

STATE OF KANSAS)
WYANDOTTE COUNTY)) SS
CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KS)

SPECIAL SESSION, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2020

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Session, Thursday, December 3, 2020, with ten members present online. Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Townsend, Commissioner First District; McKiernan, Commissioner Second District; Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; Johnson, Commissioner Fourth District; Markley, Commissioner Sixth District; Walters, Commissioner Seventh District; Philbrook, Commissioner Eighth District; and Alvey, Mayor/CEO presiding. Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; was absent. The following officials were also in attendance: Doug Bach, County Administrator; Bridgette Cobbins, Unified Government Clerk; Gordon Criswell, Melissa Sieben, Emerick Cross, and Alan Howze; Assistant County Administrator's; Angela Lawson, Deputy Chief Counsel; Sheriff Donald Ash, Interim Chief Michael York, Police Department; and Ana Quimby, Mayor's Office.

MAYOR ALVEY said before I call the meeting to order, I want to announce that due to COVID-19, individuals are attending remotely. All participants joining by phone should mute their phones when not speaking to avoid background noise. During the meeting, please make sure that you announce yourself by name and title every time you speak so that the public participating knows who is speaking. This is critical given the number of remote participants in his current guidance from the Kansas Attorney General.

MAYOR ALVEY called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL: Johnson, Markley, Walters, Philbrook, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, McKiernan, Ramirez, Alvey.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL SESSION of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be held Thursday, December 3, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. by way of Zoom and online for a presentation regarding a Task Force on Community and Police Relations.

Due to COVID-19 the public will be able to observe or listen to the meeting live on YouTube or UGTV or through Zoom.

CONSENT TO MEETING of the governing body of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, accepting service of the foregoing notice, waiving all and any irregularities in such service and in such notice, and consent and agree that we, the governing body, shall meet at the time and place therein specified and for the purpose therein stated.

Mayor Alvey said as the Clerk stated, tonight we have a presentation by the Community and Police Relations Task Force. Let me just give you a rundown on how this will proceed. I will just open with some opening remarks and then pass it onto Commissioner Johnson who was Co-Chair with me of the Task Force. Then we will have opportunities for each member of the Task Force to simply relate their findings and some of their recommendations for us as we move forward.

This Task Force began, honestly, because of what happened in Minnesota to Mr. George Floyd. There was, as you know, an outcry, deep concern, feelings of anger and resentment throughout many parts of our community and demand for change, demand for action. This was coming from all sides to us and clearly, we needed to respond.

What drove this for me personally was to make sure that what happened to Mr. Floyd would not happen to anyone in Kansas City, Kansas. No matter what has happened in the past, no matter what relations might have been in the past between law enforcement and the community we simply don't want what happened to Mr. Floyd to happen here nor do we want anything that would tend towards that that might lead us to that kind of situation.

It seemed appropriate to have a deep exploration and extended conversation about community and police relations and to bring—there are so many different topics and aspects to this about law enforcement and community relations that have to be examined and that takes a lot of time and it takes a lot of effort. We didn't want to have just one conversation or one symbolic act. We really wanted to bring the conversation out into the public domain and really allow Task Force members to explore and to ask questions and then ultimately to come forward to the Commission with what we found and offer some recommendations.

I want to say first, thank you. A heartfelt thanks to each member of the Task Force. Your generosity, your gifts of your honesty, of openness, your willingness to listen, the gift of your time.

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There have been multiple sessions and multiple meetings preparing for this and reading on the side. Your commitment to fairness and justice for all persons, on whatever side of the law, whatever side of law enforcement encountered, there was a spirit of fairness and generosity for all.

I have to say that the Task Force members were asked to refrain from advocating for any specific policy or procedural changes while the Task Force meetings were in session during the entire time of the Task Force. Frankly, we're not done yet, but we still wanted to come forward now, but that was necessary because we didn't want what we advocate for—trust me, each member of the Task Force has very strong commitment to specific items and have had throughout. They refrained from expressing those simply because we wanted those who came before us to bring their feelings, their passion, their ideas and we did not want our own—it wasn't about us. We wanted to make it about what came to us and we wanted to be in the role of facilitating and listening and if we had gotten out and been in the role of advocacy throughout this, that might have forestalled some people coming forward and that's not what we wanted to happen.

Again, I want to thank each member of the Task Force for your generosity, for being out there, for being vulnerable in all this process. In fact, sometimes just by being a part of this, you've been criticized. You've had people say to you you're not doing anything, you're not doing enough and yet I believe that you trusted the process, you trusted one another and because of that spirit of generosity we've been able to make some progress here.

A special thanks to Commissioner Johnson for co-chairing and, Harold, you've got a second career as a facilitator and it has been wonderful. I like to say you are the oil to the machine and you really made it happen. Also, thanks Gordon Criswell, our Assistant County Administrator, who has tremendous work behind the scenes helping us to respond to questions, digging into questions that came to the Task Force from the community and Gordon would dig in and make sure those questions were answered.

I want a special thanks to David Reno of our Communications Public Information. He did a lot of behind the scene work getting the word out making sure YouTube and Facebook worked. Also, Mariah Smith who also facilitated. We tried to put this on as much media as possible to make it accessible to all. Then, a special thanks to Ana Quimby, my Assistant, who kept the Task Force on task.

If we could go to the first slide.

Task Force on Community and Police Relations

Created to help guide discussion and advance the dialogue between the community (in particular African American and Hispanic populations) and law enforcement in Wyandotte County.



TASK FORCE MEMBERS:

- Mayor/CEO David Alvey, Unified Government of Wyandotte County, KCK (co-chair)
- Commissioner Harold Johnson, Unified Government of Wyandotte County, KCK (co-chair)
- Rev. Tony Carter, Jr., Salem Missionary Baptist Church
- Yarell Castor, Student, Donnelly College, KCK resident
- Evelyn Hill, Community Engagement Director, Avenue of Life
- Monsignor Stuart Sweetland, President, Donnelly College
- Curtis Smart, M.A. Public Health Administration and KCK Entrepreneur
- Maximilian (Max) Mendoza, Executive Director, Heartland 180, Inc.
- Michael York, Interim Chief of Police, Kansas City, KS Police Department
- Don Ash, Sheriff, Wyandotte County Sheriff's Office

MISSION: To coordinate and gather input and insight from the community on law enforcement perceptions, policies, procedures, and protocols in WyCo, including the KCK Police Department and the Sheriff's Office. Identifying opportunities and appropriate vehicles to gather community input, helping facilitate discussion, and serving as a conduit for the gathering and dissemination of information to the community, law enforcement, local officials and the Unified Government for review and appropriate action.

We want to make sure that our law enforcement personnel and our community are working together to improve public safety and it's a cooperative effort, it's a collaborative effort. To that end we wanted to have a diverse representation of our community. So, Commissioner Johnson is going to have an opportunity to introduce each of the members. I will just say Maximilian or Max Mendoza is Executive Director of Heartland 180 and he, unfortunately is not able to attend this evening because his agency has food to distribute and he is short-staffed and he has to get that food out tonight, so he is taking care of people tonight, so his needs are in our thoughts and prayers.

Task Force on Community and Police Relations

Community/Public Forums:

- Public Conversation #1 – Community Policing/Use of Body Cameras/DA's Office
- Public Conversation #2 – Use of Force Guidelines / Law Enforcement Training
- Public Conversation #3 – Concerned Black Clergy
- Public Conversation #4 – Restorative Justice
- Public Conversation #5 – Progress Made / Moving Forward
- Public Conversation #6 – Chief of Police Hiring Process

- All Forums livestreamed on Zoom, UG YouTube, UGTV (Google Fiber 141/Spectrum 2)
- Notification Flyers, Social Media Ads, etc. in English/Spanish – seeking public inputs!



Comms Vehicles:

- www.CommunityTaskForce.org – Dedicated website, Events Calendar, Video Archive, Public Comment / Video submission functions, etc.
- certaskforce.org – Dedicated email address directly to Task Force members
- General Media / Social Media (Facebook, YouTube, etc.) / Pastor's Group / TF members, etc.

GOAL: For law enforcement and local leaders to utilize these learnings to expand education and awareness, review and improve policing policies and procedures, and build upon community relations and outreach efforts to ensure a high level of trust, interaction, and inclusiveness with all groups and populations in historically diverse Wyandotte County.

We've had multiple community/public forums. The first was regarding Community Policing, the use of body cameras and that was by Chief York. These topics are important to us, you know, just what is the state of our Community Policing. What is the status of the body cameras that the Commission appropriated funding for in years past and it has taken some time to get operational and we understood why that was. I know Chief York is going to speak to body cameras and, I believe, Dr. Hill as well.

We had another conversation about the use of force guidelines. What is current practice within our law enforcement community and the continuum of force. What is the status, what is the extent of, what types of training do all our law enforcement undergo.

