

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

AMENDED MEETING MINUTES

Monday, July 28, 2020 at 1:00 pm

Via Zoom

Members Present: Co-Chairperson: Daryl McGraw, Shafiq Abdussabur, Marc Pelka, Chief State's Attorney Richard Colangelo, Steven Cousin, Rep. Joshua Hall, Chief Thomas Kulhawik, Chief Keith Mello, Commissioner James C. Rovella (Brian Foley), Deputy Chief Maggie Silver for Hans Rhynhart, Jonathan Slifka, Sgt. John Szewczyk (Retired), Chief William Wright

Others Present: Rep. Steven Stafstrom, Ken Barone, Andrew Clark, Deb Blanchard

I. Convene meeting and welcome

Meeting Called to Order by Chair McGraw at 1:10pm. Chair McGraw welcomed members and Rep. Stafstrom and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Commissioner Rovella noted that he must leave meeting at 2pm and will be represented by Brian Foley.

II. Review and acceptance of minutes from the 6/30/20 meeting

Chair McGraw asked if members received minutes from the June 30 Task Force Meeting and then asked for a motion to approve minutes. Upon a motion and second, the minutes were approved via voice vote.

III. HB 6004 of the July Special Session & associated changes to the task force charge

Chair McGraw began the conversation by making a statement about Black Lives Matter vs Blue Lives (skin color/culture vs. uniform color). He then asked Ken Barone to brief members on changes to the Task Force per HB6004, which had passed the House during the ongoing special session.

Rep. Stafstrom then offered some comments on the bill, relative to the Task Force. He noted that the CGA needed to act immediately on certain issues, in particular: 1) use of force policy and 2) governmental immunity. The role of Task Force is important, in that it would study both and make recommendation prior their effective dates (April 1, 2021 and July 1, 2021, respectively).

Chief Mello remarked on the use of force provision. POSTC has been examining this issue prior to this legislation and the George Floyd incident. They've looked at many states and found other models to be lacking. POSTC set up a subcommittee on June 16 – members include those involved w/the 21st Century Policing Task Force. They are looking at the entire policy, incorporating best practices and are utilizing the language in the bill to make the policy a national model. The goal is to make citizens and law enforcement safer.

Mr. Abdussabur stated that CT should have a universal use of force policy that focused on the three top reasons that involve use of force: pursuits, motor vehicle stops and stolen vehicles. He suggested that best practices have only brought us to this moment and wanted to make sure that a representative from police patrol officers is on the POSTC subcommittee. He mentioned that the constitutional policing model from Yale was done in Chicago and is not working, so why do it here?

Rep. Hall echoed the sentiments of Mr. Abdussabur. He wanted to make sure the subcommittee had a public voice in the process as well. He thanked Rep. Stafstrom and Sen. Winfield for ensuring all voices were heard in the drafting of HB6004.

Chair McGraw questioned if the Task Force is missing the mark by not addressing leadership more?

Chief Mello responded by indicating the engagement among chiefs is greater than the public would realize and especially so since George Floyd. They are questioning leadership as well and recognizing that all police cultures are equal. He gave an example that some departments have certain educational requirements, while others do not.

Chair McGraw asked if there should be a separate track to become a leader/chief.

Rev. Cousin asked how the Task Force would be able to address the issue of governmental immunity. Chair McGraw responded by stating he believed the logistics subcommittee would handle that issue. Mr. Barone suggested that this

is mainly an insurance issue and that the Task Force could look to the Judiciary Committee chairs for guidance on how to address it. Chief Mello suggested inviting CIRMA – Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency – to speak on the issue. Chief Wright noted that there doesn't appear to be a vibrant market at the time, but that it may come along.

IV. Updates from the subcommittees

a. *Mr. Slifka, Chair, Improving Police Interactions with Disability Community Subcommittee*

i. *The subcommittee has not met yet but is hoping to within a few weeks. He has appointed six additional members and many disability organizations have reached out and are willing to assist with supporting the subcommittee.*

b. *Rep. Hall, Chair, Logistics Subcommittee*

i. *The subcommittee hasn't yet met. First meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday. Members include: CHRO, ACLU, Ken Green, Rev. Selders. They intend to do a deep dive into HB6004 – what needs to be added/amended in the legislation – as well as looking at the Task Force's initial recommendations relative to the bill. He thanked Mr. Barone for his assistance.*

c. *Daryl McGraw, Chair, Public Awareness Subcommittee*

i. *They have met twice so far and have another meeting planned for August 4. It is a diverse membership. More on the subcommittee in the next agenda item.*

V. Discussion regarding upcoming "Community Conversations" logistics i.e. location, dates, etc.

Chair McGraw indicated the Public Awareness subcommittee was looking at the 3 major urban areas in CT for the first community conversations. The first conversation is tentatively scheduled for August 19 (rain date Aug 20). More details will be shared soon. Hartford and Bridgeport would be next. Virtual sessions are being planned as well.

VI. Announcement of time and date of next meeting.

It was agreed that the full Task Force would meet on the last Tuesday of every month at 1pm. Next meetings are August 25 and Sept 29.

VII. Adjournment

Upon a motion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:18pm.