucker

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 P.M.

ATTACHMENT A

From: Stephanie Diaz Figueroa <sodiazfigueroa@ucdavis.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 3:01 PM
To: Recreation
Subject: Public Comments

When I was a highschool student at Richmond High I remember not feeling safe in a place that was meant to be a safe space. i didn't feel safe being RPD and the Student resource officers would target my Black and Brown friends, particularly men. I remember my first week of Highschool I witnessed an officer taze a Black student during lunch for fighting. My friends would get searched simply because they looked "suspicious" My girl friends and I felt very weird and uncomfortable when SROs or police officers would try to talk us because we knew the story of RPD's involvement in the sexual exploitation of an 18 y/o sex worker. Police DO NOT make me feel safe and in fact create fear in my community.

From: Michelle Bolanos <bolanosmichelle1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 2:58 PM
To: Recreation
Subject: Public Comments

Hello,

As a longtime Richmond resident, I am writing to express my concern over the large budget that is being allocated to the Richmond Police Department. After the disturbing 2016 case that involved officers in the sexual exploitation of an 18 year old, I found myself questioning my trust in the departments ability to hold their officers accountable and in their ability to keep our most vulnerable safe. I find it concerning that since the incident, four of the officers involved are still employed with abundant salaries. Their salaries are a stark contrast to those of our educators who often go above and beyond to see their students succeed, but are not being compensated in a way they deserve.

It is time to reallocate the RPD budget into community services and education. Community services are a necessary component in ensuring the safety for our residents and they are far too often left behind as an afterthought. It is time to service our community rather than police it.

Thank you for your consideration,
Michelle Bolanos

From: Marina Zubareva <marinavzubareva@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 1:15 PM
To: Recreation
Subject: Public comments line item 5

Good evening,

I am Marina Zubareva - a Richmond resident, teacher, wife and mother. I strongly believe that we **MUST** fund programs that will keep our citizens safe, healthy and **ALIVE**.

It is crystal clear that this is **NOT** what police are trained for. Our money and time should go to **gun and violence prevention** through the office of neighborhood safety. We must invest into the **Community Crisis Response** programs so our citizens can receive the kind of professional help that our taxes pay for. We must invest in our **youth** and in **safe spaces for our unhorsed citizens**.

Finally, we **MUST** address the racial disparities in **traffic violations**. Not only do these affects driving records and chip away at income - **they literally get our citizens killed**. Our current system which we pay for is **NOT** keeping **ANYONE** but the system itself safe.

It is time to invest in our citizens and our future - **NOT** the systems that allow oppression and murder.

Marina Zubareva

Sent from my iPhone

From: Chandra Davies <chandradavies00@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 12:37 PM
To: Recreation
Subject: Public Comments - Agenda Item 5

Hello,

My name is Chandra Davies. I support the proposed budget reallocation from RDP to community-based organizations.

Delegation is an important part of success in any goal involving more than one person. This proposed budget would allow a more practical and manageable distribution of responsibilities and the necessary funds to uphold those responsibilities.

Organizations like SOS!, ONS, and Youthworks are focused on prevention-oriented solutions, which is more cost-effective in the long run— not to mention the trauma, injury, and even lives that they save.

There is already a lot of distrust between members of the community and the police. Having community responders to tend to appropriate crises would help people feel safer, which on its own is a key step in de-escalation.

It would be wrong to knowingly ignore realistic solutions to current problems, knowing that we could have a team of people specifically and thoroughly trained to handle certain situations to keep our community members safe.

Thank you,
Chandra Davies

From: Sadie Egan <sadierubye@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 12:32 PM
To: Recreation
Subject: Public Comments Line Item 5

Hello,

My name is Sadie and I grew up in Richmond and am now raising my family here. First I want to thank the task force for your dedicated work towards reimagining community safety. I have been so inspired and hopeful listening to the vast expertise and life experiences that have been brought to the table.

I am in full support of the proposals to cut RPD by 25 FTE to fund programs that support our neighbors and children in need, please vote yes to present these to the city council. These programs have been proven to reduce crime, poverty and the impacts of systemic racism. RPD is NOT the most effective or economic agency to manage the majority of the things they are tasked with. Police officers do not have the education, life experience, or skillset to effectively help people struggling with mental health, drug addiction, housing, poverty, conflict management, etc. No amount of training will make a police officer capable in these areas and we cannot continue to pay large salaries for people to do jobs they are not equipped, trained or interested in doing. Police do not reduce crime, this has been shown in countless studies, including the data right here in Richmond. We must restructure our public support systems and we must do it now. This is long overdue and our Black and brown community members are paying the price every day.

I urge us to have the courage to radically reimagine what safety means in Richmond. We need to create systems that support and care for people, not wait until the problem is so bad that violence, crime, and law enforcement are the only responses.

Thank you

From: Jessica Cortes <jessica5698@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 12:21 PM
To: Recreation
Subject: Public Comment Line Item 5

The killing of Ma'Khia Bryant yesterday is the exact reason we need to reallocate funds from the police department back into our community. Richmond residents need more support, not more policing.

Thank you,

Jessica Cortes, Richmond resident for 20+ years

From: Erin McCluskey Wheeler <erinmccluskeywheeler@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 11:29 AM
To: Recreation
Subject: Public Comments - Agenda Item 5

I am writing in support of the proposal put forward by the Richmond Public Safety Task Force to reallocate funds from the Richmond Police Department's budget towards public safety initiatives. My family and I have lived in Richmond for 41 years and I have benefited from the Youthworks program which allowed me to be gainfully employed during high school. I believe it is important to reallocate funds towards education, employment, housing, and gun violence prevention. It is vital that we spend money on creating Community Crisis Response Programs for people in need of mental health assistance. We spend far too much on our Police in the City of Richmond and I want to see my tax dollars going towards early intervention work in education, employment, and housing. I want investment in our communities rather than spending money policing and criminalizing the violence that is a result of the lack of investment in our community. Please vote yes to reallocate funds from the Richmond Police Department back into our communities.

Thank you for you time,
Erin McCluskey
5822 Santa Cruz Ave, Richmond