We had the request from the Concerned Black Clergy multiple questions from them. We tried to answer those questions and there are more questions from them, we need some more clarification. We're trying to schedule a meeting. They had to cancel a meeting because there were a couple of funerals that members had to attend to, but that conversation is moving forward.

We had a presentation by Msgr. Swetland about restorative justice. We had also representatives from the Village Initiative which is an agency that tries to find a way to bring our returning citizens from incarceration. What specific problems do they face as they try to come back into our community and reestablish their lives in the community outside of incarceration. We tried to take a tenor of where we were, progress made in moving forward, and, in fact, we never got to that topic that night because Curtis Smart shared his own story with us in an encounter he had with police when he was younger, which wasn't that long ago, because he's not that old. I have to say that stimulated a tremendous amount of conversation and exploration by members of the Task Force and, Curtis, again, I just want to say on behalf of all of us, thank you for sharing that with us. We understand how difficult that was for you to publicly tell that story.

We also, in our last conversation at the request of the County Administrator and at the request of the community, we wanted to bring forward because you know we're in the process—Chief York is getting ready to retire, congratulations. The Chief hiring process has been suspended because of COVID and the County Administrator, Mr. Bach, asked us to elicit or solicit from the community what kinds of qualities and professional expertise they would be looking for in a new Chief. Also, an opportunity to describe for the community, be transparent about what the process is that's going to be used as we move forward in hiring a new Police Chief.

You'll notice we tried to find so many different forums to bring this forward, Zoom, UG YouTube, the UGTV. We sent notification flyers, social media ads, Spanish and English. We sent notes out to some of the major anchor institutions in Wyandotte County including El Centro and metropolitan organizations that encounter sexual assaults and others to seek input. We've got communication vehicles, a place on the website and an email where we receive multiple requests for information and others.

All of this has been a long process and yet I want to emphasize when we get to the end, we're not done. There are more topics to be explored and ultimately what we need to do is regularize a conversation exploration, discussion about how to continually address issues that arise between policing and our community. Whatever those issues are, as we move forward, we have to find a way to continue to bring those into discussion exploration and to look at best practices and continually improve the opportunities for public safety.

I think kind of just giving that brief introduction, I'm going to pass it off to Commissioner Johnson and we will then proceed into individual Task Force members.

Commissioner Johnson said thank you, Mayor, for that very through introduction. I appreciate the opportunity to serve alongside of you as the co-chair for this Task Force and to deal with this issue that has plagued our society for far too long. The things we have discussed have been vital pieces of information in a time of learning, a time of sharing, a time of being challenged. Some of the information that has been received has really kind of broaden my own personal understanding of the things that are occurring between law enforcement and the community. It's been a pleasure also to serve with this committee. Again, I want to express my appreciation to you for volunteering your time to be a part of this. It has not been easy work, but I think it has been work that will help to shape the language of our community as it relates to our ongoing relationships with our law enforcement agencies.

Wyandotte County is unique in that we haven't had the types of situations that have happened outside in the nation that we witnessed here in our community but we want to make sure we're being as vigilant as possible to make sure that those things don't happen. It's already been said, but I don't think it can be said enough.

With that, I'm not going to belabor the time. I know we have until—what time are we going to be done, Mayor? **Mayor Alvey** said I would say 6:45-6:50 at the very latest. **Commissioner Johnson** said very good. Then we want to go ahead and get started. We've asked each one of the members of the Task Force to share their observations, to share their recommendations, their thoughts of their time on the Task Force with the Commission and the community at-large that may be watching.

With that, we're going to be start with Rev. Tony Carter. If you could introduce yourself and then share with us your observations as it relates to the work with the Task Force.

Rev. Tony Carter said thank you Commissioner Johnson and thank you Mayor, County Commissioners, and the community of Wyandotte County for the opportunity to serve the people of our yet evolving community. I say that—I'm Pastor Tony Carter of the Salem Missionary Baptist Church where I serve as Senior Pastor and have since 2002. I say that our community is evolving because I believe this county is on the brink of greatness. In my humble opinion the brightest or the biggest barriers revolve around historic disparities concerning health and wellness, economic growth and opportunities and the continued fight related to systemic racism which has plagued our community and the African American and other Black and Brown people in our community. I fully expect that we shall reach our potential as we continue to work together with God. Having said that, I'm reminded of a statement I read from Pope Francis who once said and I quote "a way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all, just satisfy the demands of justice, fairness and respect for every human being." I believe that wholeheartedly.

Several months ago after observing the senseless death of another Black American playout on television screens, communities all over this country were awakened to a level of consciousness that had not been experienced before in my recent memory. In the midst of many of peoples that protest, the Mayor formed the Community and Policing Relations Task Force which were tasked with listening to our community and facilitating the conversation regarding police and community relations. While we committed to be primarily listeners, that is hard to do and not also see things that motivate you to offer recommendations that also facilitate improvements in the process, but also eventually lead to substantively impactful change. In other words, to satisfy the demand of justice, fairness and respect for every human being.

I've learned a lot through this process and my emotions have spanned the gambit from absolute anger to holding back to tears. Initially I put a lot of pressure on myself to deliver for my community and I mean all of my community until I realized it was going to take a collective collaboration of each person on this Task Force to point this work in the right direction. I got to see those synergies come together and I felt the breath of God validate some incremental steps in the right direction that can form the basis for the real life change that needs to happen within these systems of government, law enforcement, and our community as a whole. There is still much work left to do to effect real change. For example, they can't weigh initiative that many will probably

refer to tonight that our police department has recently began to embrace is a step in the right direction. However, it still leaves much work to be done.

The eight proposed policies are banning chock holes and strangulations requiring de-escalation, requiring warning before shooting, requiring officers to exhaust all alternatives before shooting, imposing a duty to intervene, banning shooting at moving vehicles, establishing a Use of Force Continuum and requiring comprehensive reporting. These eight policy changes, if implemented, is said to reduce police killings by 72%, but the flow of “8 Can’t Wait” and all police reform efforts give an inability to control for prejudice officers, bad temper officers or a very real possibility that an officer may simply break the rules as did Derek Shaaban in Minneapolis.

Even if an officer is prosecuted and convicted, and I do say if, death is irreversible. We cannot bring George Floyd back; we cannot bring Breonna Taylor back and so on and so forth. There’s still, again, much work to do.

The funding of our District Attorney’s Community Integrity Unit was a step in the right direction. However, there is still much work to do and what happens when the politics changes and the funding goes away, there’s still much work to do. We can feel promises to do better and to remain vigilant, but even as I speak there are those who vehemently disagree with me. Some will say that we’ve already done enough, still others will say we haven’t even come close to doing nearly enough. There’s still so much work to do.

In Exodus 3—Chapter 3, Verse 9, God to says Moses the pride of the children of Israel has come to me and I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Then in Verse 10 he, God, says come now literally go now; therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people out of Egypt. I’m done when I say this, God says to everyone in the room, everyone on the call, and everyone in this community, go now that you may bring my people out of injustices of all kind.

As recommendations, that we remain diligent and committed to this great work by any and all means necessary, that the Commission empower some entity be it the Law Enforcement Advisory Board or the Task Force itself to propose substantive solutions to deal with wholeheartedly the problem with racism, police brutality and other disparities that add to these plagues in our community so that my grandbabies and your grandbabies can live in a safe community that satisfies the demands of justice, fairness and respect for every human being. Thank you. That ends my comments.

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Commissioner Johnson said thank you Reverend, well stated. I appreciate it and you said it in your preacher voice and so I appreciate that, and we all are better for it. Thank you so much.

We're going to now hear from Yareli Castor, one of our—she might be our youngest member, I daresay. Although she's quiet, she has really helped us a lot and informed us a lot.

Yareli Castor said I'm a graduate from Donnelly College and I'm still a student now at Rockhurst University and I want to say thank you to our Mayor and Commissioner and the Community Task Force. It's been really great work working with all of you and I want to thank you guys for giving me the opportunity to be a member of this Task Force. I know you kind of quoted what I was going to say, Commissioner. I believe I am the youngest one in this group and, yes, all the times you didn't see me asking a lot of questions or making comments and ultimately was because I was taking the part of being an active listener really seriously. Like I said, we each all have ideas and things that we stand for and I didn't want any of that to get in the way of what we're trying to do here.

With that being said, listening to what our community members were saying and each individual who presented throughout this time, one thing I noticed when I first came here I had—I knew that our community had a frustration and feeling of anger toward our law enforcement. I didn't know the magnitude of it, but I knew that it was there. However, what I didn't know, the perspective from our law enforcement. Through social media and news outlets was what I was receiving my source of information, and, in a way, it made me have a certain view of our law enforcement here in Wyandotte County that wasn't true. I perceived them as not caring and not doing enough for our community but coming here and listening to the concerns of the community and of law enforcement made me realize that my information was wrong from both perspectives.

