

Public Safety Committee Minutes
February 2, 2021– 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman John Lant; Committee Members Preston Allen, Eric Connolly, Dick Lucia, Jean Raymond, Jon Schopf, Mike Smith; Supervisors Darren O'Connor, Bill Peck, Tom Richardson and Chairman of the Board Todd Kusnierz; Steve Bulger, Matt Rose, Audra Hedden, County Administrator; Hugh Burke, Michael Hartnett, County Attorney; Jason Kemper, Planning; Michael Zurlo, Richard Castle, Sheriff; Michael Prezioso, Mental Health & Addiction; Karen Heggen, District Attorney; Carl Zeilman, Emergency Services; Andrew Blumenberg, Public Defender.

Chairman Lant called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Lucia, the minutes of the January 12, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Schopf, seconded by Mr. Allen, to authorize an agreement with the Prevention Council of Saratoga County for a Certified Peer Recovery Advocate to be assigned to the Saratoga County Correctional Facility at a cost not to exceed \$35,000 for the 2021 calendar year. Unanimous.

Mr. Zurlo said that funding is in the budget for this item. Over the past several years, we have had this advocate in the jail. He works 35 hours a week and is provided by the Prevention Council. He works with inmates that come in that are having drug abuse problems. The program has worked tremendously over the last couple of years.

A motion was made by Mrs. Raymond, seconded by Mr. Smith, to authorize an Agreement with the Town of Wilton for specialized Law Enforcement. The Motion Passed. Mr. Lant recused himself from voting.

Mr. Zurlo said that this is a three year contract. The contract indicates that it will be an 8-4, Monday through Friday service for the Town of Wilton. The first year's cost is \$74,003.75 and increases 2% annually after that for the remaining two years of the contract.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mrs. Raymond, to introduce the Executive Order 203 Group Report and scheduling a public comment period for community feedback on the report/plan prior to adoption or ratification of the plan by Resolution of the Board of Supervisors. Unanimous.

Dr. Prezioso gave an overview of the process that the Executive Order 203 Compliance Group engaged in, how they went about satisfying the requirements of the order and then gave a brief overview on some of the recommendations that will be presented for the Board's consideration. In June 2020 Executive Order 203 The New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative was issued by Governor Cuomo. It required a review of policy, procedure and

practice in order to foster trust and address potential racial biases and disproportionate policing in communities of color. It directed consultation among a group of identified stakeholders with a charge of developing recommendations, subject to public comments, and then ultimately adoption by the local legislative body by April 1st 2021. The Compliance Group was appointed in October 2020. The organizational meeting was held in October 2020. Shortly after appointments, Sheriff, Dr. Prezioso, and Vice Chair Under Sheriff Rick Castle were elected at that time. The group talked about the methods that could be utilized to engage the community, recognizing that that was part of the tentative Governor's order, and was decided that a multi-dimensional approach would be adopted to collecting and engaging the community, collecting information. This would include surveys, written comments, soliciting direct feedback from groups and individuals with opportunities for questions to be asked and discussion. Part of the process was in reference to the New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative workbook and that was published by the Governor's office, concurrent with the issuing of Executive Order 203. Recognition of the intent to have transparency, meeting notes were taken for each of the meetings and were published on the website across all of the groups meetings with members of the public. A public call in line was established to allow members of the public to listen in, and Zoom sessions were also held. Between November 4 and January 7 more than 1,000 invitations were extended to various community groups, individuals and other stakeholders to provide input into the process. Dr. Prezioso said that this is not an exhaustive list, but just to give a flavor of who participated in that process, along with the members of the group was MLK Saratoga, the Saratoga Immigration Coalition, Saratoga Pride, Saratoga Peace Alliance, All of US, various school districts, faith based communities, law enforcement and human services providers. Feedback was received, 237 survey responses and 11 emails. The surveys evolved with feedback that the group received during the course of its meetings with the public. There was constructive feedback offered regarding the reading level of the survey, its complexity, and as a result, the survey group, as well as the compliance group, modified and had several different versions of the survey to make it more readily accessible by members of the community. Members of the community who participated in this process were also instrumental in helping to reach out to their various networks to engage them and providing feedback to the groups. Some of the discussion topics that were covered included ongoing review of policies and procedures, feedback and discussion around the school resource officer program, discussion of the use of equipment with a militarized appearance. There was considerable discussion of the events of July 30, 2020 in Saratoga Springs. Discussion of the need for increased data collection. Discussion with the deployment of non-law enforcement professionals for example, mental health professionals, discussion about the perceptions of the community of law enforcement, discussion about the increased need for mental health services both at the local and the state level, the need to and possible means of improving communications with the community discussion of bias related education, body camera usage, and the maintenance of accreditation standards. In summary, the recommendations that are included in the report that is being submitted, it was recommended that an advisory committee be explored in order to continue the engagement with the community. This existed prior to the advisory committee, but to continue that engagement. Suggest maintaining compliance with New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program, maintaining policies consistent with the New York State Municipal Police Training Council, recommending review and implementation of training and such topics as diversity and cultural education and elimination of bias. Recommendation to explore the use of body and in-car video programs. Recommending the exploration, the feasibility of a professional standards position to investigate any complaints, review of policy, and generally audit

within the Sheriff's office. Encourage the Sheriff to amend policies to facilitate demographic data collection. Develop a list of resources for the public law enforcement to use in lieu of law enforcement deployments. Recommend the Sheriff continue to incorporate mental health resources to benefit the public and law enforcement. And finally, to explore the deployment of equipment with a militarized appearance, such that public safety can be maintained with the recognition of the potential for causing fear or misunderstanding by members of the public. Dr. Prezioso thanked the Board for their support of the work of this group. Dr. Prezioso thanked members of the committee for their work on this process, and absolutely appreciates the time that was invested by members of the public in participating in meetings, some people attended more than one meeting, and provided feedback, both during the course of those meetings, as well as in written form.

Mr. Lant thanked the group for all of the time that they have put into this effort.

Mr. Kemper asked what the proposed end date of the public comment period would be. Mr. Hartnett said that he would suggest a March 5, 2021 deadline to allow any comments to be circulated to the full Board for consideration. Mr. Hartnett said that they would request the clerk to publish the notice of the public comment period, where the report can be found to get input from the community. Mr. Hartnett said that this is a two-step process. This is advancing the report from this committee to go to the full Board, and then it is the Board's decision to take public comments and whether or not to adopt it whole or modified. Mr. Hartnett said that we need to be cognizant of the April 1st deadline, approval would need to happen at the March meeting.

On a motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Lucia, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board