

Connecticut General Assembly

Police Transparency & Accountability Task Force

Daryl McGraw, Co-Chairperson



c/o Judiciary Committee, Room 2500
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Ct 06106

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 19, 2020
1:00 PM in Room 1B of the LOB

The meeting was called to order at 1:03PM by Chairman, Daryl McGraw

The following task force members were present:

Shafiq Abdussabur, Ken Barone, Chief State's Attorney Richard Colangelo, Rep. Joshua Hall, Chief Thomas Kulhawik, Daryl McGraw, Chief Keith Mello, Hans Rhyhart, Brian Foley for Commissioner James Rovella, Sgt. John Szewczyk, Chief William Wright

Daryl McGraw:

Welcome, introduces everyone

Ken Barone:

States emergency exits, procedure

Daryl McGraw:

Begin with introductions

(All):

Introduce themselves

Daryl McGraw:

Motion to accept minutes

Chief Thomas Kulhawik:

Correction to 2:51PM comment, POST is CLEA accredited

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(All):

Accept last week's meeting minutes

Daryl McGraw:

How are officers trained to deal with those with physical disabilities, mental health issues, as well as minorities?

What is the training process like, how often does it occur?

Community members have reached out asking these questions

Ken Barone:

Reached out to POST to get information on how this process occurs, both for new officers as well as officers being recertified

Goal would be to get them to share this information with task force so they can get an understanding of how this works

Chief Keith Mello:

Can facilitate getting Karen at a meeting to educate task force on this topic

Daryl McGraw:

Is Karen the best person to talk to on this issue?

Chief Keith Mello:

Yes, she is very knowledgeable on training curriculum

Daryl McGraw:

Addresses second goal of task force

Ken Barone:

Discusses his involvement with the Connecticut Racial Profiling Prohibition Project

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Begins PowerPoint presentation on statutory charge of task force, to "review the feasibility of police officers who conduct traffic stops to issue a receipt to each individual being stopped that includes the reason for the stop and records the demographic information of the person being stopped"
Progress has been made on this issue, in 2013, mandating all police agencies to electronically collect and report traffic stop data
States that while there are always going to be discrepancies in reporting, there is little reason to believe this would invalidate data collected thus far on the topic
Gives overview of current system, includes the fact that officers are mandated to fill out all required fields before they can "clear the stop"
Demographic information is already recorded on infraction tickets, as well as entered into CJIS racial profiling database
Addresses several other points of contention with data collection process
Discussion is around 35% of stops that end in verbal warning, as there is no paper trail
Second charge of task force is finding if it is feasible to get officers to issue separate receipts at traffic stops
Unintentional consequences: could substantially increase time of traffic stop, lead officers to do away with verbal warnings, increase amount of tickets issued, require funding from state to reimplement paper/handwritten system at traffic stops for municipalities, challenge officer's perceptions of individuals

Chief Keith Mello:

Good overview of current state of system
Audits are in place for officers and departments
Both by themselves as well as outside groups
Cost is a concern, as is the ability/likelihood to give verbal warnings if this were to change

Ken Barone:

State website would be used for all departments to enter data

Chief Keith Mello:

This would be worthwhile if there was adequate evidence to justify it
Without it, the cost is too great to do so

Daryl McGraw:

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What happens to departments who are shown to discriminate?
Especially if they are consistent in doing so over the years

Ken Barone:

Connecticut uses a system that evaluates through seven different indicators
Then uses "preponderance of the evidence" approach
If a department is demonstrating they are unfairly targeting certain groups, further research is done to prove this
Ask questions about possible causes of skewness in data
Make report, hand it over to department
Report proposes recommendations to department to prevent this from occurring any further
Work with department if they don't show to make changes on their own
Process has worked for all but one department thus far
The state can withhold funding (through OPM) if they do not comply to these changes

Daryl McGraw:

What about "frivolous stops"?
Has had experience with this issue
Would forcing officers to provide receipts at stops prevent these stops from occurring?

Ken Barone:

Is referring to pretextual stops
Says it takes less than 90 seconds for officers to identify a legal reason to pull over cars
Primary goal of motor vehicle enforcement is safety of our roadways
Enforcement rates are the same across races, aside from in the case of uninsured vehicles
Is more of a socioeconomic issue that policing one
Exposure to police is biggest driver to having an impact on crime
Legislature needs to take into consideration unintended consequences of laws put in place

Daryl McGraw:

Any questions or comments in response to that?

Rep. Joshua Hall:

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Is the data departments and outside groups auditing the same?

Chief Keith Mello:

The data is the same
Look at the data that is "transmitted up to the state"

Rep. Joshua Hall:

This is the data transferred up to the Central Infractions Bureau?

Chief Keith Mello:

That's correct
Data is collected through internal systems
In cases like that of consent searches, department pulls officers in to explain why they did what they did and what the justification for it was

Ken Barone:

Explains the data collection process

Chief Keith Mello:

Sometimes officers don't have time to complete stop information, leads to errors
They are reminded to do so

Ken Barone:

Most systems make it so officers cannot move onto next screen on computers until stop information is submitted

(All):

Debate effectiveness of data
Some departments have used Ken's data to improve procedure
Socioeconomic issues may not be captured in this data, however
75% of policemen/women are white, but not by design

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Daryl McGraw:

Both sides provided interesting points

Ken Barone:

Revisit information discussed here at next meeting

Daryl McGraw:

March 11 and March 25, 1PM at LOB are next meeting slots
Possibly Room 2A
Meeting adjourned