Like I said, I didn't know the magnitude and listening to the stories I was like this is a huge concern and we have been crying out for help or individuals have for a long time. Even though it may seem that we're starting to talk about this conversation, it may seem too late, but; however, I'm really glad that this conversation is going because it needs to.

However, like I said, I didn't know the magnitude of the situation and the perspective of the law enforcement, what they presented, their policies, the type of training that they receive, the type of work that they do. That it's not just catching the bad guys made be realize that they ultimately do have the desire to serve our community, do have a desire to protect us and although

in our social media, our news outlet, sometimes changes that and makes us see that, oh, in our community, Wyandotte County, is just like every other state. Thankfully it's not as bad, however; it is as bad for us to start to do something about it now.

I was listening to the community and the questions that came in, I saw a lot of comments through individuals who expressed anger and these ideas that were ultimately answered and, no, that's actually not what we do. We do have a policy in place that addresses that and if you do have an issue, you can come forward and we do have someone who listens to your complaints who has them reported. I felt like a lot of individuals did not know that even existed, that they couldn't even come forward, that they couldn't—it had to do also with the lack of trust they have with law enforcement. However, I heard time and time again questions or comments that were later addressed in saying no, that's actually not true. This is the truth. So, there was a lack of communication from both sides of our community with our law enforcement and law enforcement with the community with each other.

Ultimately, what my recommendation would be is that we need to do a much better job informing the community of this type of everything that we presented, the use of force, the training. All of that needs to be presented and given to the community, not just through a flyer, not through just an email and not just in one language. Wyandotte County is so diverse, it needs to be given to each community member in their language that they understand. Like I said, not just through flyers, not just through a post, not everybody has Facebook, not everybody has those means, so I guess it changed my view of doing my law enforcement here in my community in knowing they do so much more. All of that was impacted by the Citizens Academy and as well as each presentation. I felt much more informed to have an actual conversation. I'm not the type of person who likes to comment unless I know the situation or I'm aware of it. However, as a community member, going to this it informed a lot that I was able to come back and actually talk about it with individuals and say did you know that this happened, did you know they're not just about catching the bad guys. They're actually helping homelessness crisis that we have here, the lack of buildings to host these types of people, that they do so much more.

Ultimately, that really hit home to me is that all of this information is there, it's available for us, but we don't really know about it. Ultimately, and I know my time is almost up, we need to do a much better job of communicating this type of information to our community here in Wyandotte County and to do it in a way that it's accessible to everybody, not just through an email,

a Facebook post, in one language. Like I said, it's very diverse and we need to make sure it's reaching those people who we ultimately have not been reaching today and that's all I'm going to say because I know we have a lot of other people to listen to.

Commissioner Johnson said thank you Yareli. Your words were very, very timely and I appreciate that. It really brought some good light to some things that we have experienced here and that we need to do better, a better job of in Wyandotte County.

Commissioner Johnson said we're going to hear from our Sheriff right now, Sheriff Don Ash, who will present his observations and comments at this particular time. Thank you and, Sheriff Ash, it's in your hands.

Sheriff Don Ash said first of all I want to say thank you to all of the fellow Task Force members here, all of the citizen soldiers, so to speak, that volunteered and signed up to be on the Task Force. Your thoughtful questions, your comments and interaction have been greatly beneficial to me as the leader in the Sheriff's Office. I also want to thank the members of the community that took time to email a question or to send in a comment or a video or provide the feedback that they provided. Yareli did a great job characterizing what it was that we were able to get a feel that what was really the thorn in the side of members of our community and that's greatly beneficial.

In the interest of not being redundant to what Chief York is going to present in a little while, I'll just tell you that just about everything that the Chief is going to share, the Sheriff's Office is right along in line with that, in lock step with the information he's going to share in almost every point, point by point.

Outside of that, I just want to say a couple of other things that I'm really committed to following through on are the points about the better wellness for our police officers and our sheriff deputies that are serving on the frontline out there. Ways that we can monitor them, ways that we can make available services and assistance to them as they seek ways to cope and deal with the high stressors of this job. We're going to be doing some more work on that. We're going to be looking at some alternatives for that in the very near future.

I also want to explore this idea a little bit more. In that same vein of making periodic mandatory sociological wellness evaluations available and required, if you will, for all of those particularly that serve on a frontline somewhere in this work. I think a time has come for that and

I would like to have some conversations with Human Resources and Legal and County Administrator staff about what that might look like here for the Unified Government. So, we're committed to that.

We're also looking internally at the Sheriff's Office to form—we have a peer support team in order to help assist with those kinds of things. We're also looking to form a Diversity Equality Inclusion team, if you will, that would be a group of individuals that are specially selected and highly trained in order to be the sonar, if you will, out there searching or watching or monitoring our work environment for individual deputies and frontline workers that might be experiencing either some discriminatory behavior toward them or attitudes toward them or somebody that feels like possibly they're being marginalized within their work group. They would be able to go to one of these specialized team members and at least open that conversation and dialogue so that we could begin to look at how we need to best respond and deal with those things.

Of course, we're constantly looking at ways to improve on our defensive actions and uses of force in our policies. There is some other equipment that has recently become available in order to be able to desist us with less lethal, less invasive types of things. Things like a conducted energy device called the Glove that we could utilize in particular instances especially inside the Detention Center. Also, a device that's called the BolaWrap which would work similar to a taser in that it would deploy a cord wrap that would wrap around and immobilize people's hands and their legs so that officers and deputies then could move in and handcuff or control folks without having to tase them and without having to use some of the other less lethal or certainly lethal methods. That's fairly new technology that's becoming readily available now in law enforcement. We're investigating it further and looking for ways we might be able to incorporate that into our policies.

I, like Yareli, found my role to be mostly listening and not talking and so I'm still listening. With that, Commissioner, I'm going to yield the rest of my time to Chief York.

Commissioner Johnson said thank you Sheriff. I appreciate those comments and even with some of the things that—alternative methods, when I saw the little scraps that you shot, it reminded me of an episode of Batman when I was younger and I would watch TV, so I guess we're moving into the age of the Superhero's I suppose with that. Thank you for those comments. We really appreciate it.

Next, we're going to hear from Curtis Smart who is going to come at this particular time.

Curtis Smart said I recently graduated from the University of Kansas Medical system with my Master's in Public Health Administration and I have enjoyed being a part of this Task Force. It has been a wealth of knowledge for me and it's also been an eyeopener for me because I did not know that our police were as good as they are. I didn't know how phenomenal our police are in our neighborhoods and in our surrounding areas.

First, I would like to say thank you to everyone for allowing me to be a part of this Task Force and that I believe in our Police Department and their ability to uphold the law. I also believe in our citizens in our county to obey the law. I would like to offer a few suggestions and I will be very brief tonight.

My first suggestion would be to push funding for body cams. I feel that with body cams we would be able to protect the rights of our citizens and the police. I feel that it would help with the current crisis that are going on across our nation. With body cams there won't be two sides of the story. It will be the story that was told on film.

I will also make a suggestion for funding sociological examination of officers who have had traumatic experiences in our community. We spent a lot of time talking about how officers make these rash decisions, but we don't—I don't believe that I've seen too many officers had that sociological examination or had access to sociological help or as much help as they may need. We're in a wake of a time and place where we are talking about mental health. Mental health is very important, especially for our officers in our community who see things on a daily basis that the average person probably doesn't see. Building programs around sociological examination for officers, I think would really, really help.

My last suggestion would be, from my observations and working with the Task Force, would be to help fund programs like DARE to put officers out in front of youth and young adults that are in school and making them realize that the police aren't bad and also bettering their relationship with local officers. I can remember growing up in my neighborhood and going to school and seeing officers come to my school and then that weekend going to the skating rink and seeing that same officer know my name. If I did something and got out of line, that officer could call my parents. He didn't necessarily have to detain me or tase me or anything because he knew my parents. Building that type of rapport within our community again would be great because it what it does, it creates a trust and value system, not just a amongst the citizens, but also amongst our officers and our fellow officers.

What I think in the long run what will happen is when a person is younger and they grow up knowing police, there is a certain respect level that comes with that. I think in some way's citizens have lost respect for police and law enforcement and law enforcement has lost respect for citizens in the way they handle law enforcement. Repairing that relationship, I believe, this would be a part of repairing that relationship.

I will close with saying, this is one of my favor quotes, Helen Keller says "the only thing worse than being blind is having sight with no vision." I feel like we're moving into a space where we have a clear vision and a clear view of what we want to do. Now it's how we take those initial steps to get where we want to go. Thank you.

Commissioner Johnson said thank you Curtis. I appreciate those comments and the work of reconciliation, I think, is what I really took away from that. It presents a great opportunity for us in this community that we live in.

At this time, we're going to hear from our Chief of Police, Chief Michael York, is going to come, and I think he has a presentation that he will be submitting to us as well.

Chief Michael York, Police Department, said before I get started, I just want to say to the Task Force, thank you for challenging me. I've learned a lot. I've made some changes to the Police Department because of what the Task Force has suggested, so I thank you guys for that.

**ON JUNE 16, 2020, PRESIDENT TRUMP SIGNED EXECUTIVE ORDER 13929
"SAFE POLICING FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES"**

BELOW ARE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE ORDER, AND THE KCKPD'S STATUS REGARDING THOSE POINTS.

1. Departments' must constantly assess and improve their practices and policies to ensure transparent, safe, and accountable delivery of law enforcement services to their communities.
 - a. **In compliance** through policy review and general order updates
2. Departments' must adhere to independent credentialing bodies
 - a. **In compliance** through participation in CALEA
 - b. Funding through the DOJ will be appropriated ONLY to those agencies who are credentialed
3. Departments' must utilize a credentialing body that sets standards in use of force, de-escalation techniques, early warning systems, and community engagement systems.
 - a. **In compliance** through participation in CALEA and our current Internal Affairs early warning system (G.O. 1.12 Management Awareness Program)
4. Departments' must prohibit the use of choke holds except in situations where the use of deadly force is allowed
 - a. **In compliance** with current policy change
5. Departments' must create a database to coordinate sharing of information concerning instances of excessive force related to Law Enforcement, further track instances of terminations or de-certifications of LEOs, criminal convictions of LEOs for on duty conduct, and civil judgments against law enforcement officers for improper use of force. Account for instances where an LEO resigns or retires under active investigation related to the use of force.
 - a. **Pending compliance** - working with KBI in creating a database to be in compliance

The department is in the process of implementing a new reporting database - **IA Pro**, that will make this information easier to track and will be centrally located. This should allow us to come into compliance.
6. Departments' must properly train ALL officers for encounters with individuals who suffer from impaired mental health, homelessness, and addition.
 - a. **OUT OF COMPLIANCE** - KCKPD is approximately 85% trained. A CIT class of approximately 30 officers is planned for fall 2020 if COVID allows. Current best practice does not allow for those in the training academy to take the CIT course. The CIT course is offered after one year of service.



Let me start with this PowerPoint here, my first slide. Shortly after the George Floyd incident, Trump signed the Executive Order for Safe Policing For Safe Communities. I want to go over these and explain them to you.

The first Order would be that departments must assess and improve their practices and policies to ensure safe and accountable delivery of law enforcement services to the communities. We are in compliance with that. We have a policy review every week. We update our General Orders monthly, if not weekly, and we work with the Legal Department in our policy review as well.

2. Departments' must adhere to independent bodies. We do have that. We are in compliance. We are certified through CALEA which stands for Certified Accredited Law Enforcement Agency.

3. Departments' must utilize a body that sets standards in use of force, de-escalation, early warnings; things like that, so we are, again, in compliance through the participation of CALEA and we also have when it comes to officers, we have an early warning system. We are actually getting a new system up and running. It is called IA Probe which tracks our officers. What I mean by tracks our officers, it tracks their discipline, it tracks their uses of force, it tracks their vehicle accidents, it tracks sick leave. So, if all those things are being tracked, we can determine when an officer maybe is struggling in an area so we can easily be alerted of that and take positive action.

4. Departments' must prohibit the use of choke holds. We don't have a choke hold. We've never had a choke hold. There is different strengths, but never a choke hold. I will go into that more in detail.

5. We must also create a database to coordinate sharing of information regarding excessive force, termination of law enforcement officers, criminal convictions; things like that. So, that is pending. We are working with the KBI. We are creating a database. I have Major George Sims that's part of that group. He meets with the KBI routinely and they are going to create a database basically tracking everything that number 5 is asking us to do.

6. Departments' must properly train all officers for encounters with individuals who suffer from impaired mental health, homelessness; things like that. We are out of compliance; however, we have 85% of our Police Department trained on that. Every recruit that goes through the academy is trained to deal with people that are suffering from some type of mental illness.

KCKPD Use of Force Policy

SINCE 2015, ALL NEW OFFICERS RECEIVE A MINIMUM OF 80 HOURS OF USE OF FORCE INSTRUCTION.
AOT TRAINING IS BETWEEN 8-16 HOURS A YEAR OF USE OF FORCE TRAINING

CHANGES TO CURRENT POLICY- Items in red are recent updates

Hard Empty-Hand Control – Most empty hand control techniques may be used to counter escape resistance, active aggression, or aggravated active aggression. These techniques are generally applied when lower forms of control have failed or when not applicable because the subjects resistance level was perceived at a dangerous level.



- Side of neck (Brachial Stun) – May be used to defend the officer or another against active aggression.
- Shoulder pin – The shoulder pin may only be used when confronted with aggravated active aggression.



The two things that I've changed since the George Floyd incident was the shoulder pin. As you can see by looking at that picture, that is a shoulder pin. I changed that to where the officers can only use the shoulder pin when they are fighting for their lives, when they are at lethal force. Prior to the George Floyd incident, we could use a shoulder pin when the officers were being attacked. Now, I've moved it to where an officer is at deadly force is the only time you can use the shoulder pin.

The side of neck; we have what we call a Brachial Stun. The officers can use a Brachial Stun which basically you use your palm and you strike the side of a person's neck which stuns them. I've changed that as well. If an officer is being physically attacked, being beaten, he can use the Brachial Stun.

ACADEMY CLASS TRAINING

- ⇒ 7 hours – Ethics in Law Enforcement
- ⇒ 12 hours – Interpersonal Communications and Human Behavior
- ⇒ 6 hours – Fair and Impartial Policing
- ⇒ 6 hours – Interactions with Special Populations
- ⇒ 4 hours – Emotional Health and Stress Management
- ⇒ 8 hours – Mental Health First Aid / CIT Related / 2018 to Present



Like Yareli said, it's not all about catching the bad guy, so this is what every recruit goes through, every officer that enters into our academy goes through these types of training. There's a lot more to it than just trying to catch the bad guy as you can see.

OFFICER TRAINING / AOT

- ⇒ 18 hours – Biased Based Policing (State Statute Mandated)
 - ⇒ Mix of Fair and Impartial Policing and Verbal Defense and Influence
 - ⇒ 4 hour and 2 hour blocks depending on the year
- ⇒ 4 hours – De-Escalation Training
 - ⇒ 2 hour blocks over 2 years
- ⇒ 2 hours – Cultural Awareness
- ⇒ 2 hours – Dealing with Special Populations / CIT Based
- ⇒ 4 hours – CIT Updates
 - ⇒ 2 hour blocks over 2 years



Every officer that is working the streets, every year they have what we call AOT which is called Advanced Officer Training. They get biased based policing, de-escalation, cultural awareness, and dealing with special populations. Again, we're constantly training our officers on how to deal with certain situations. How to de-escalate, how to be aware with different cultures; things like that.

DUTY TO INTERVENE POLICY

Major Sims
 Captain Harris
 Captain Grosko
 Captain Falkner
 Officer Kirkpatrick

Pre-event
 Warning signs of officer getting over emotionally invested
 Anger
 On Scene Ques
 Onset of anger
 Profanity
 Poor tactics
 Have a 10 code that will warn an officer that he/she is starting to get out of control



This is the biggest thing I have done. We've got to have a Duty to Intervene Policy, so I have sent a lot of my Commanders to training. They are going to change our General Order. Our General Order currently states this for Code of Ethics. "An officer will not engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will an officer condone such acts by other officers." That's not as clear as I would like it, so I really believe if the Minneapolis Police Department would have had a Duty to Intervene Policy, the George Floyd incident would not have happened. Each officer, and I'm not talking just about officers, I'm talking about Sergeants, Captains, Majors and above, they are going to be trained in Duty to Intervene Policy.

So, when an officer gets caught up in a situation, gets over invested in a situation, the Sergeant, the other officer on the scene has a duty to intervene. I can tell you this, I haven't

implemented this just yet, but I'm going to have a 10 Code, so when an officer is emotionally over invested and the other officer sees that, he's going to say 10, whatever that code would be, 10/6 10/6 which means you need to slow down, you need to back off. This is not just officer to officer. This is officer to sergeant, sergeant to captain; we all have our duty to intervene, so that's going to be implemented shortly.

Wellness Program – Peer Support

The KCKPD Wellness Program is dedicated to improving the personal and professional wellness of the employees of the KCKPD. The approach begins in basic training and continues throughout an officer's career. This is accomplished through developing innovative programs, training, coaching, and resources to connect employees with the proper resources to fit their needs.

- **Trauma Based Calls** – The wellness officer responds to daily trauma based calls for service during her shift
- **Chief's Daily Digest** – Emailed to the Department daily. Contents include: Current news from the Chief's Office, mental health tips, good news in the community, and highlights a Department member.
- **Weekly roll call and unit visits** – These visits allow constant communication between the Chief's Office and all units of the Department. During these visits officers are reminded to focus on their mental health.
- **Adding a therapy/comfort dog in 2020** – The dog will come from Animal Services and be trained in Lawrence, Kansas.
- **2021 In-Service Training** – Developing the most effective mental health training for In-Service Training 2021 with the Department Psychologist.
- **Spouses Academy** – Developing the first Spouses Academy in the region (possibly the Country). For years, the effect of this career on the Officer's family has been overlooked. The Officer's spouse needs to be educated just as much as the officer.
- **Mentoring Program** – The Wellness Officer will integrate a mentoring program that begins in the training academy and continues through the first year or two of service.



Like Curtis said, we do have a Wellness Program. We do have a Peer Support Team. I have an officer here that works in the Chief's Office and that is all she does. She goes to roll call; she goes to the academy. When officers are struggling, she reaches out to them, she gives them resources; things like that. We do have that. Could we improve upon that, yes. This is relatively new for 2020 and it's gone over quite well. We have a spouse academy. We have a mentoring program. We've even gone so far as a comfort dog. We have two comfort animals that visits the roll calls, they interact with the officers. Once the dogs graduate their training, we'll take them out to the community.

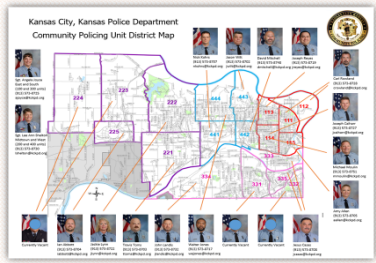
Community Policing Unit

Established in 1995- The KCKPD was innovative in creating a full time Community Policing Unit

- Currently consists of 14 COPPS Officers positions. There are 3 other vacant positions within the Unit, one of these is currently being filled. These officers support approximately 150 Community Groups
- 3 School Resource Officers
- 2 Police Athletic League Officers
- 1 Juvenile Programs Officer
- 3 Sergeants
- 1 Captain

Diversity within the unit:

- 14 White Males
- 1 Black Male
- 1 Hispanic Male
- 4 White Females
- 2 Black Females
- 1 Hispanic Female



This is really my last slide for the most part. I will tell you I believe this wholeheartedly. This is the reason why we had nothing but peaceful protests because we have done Community Policing since 1995. We have a stand-alone fulltime Community Policing Unit which 20 officers, as you can see, are engaging the community throughout the entire KCK area. We have our Pal, we have resource officers, we have a juvenile program, we have an okay officer that goes out to the schools and this is 30 some years or close to 30 years of doing nothing but positive engagement with the community. That's why I believe we did not see any type of civil unrest during the George Floyd protests.



These are just a few of the programs that do day in and day out. There's probably 10 here. I'm sure we have about 20 more so they go to schools, talk to the kids, we read to the kids, we do pizza with the kids, play basketball with the kids.



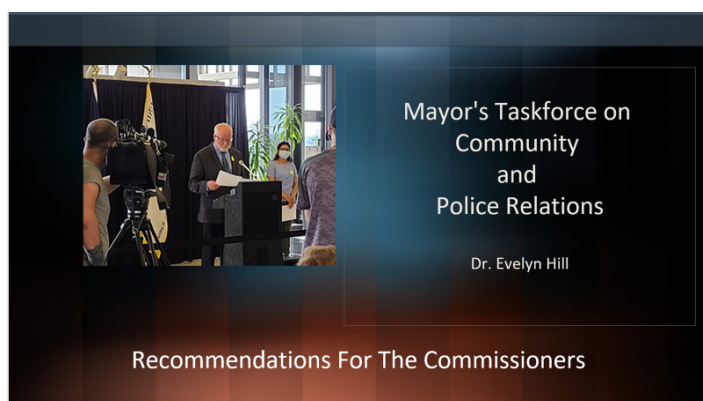
We are out there engaging, not just the community, but the youth as well and that's basically what they do, is community engagement. That, Commissioner, is all I have.

Commissioner Johnson said that is quite a lot, Chief, and I appreciate you for bringing light to some of the things that the Police Department is doing. You all are doing a mighty fine job. I don't think it is—we need to continue to be aware of the fact that we have not had any issues when we had the peaceful protests. Every community cannot say that and so we are the beneficiaries of the work of our Police Department here in Wyandotte County. Thank you and the Sheriff for being a part of this dialogue and hearing and listening to the concerns of your fellow persons that are on the Task Force as well as those that are in the community.

We are going to hear now from Dr. Evelyn Hill who I believe has a presentation tonight, so we're excited to hear her presentation.

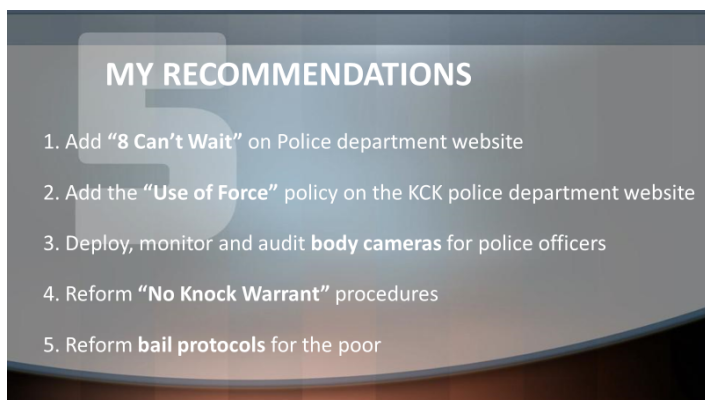
Task Force on Community and Police Relations

Presentation by Dr. Evelyn Hill



Dr. Evelyn Hill said thank you Commissioner Johnson, Mayor, and all the commissioners for being with us this evening. Thank you to the community. You have been very active in listening and so we certainly appreciate you and to my fellow Task Force members, thank you also.

I too have learned a lot. I am very appreciative of those that have taken the time to really explain some things to help me and the community to understand law enforcement a lot better. So, I do want to say thank you for that.



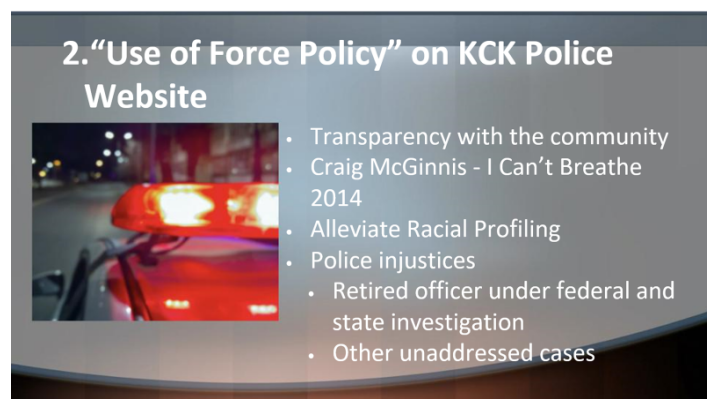
Here are my recommendations.

1. Add “8 Can’t Wait” on the Police Department website which I thought would be an excellent opportunity to show some transparency on the part of the Police Department. I’ve heard from Interim Chief York that he does plan to put it on his website, so I’m really excited about that.
2. Also, add the “Use of Force” Policy on the KCK Police Department website is another recommendation that I added.
3. Deploy, monitor and audit body cameras for police officers.
4. Reform the “No Knock Warrant” procedure
5. Reform bail protocols for the poor



When we began to talk to Interim Chief York about “8 Can’t Wait” he immediately sent back the protocols that the Police Department here in KCK had already put in place which I was very excited. I did look at other websites throughout the community and saw that “8 Can’t Wait” was already on their website. To know that Chief York and at least had already started working on this with his departments and now he has said he is going to put that on our website. It’s very exciting.

Olathe has already done this. Overland Park Police Department as well as Wichita. Wichita was the most comprehensive I saw. They had a whole section on what they’re doing in the community around unbiased and fair community policing. I learned a lot just my own personal research and I think another part that I found out was that on the Missouri side, don’t quote me on this, I don’t think they’ve done the work the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department has done. So, I appreciate the efforts that the KCK Police Department is doing.



The Use of Force Policy on the KCK Police Website; I noticed right off the bat—many people contacted me from the community about transparency from the Police Department. One case had to do with this individual’s death. One of the community members said that this individual was killed by the hands of police officers and there were no guns involved and the gentleman said the same words as George Floyd, I can’t breathe. So, as we have heard already the police have already began to do some major changing and, hopefully, this is in the past and we can move forward.

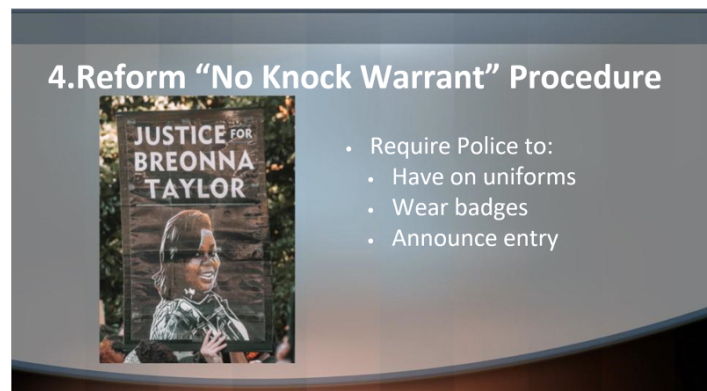
The good news was the families were compensated, but you can never bring back a life, but I appreciate what we’re trying to do. When I say we, I mean the Police Department is doing now to do things different.

To alleviate racial profiling and to also get rid of any police injustices that are out there from the past. There has been so much talk about a retired officer and some of the issues have not been addressed and it looks like the police just let him get away with some of atrocities that he had

been doing. I'm not calling any names, but I can say this, the opportunity to hear from others, we did find out that possibly if it's under investigation with the FBI and the KBI then there will be no conversations about it because they just don't discuss anything that's in court.



We've heard a couple people already mention the body cameras. I'm excited to know that we are moving forward to get the body cameras. I think we're at a point now where it's time to just do it and not talk about it anymore, just get it done.



Reform on the "No Knock Warrant" Procedure; many of know about the case where Breonna Taylor was killed by police. They had the "No Knock Warrant" and, of course, it was she said she said stuff. They said we did announce. We swear we had on the plain clothes so forth and so on, so there are some things that can't be eliminated. If they just wore the uniforms, if they just wore the badges and announced the entry. Those are just real easy things that can be done, and the Breonna Taylor incident was very troubling because they didn't even have the right address, so the whole thing was botched. Still I don't think the police officers were necessarily done justice as far as—if they did kill the young lady, which, in fact they did, there were so many other

protocols. What I saw—who I saw get charged was one of the police officers that shot in another apartment (inaudible). Anyway, that is just my view of the “No Knock Warrant”. These are things in my view and I’m just a citizen. These are things in my view that are easy enough to fix that could at least make some positive changes in our community.

5.Reform Bail Protocols for the Poor



- Citizens in jail because:
 - No money for bail
 - Mental health issues

Reform Bail Protocols for the Poor. I’ve already talked to both Interim Chief York and Sheriff Ash and many of those who would possibly be in jail now due to COVID. Many things have already changed so I applaud those folks for making some different protocols and not incarcerating as many individuals as they were formally and for the work that they’re doing with Wyandotte Center for those who have mental health issues. There is some more work that can be done with the reform on bail, but I have seen some work started, so thank you for that.

Special Thank You

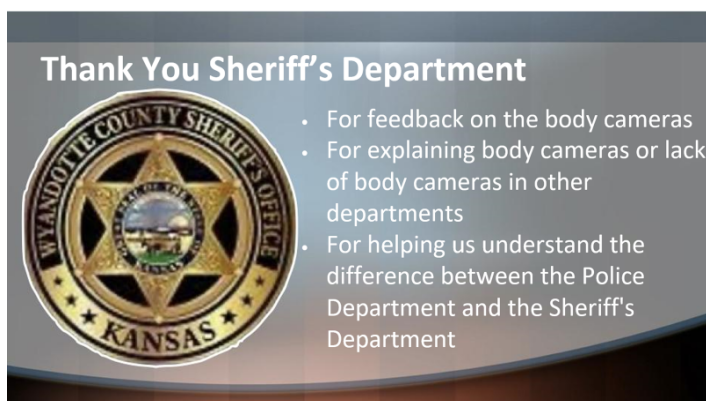


- Interim Chief Michael York
 - Added complaint section to KCKPD Website
 - Hosted the Taskforce for the Citizen Police Academy
- To all the good police officers
- Congratulations to all who won Awards this year.

A special thank you to Interim Chief York for adding the complaint section on the KCK Police Department website. Curtis Smart indicated that he had been pulled over just because he had a nice car. That’s what he said that he was in the high crime area and he was just leaving a community meeting. What was interesting was the questions that came from our law enforcement,

well, did you file a complaint, did you go in and file a complaint. I loved what Curtis said, he goes man, I was just trying to get home. I was just driving, didn't have nothing on my mind, if I could just get home. Well, now they have the opportunity to make a complaint if they're pulled over. You can go online, thanks to Chief York, and make a complaint. You can put your name on it, it can be by telephone, online, it can be done where in the past you had to go in. You can even make an anonymous complaint, so I appreciate him and his team for putting that on the website.

Thank you, Chief York, for hosting the Task Force to the Citizen Police Academy. I had no idea how much information is out there that they do, but it was a great experience for me and I want to say to all of the great police officers, thank you for putting your lives on the line every day for us and congratulations to all those who won awards this year. I watched your program on your website and so thank you to the police officers.



This is my final slide. Thank you to Sheriff Ash. His feedback was very informative on several different points. One in particular was some insight he shared with us concerning the body cameras and I really appreciated him helping us understand the difference between the work of the Sheriff's Department and the work also of the Police Department and how they are different.

One of things that the community was very upset about was the District Attorney's Office was not a part of the Task Force and so I still am grateful that we did get to hear from the DA's Office. He made a presentation at our first Task Force meeting, so that was good, but many of them in the community were still very concerned that he was not a part of the Task Force.

I just want to say thank you again. I do have one quick verse I would like to read. Proverb 31.8-9. "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all or destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Commissioner Johnson said thank you Dr. Hill for that thorough presentation. We appreciate your work on the Task Force as well and your candor has been very beneficial to us all, so thank you for that.

At this time, we're going to here from Monsignor Stuart Swetland, President of Donnelly College.

Task Force on Community and Police Relations

Presentation by Monsignor Stewart Swetland

Monsignor Stuart Swetland said thank you Commissioner. I want to thank everybody involved in this. It has been both educational and informative, but also, I think a good step in the right direction as we build a more caring community. I have the advantage of going towards the end, so I can say ditto to a lot of what already happened.

Task Force

Responding to
George Floyd's
Death



This Task Force, as we heard the Mayor say, was a proactive response on his part after the murder of George Floyd and we want to thank him and others for having that proactive response.



Mayor's Proactive Response

But long-standing Issues

Are we listening?

Are we being heard?

That proactive response has led to a host of things already being improved and bettered in our community. You just heard at least seven of them laid out in the previous presentation. The Community Integrity Unit at the DA's Office, the Duty to Intervene Policy that you heard from Chief York. The less lethal devices and techniques being employed by Sheriff Ash. The Internal Affairs complaint button that in a discussion on the Task Force that is now right there on the front page if you go to the Police Department's website. Body cams coming and the software and the implementation of those for the next calendar year. The changes in the use of force rules. Clarifying and getting more community buy-in to those and the "8 Can't Wait". All of that is already steps in the right direction.

There are long-standing issues and we have to be honest about these and two of them right away are, Are we Listening and Are we being Heard. At first it was difficult for us to get the community to trust us enough just to even make submissions. Evidentially a couple of few people primed the pump and then we started to get a deluge which is good, but I think a lot of people in our community are still wondering are we listening, are we being heard. When I presented these to some of my staff they said, well, who's the we in this questioning and that's my point mainly. We are the we, all of us. Mother Teresa Bojaxhiu, who is in the Catholic tradition, is a Canonized Saint, she used to answer the question what's wrong with the world with this response. We have just forgotten that we belong to one another and we here in Wyandotte County, we belong to one another and; therefore, we must listen to one another and we must speak to one another candidly and openly and be willing to engage in constructive, extended conversation and that's what the Task Force has begun and I think it's just the beginning because we have to listen as we have tried to the police. They have an important position and view to give us. We have to listen to our elected officials, but we also have to listen to all the citizens from all the different groups, as Yareli

said, different language groups, different backgrounds, different histories, and different experiences some of which, we have to be honest about this, in the past have been quite unjust and that has to be admitted and we might need some kind of system where we can face those kinds of past injustices perhaps like in places like South Africa that had Truth and Reconciliation Commission to honestly confront and speak about those past injustices. Some of them not in truth that too far in the past.

Concerns

- Communication Issues
- Lack of Trust
- Police Force Does Not Reflect the Community
- Union Control/Rules Makes Change Very Difficult
- Concerned with the Rules of the Use of Force

Our concerns—in addition to these communication issues which will be an ongoing reality for our community and I hope the commissioners continue to want to have these kind of constructive extended conversation is we have to work to build trust in our community between the various groups and that won't happen unless we all feel that we're being heard and that we can speak openly and honestly.

Part of that is our police force still in its make-up does not reflect the community that it serves and it serves it well in almost every case, but we need to do much better as a community in having a police force and other first responders that reflect the community in which they serve and that is proactive recruiting and proactive promoting of people from different backgrounds, different language groups, different ethnicity, different genders.

Part of the concern that we continue to have though is that some of the rules make change very difficult in our community. My church, and I personally am very pro-union, but when unions stand in the way of keeping progress from happening, we have to address that and if union rules have to be changed to allow our police and other first responders to reflect more what the community looks like, then we need to address that.

I am very concerned, and always will be, partly because I teach and partly because I have a military background, I was a Navel Officer before I became a Priest and one of my academic

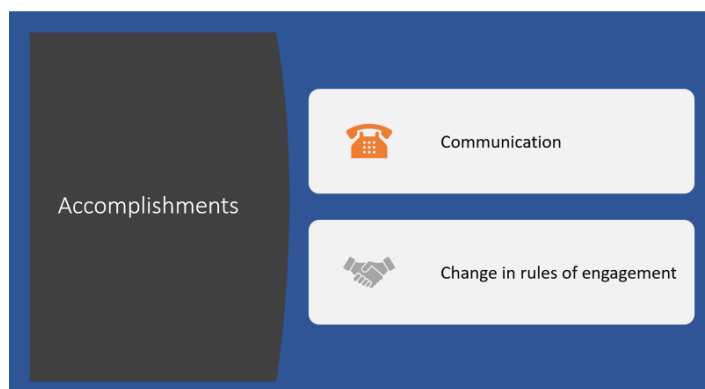
into consideration the plight of whoever has been victimized by an injustice. I think we need that on a wider scale for a host of areas, but that will take community buy-in on a large scale.



I do believe we ask our police to do way too much. Just like we're asking our schools, our public schools, to do way too much. They should be about education, not about all the social services we ask our schools to take the lead on. We're asking our police to do way too much. They often are the first point of contact with the government when it comes to homelessness, addiction, mental illness and people of poverty. For example, evictions and things like that.

I think it's asking too much for people we train to be law enforcement officials and representatives and practitioners to also be able to handle all the social services that are involved with dealing with poverty and homelessness, addiction, and mental illness and a host of other things. That means, we as a community, need to commit and the commissioners need to help us commit, to provide an increase in social services that will help decriminalize poverty, decriminalize homelessness, decriminalize drug and alcohol addiction and decriminalize mental illness.

Way too many people that fall in those categories end up in our Criminal Justice System when good social services would have saved us all and helped them be raised up as a community and I think we all suffer because when one part of the body of the community suffers, all suffers. When one person is successful, we all share in that success.



Our accomplishments so far are many. Especially, I think we have begun to open the lines of communication. We've seen these wonderful change, I call it rules of engagement from my military background, but the use of force rules and all the other things that we've discussed, these are great steps and I commend everybody for their willingness to humbly be willing to change when we mere civilians bring up points of view. I appreciate that.



We have much more that still needs to be done and we need long-term citizen involvement. We've talked about various ways that can happen. There are already existing structures that perhaps can be strengthen and empowered, both though will have to be strengthen and empowered to represent the citizens in their dialogue and in their review of what our police and other first responders are doing. We need that long-term buy-in and long-term citizen involvement on this and many other issues.

I'm just happy to have played a small role in helping us maybe make a step forward in that direction, so thanks for everyone involved with the Task Force, the Police and the greater community for all your submissions and input.

December 3, 2020

Commissioner Johnson said thank you Monsignor for, again, that wonderful presentation and it was very thorough as have been all the presentations tonight. The word that just jumped out at me at the latter part of your presentation was long-term and this is a long-term problem, it's going to take a long-term solution. We've been at this just for a few months and the work we've done I think has been positive and we've moved in the right direction. We have to have a long-term mindset if we're going to adequately address the issues that are plaguing our community.

I consider this to be a pandemic, a social civil pandemic of sorts and the things that have been outlined tonight from our Task Force members speak to those issues and just as we talk about the pandemic with regard to COVID-19, we still have to continue to work on remedy's, vaccines for our community that will help to alleviate any race of centuries of bias and centuries of discrimination that we've been doing across our nation that has not infiltrated even into our community.

Again, I think we're moving in the right direction. I appreciate the work of every person on this Task Force. I appreciate, Mayor, for your direction and your leadership on this and at this point I will yield the floor back into your hands for further direction as we go forward.

Mayor Alvey said thank you Commissioner and thank each member of the Task Force for the hard work you've done, the diligence and the commitment, again, the passion you have for one another, for the community.

You know, it's interesting to me that when we started this we really wanted to be active listeners to really facilitate conversation, to establish to bridge maybe those divisions between the community and the police and that really the Task Force would exemplify the vision of what we're trying to get to. The positive feelings that we have toward the work, the understanding and how serious it is, the commitment we had to this, devoting to listen and that changes were made as we heard through the process. That was really the hope I think and, again, it does need to continue on.

I go back to something Rev. Carter mentioned and that is that this is a continuous effort and it's not just—this was just about police community relations, but it extends to so many different aspects of the social fabric that we really need to heal and I will say that my experience on the Task Force has been kind of an image of what I want for everyone to experience. The

positive regard that each Task Force member had for one another, for those who came forward, really does exemplify the vision of what is in store for us if we will engage the conversation with respect and honesty and commitment and passion.

There is, like we said, more work to do and I will just identify some of the things I think we need to continue to work on. The Task Force, we had set this date as a time for the Task Force to give a report and as we got into it realized this is much broader and there is more work to be done and so the Task Force has graciously offered—members have offered to continue on into the new year. We want to continue this on, but our ultimate goal is to institutionalize this conversation, regularize it. It's got to continue on. In what capacity and what agency, we do that is still under discussion. We're trying to figure that out, but there are more things to discuss and if it's not the Task Force, I don't want to presume upon your time and commitment for too long, so I thank you for your commitment to continue on for the near term, but there is more that needs to be done, we've already discussed.

We need to—it's great that there is a place now on the website that you can go and land a complaint. That's important, but there are other ways in which citizens need to know how do they seek redress and grievances, what is the process for different ways. We want to do a presentation—have a presentation of the District Attorney Dupree, the Community Integrity Unit, you know, how does that function, what is the process, what are the results.

What else is missing. Are there gaps in those kinds of things for people, are we duplicating. We want to kind of lay this out there and make it available to the public to see.

We have a request from the metropolitan organization that counters sexual assaults to meet with the Task Force to talk about some of their specific concerns, so that is a topic for the Task Force. Certainly, we have to look at recruiting, hiring and promotions so we can achieve—that law enforcement can better reflect the diversity of our community. That has to be a goal of ours for our community and we have to explore that to see what more can be done, what needs to be resolved there.

I think we need to have a serious conversation as Chief York and Sheriff Ash mentioned about wellness because, you know, police officers, and Monsignor mentioned, are asked to do way too much. That we're asking them to be at a protest when they're being protested and to protect us through your protest and that's a recipe for disaster. Yet we haven't had that because of, I think, the relationships but we've got to look at how do we care for officers who truly desire to be of

service and encourage that and provide them with the resources, the sociological resources, peer resources they need to continue to carry that forward.

So, we have more work to do, the Task Force does. The primary objective now is how do we institutionalize this discussion moving forward. It has to be a standing agenda item. Whether this is carried on by the Law Enforcement Advisory Board as a standing agenda item that maybe we as a Commission would continually ask these kinds of questions. My experience has been because of working with the members of the Task Force is there is a tremendous generosity of spirit to be open and honest and to look at these and to let the emotions flow because they real, they are necessary, but they reveal to us what is at stake.

I will say the one disappointment—if I've had one disappointment, it was we had really asked for and sought out individuals to tell their stories of their encounters with police and we did not—and I want to thank again Curtis Smart for telling his story. The issue is that when there is this lack of trust and people who have these experiences may not feel comfortable coming forward and so our hope was that when we heard those stories that would bring the urgency to each Task Force meeting and that did not happen. That does not mean we can stop there. We have to find a way for those stories to come forward because they will reveal to us patterns that we say, oh, there's a pattern here that we have to look at and we can address that. Until we have multiple experiences coming to us, we may not be able to discern those patterns.

We have time now for questions and comments. Again, if any of the members of the Task Force have additional things they want to express that came out, please do so. I will now turn this over for the Commission.

Commissioner Ramirez said thank you Mayor and thank you Commissioner Johnson. I want to thank the entire Task Force for all the work that they did. We all know 2020 has been a year that has been very hard on us let alone having a pandemic, but having racial inequity come out and so I thank you Mayor and Commissioner Johnson for heeding the call of the people who are wanting change and coming together as that is something the community will be very happy to see.

Yareli, I could not have said it better. The recommendation you gave, that is something very important and something I continue to strive for is having open communication with all forms of our government and so thank you for your words. Like I said, I couldn't have said it any better.

Chief York—I just have a couple of comments on some people and then a closing statement. Chief York, I thank you for your wanting to create a Duty to Intervene Policy. That will make our Police Department even much better and greater for having that, so thank you for taking that step and listening and continuing to listen and act with the community. That means a lot to me.

Dr. Hill, I thank you for all that you do. Two of the recommendations you give I do support. I would support us looking at more bail reform and reforming our No Knock Warrant. I do have a question on that, that Chief York or Sheriff Ash can answer pertaining to our No Knock Warrant. Is that something we do here. Is that something that's regularly used? **Interim Chief York** said, Commissioner, no. The only time we would use a No Knock Warrant is when someone is in there as a hostage. We don't do No Knock Warrants on barricaded subjects or narcotic search warrants, anything like that; we do not do anything when it comes to No Knock Warrants. **Commissioner Ramirez** said okay, thank you for that. Again, that makes our public safety department even greater for taking that step and not engaging in that. That is something we can still continue to look at and just make sure that we're doing the best that we can in that.

Especially thank you Monsignor Swetland for kind of giving us and holding us as County Commissioners, as a governing body, as a local government accountable for what we're supposed to do. That means a lot to us because then that shows the community is watching us and the community is wanting to ensure that our government is doing everything we can to ensure our citizens are safe and being taken care of.

To, Mayor, from words that you had said, I would like to see and make a request that this Task Force be permanent, a permanent form of our government. As Monsignor Swetland had mentioned, they may not be here in our city but we have longstanding issues of racial inequity and distrust between community and our police. Once we become stagnate and think we've done the work, more happens. This is something that can constantly change. There is always something that we can do better and so I thank you for that and I hope we can continue to have these conversations and, hopefully, make the Task Force permanent in some way, shape or form.

Lastly, of overall, thank you to our public safety members. Every single one of you who devote your time and sacrifice your life and your time to this county and protecting it, especially during the time of COVID and the pandemic, thank you for everything that you do. Thank you,

Sheriff Ash, thank you Chief York. You are making our community much greater and safer for it. So, thank you to everyone who did all of the work and I hope we continue these conversations.

Commissioner Bynum said, Chief York, I did not know that you were planning to retire, so to you I just want to say congratulations on your retirement, but moreover I want to thank you for your decades of service to us and also, how responsive you've been to me and I'm sure other commissioners, when I reached out to you to either share something with you or ask a question.

I also want to say thank you to you because for what I observed to be the openness that you brought to this Task Force work. I did watch most of the sessions.

To Sheriff Ash, I just want to say amen and thank you for vocalizing your support for officer wellness. I did work several years here for our Community Mental Health Center and since my time on the Commission I've had many opportunities to bring welcome remarks to the department's Crisis Intervention training that are held with the law enforcement and public safety folks. On both sides of that spectrum, the community and the public safety side, I had the honor of hearing so many personal stories. I can tell you people are hurting.

Mr. Smart, I just want to say thank you for sharing the story that you told during one of the Task Force meetings. I think we all needed to hear that story and I'm just asking everyone to be mindful of what the community is experiencing but not only that, the incredibly difficult job that our public servants are doing and I think we've said that multiple times throughout our time together tonight. Not only that, but just the hardships and the biases that are experienced by our community members. I really do believe continuing this conversation can be helpful on both sides of that spectrum.

Just thanks to all of you on the Task Force for giving your time to this effort. It's really appreciated. I've appreciated all that you've done and all that you've said, all that I heard and learned and especially what you brought tonight.

I just have a quick comment. I did not hear the voices of the FOP members of the Police or Sheriff among this experience yet so far and if we do need to review and change contracts which may very well be true, I would just ask that we please include those folks in our conversations. That we seek those solutions collaboratively as our first method of approach.

Mayor, I would put forward the standing committee that I chair, Public Works & Safety, as a location for this item to be a standing item. Currently with our Administration and Human

Services Standing Committee, we have a standing item on our CARES Act funding, so I just offer that if you believe that might be a good place for it.

Finally, I would just say I'm ready for our continued constructive engaged conversation and I'm ready to help be a part of our path forward to the greatness that Pastor Carter knows is on our horizon so thank you all so very much.

Commissioner Townsend said, Mayor, I want to commend you for taking the proactive approach to organize the Task Force. To Commissioner Johnson for agreeing to co-chair it, but to each and every one of the members of the Task Force that we heard tonight, I've been taking copious notes on all of this. I want to say that several of the members talked about the peaceful way in which protests were conducted in KCK and that says a lot for our citizenry and also for the police officers and any members of the Sheriff's Department who sought to make that happen. Freedom of Speech is vital. The community was protected so it's great to see that level of justice regardless what your side of the coin was.

Since we don't have a lot of time left, inaudible, but I do want to say I'm happy to hear that the—one of the things you mentioned, Mayor, is that the Task Force was to bring recommendations that are going to improve the relationship between the community and our Sheriff's Department and the Police Department, but this is going to be an ongoing situation. So, I'm glad to hear that is going to happen. For the brief time we have left, I do want to get a little bit more clarity about a couple of particular issues that Chief York mentioned.

One had to do with the Duty to Intervene Policy. I'm not clear when that goes into effect. I understood him to say that there is a 10 code and I had to think back to some of the TV shows to understand what that meant, but I get it. What exactly, at this minute, is the position of the Duty to Intervene Policy with our department?

Interim Chief York said I would say we are working on the policy now with the Legal Department. It just has to be finalized and then we're going to do a—immediately we're going to go to roll call's and train the officers. To give you a timeline, I would say it will be up and running by January of '21. I think it will be ready before that, but to be practical with the holidays, I think the PowerPoint and the policy will be done in the next couple of weeks, the first of the year and then every year from there we're going to be teaching it to the officers in-service and obviously,

train it to the new recruit officers, scenario base training on Duty to Intervene. I hope that answers your question, in a couple of weeks.

Commissioner Townsend said okay, but in the interim what is the position of duty to intervene? **Interim Chief York** said we have been talking about it with the officers, they know about it. The position is you must intervene if you see any type of misconduct or an officer getting overly excited, it's mandatory that you intervene. That's been my position all along and we've been talking about it with the officers and they know about it. I'm confident that between now and the policy we're going to be right there when it comes to intervening.

Commissioner Townsend said (inaudible). **Mayor Alvey** said, Commissioner, I think we lost you. **Commissioner Townsend** said (inaudible). **Mayor Alvey** said, Commissioner, you keep cutting out. **Commissioner Townsend** asked, can you hear me? **Mayor Alvey** said we can, but it goes in and out. We're not hearing you Commissioner. I think we may have lost Commissioner Townsend. She'll come back on. In the meantime, Commissioner Philbrook.

Commissioner Philbrook said there has been so much said tonight that rings so true for me that it would be hard to nail it all down which is why I also took copious notes and I appreciate the hard work for the Task Force and the people stepping forward to use their love of our community and the fact that they really do have the integrity and the devotion to the safety and wellness for our community. That takes a lot of intestinal fortitude and a lot, lot, lot of devotion.

Having said all that, I do have to say that I have to apologize as an individual living in this community and have been here some 70ish years and I will tell you that I have to apologize. Yes, I see you Rev. Carter laughing at me, yep you got caught, but the point being is that I've lived here a long time and I saw some of things that we're talking about and I was—I don't know that I have an excuse. I didn't step forward on these things earlier on, so I owe a big apology to our community as just another human being living here and I want to—I thank you for giving me the opportunity now to step up to the plate and be part of the solution for some of our issues. So, thank you very much.

Mayor Alvey said, unfortunately, I don't see Commissioner Townsend back on and our time has ran out, but we will follow-up with Commissioner Townsend to make sure any questions that she has will be answered.

Again, I want to thank everyone for your commitment of time and passion and that's what it takes. Your openness and generosity to members of the Task Force, it has been an inspiration to me personally. Again, I want to offer a very special thanks to Commissioner Johnson. Harold, you are our rock star.

Commissioner Johnson said thank you Mayor. It's been a pleasure serving in this capacity. I hope that everybody can appreciate the seriousness of the issue that we're dealing with. The community is going to help keep us honest and I think that we need that. I look forward to a bright future in Wyandotte County. I do think we're right on the prefaces of something great that is not only going to be told in terms of an economic way, but also, in a social way that will be reflected in all of our community, so thank you, again, Mayor, for this opportunity.

**MAYOR ALVEY ADJOURNED
THE MEETING AT 6:51 p.m.**

Bridgette Cobbins
Unified Government Clerk

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