



Public Safety

BOL Meeting Minutes - Final

Committee Chair: Colin Smith

800 Michaelian Office Bldg.
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601
www.westchesterlegislators.com

Monday, March 1, 2021

3:00 PM

Committee Room

CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present, Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM.

Pursuant to Governor Andrew Cuomo's Executive Order No. 202.1, "Continuing Temporary Suspension and Modification of Laws Relating to the Disaster Emergency," which temporarily suspends portions of the New York State Open Meetings Law.

A section of the order, "Suspension of law allowing the attendance of meetings telephonically or other similar services," provides for the suspension of "Article 7 of the Public Officers Law, to the extent necessary to permit any public body to meet and take such actions authorized by the law without permitting in public in-person access to meetings and authorizing such meetings to be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the ability to view or listen to such proceeding and that such meetings are recorded and later transcribed."

Others in Attendance: BOL: James Silverberg, Amy Vele BOL Remote: Alfreda Williams, Damon Maher, David Tubiolo, Catherine Borgia, Terry Clements, Ruth Walter, Melanie Montalto, Jason Chervokas DPS: Commissioner Thomas Gleason, Captain William McGuinness, Lieutenant Nick Alongi, Sergeant Michael Brancamp CEO: Blanca Lopez, Copernicus Crane, Peri Kadanoff, Executive Director-Solid Waste Commission Others: Mayo Bartlett and Leroy Frazer

Present: Legislator Smith, Legislator Boykin and Legislator Covill

Remote: Legislator Barr, Legislator Cunzio, Legislator Johnson, Legislator Shimsky and Legislator Woodson-Samuels

MINUTES APPROVAL

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. 2021-154 2021 Westchester County Police Reform Report

Forwarding the 2021 Westchester County Police Reform and Reimaging Task Force Report
This County Executive Communication was placed directly into the Committee on Public Safety. It appears here for Tracking Purposes only.

Discussion on Training & Equipment

Guests:

Co-Chair Mayo Bartlett

Co-Chair Leroy Frazer

Blanca Lopez, Assistant Director of Operations- CE Office

Copernicus Crane, Assistant to the County Executive- CE Office

Peri Kadanoff, Executive Director- Westchester County Solid Waste Commission

Commissioner Thomas Gleason- Department of Public Safety

Captain William McGuinness- Department of Public Safety

Lieutenant Nicholas Alongi- Department of Public Safety

Sergeant Michael Brancamp- Department of Public Safety

Chairman Smith of the Public Safety Committee opened the meeting and thanked the members of the Westchester County Police Reform & Reimagining Task Force, the Department of Public Safety, and all the participants for making this process both informative and professional. He stated that the work we have done here will continue to benefit the residents of our County.

Co-chair Mayo Bartlett began the presentation from the Training and Equipment Working Group by noting the great relationship that Commissioner Gleason and the members of his Department had with the working group as they conducted their work. He also mentioned that the Department already far exceeds what is required of them by New York State. This working group looked at what are the best practices in police training, and what is the best non-lethal equipment available? This working group engaged in an evaluation of training at the Police Academy to determine whether the requirements mandated by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) were met or exceeded, and to determine whether additional training at the academy might be required in certain areas. There was also an analysis regarding whether there should be an extension of police officers' probationary period. The members of the Training and Equipment Working Group include:

- Thomas Gleason, Commissioner, Westchester County Dept. of Public Safety*
- Dr. DaMia Harris-Madden, Executive Director, Westchester County Youth Bureau*
- Rev. Dr. Stephen Pogue, Pastor, A.M.E. Zion Greater Centennial Church*
- Tejash Sanchala, Esq., Executive Director, Westchester County Human Rights*

Commission

- Robert Tucker, Chairman and CEO, T&M Protection Resources*
- Rev. Dr. Verlin D. Williams, Union Baptist Church, White Plains*
- Mayo Bartlett, Esq., Task Force Co-Chair*
- Leroy Frazer, Esq., Task Force Co-Chair*
- Peri Kadanoff, Esq. – Working Group Liaison*

The task force Co-chairs presented the recommendations which was followed by Commissioner Gleason giving his response to these recommendations on behalf of the Department of Public Safety. These are the recommendations from the Training and Equipment Working Group:

- Enhance Officer Training:*
 - o Amend WCDPS's in-service training requirement standards to include mandatory leadership/executive development training for second and third line supervisors annually.*

Training should include implicit bias on an annual basis.

- o Training records for all officers shall be reviewed to ensure that each officer has received basic CIT (Crisis Intervention Training).*

- o Recommend that WCDPS increase number of Patrol Officers and Supervisors receiving Advanced Crisis Intervention Training. Currently there are approximately 12 officers who have received Advanced CIT.*

- Develop a library of training videos – to be used to enhance in-service training and to share with other local police agencies.*

- Increase in-service training requirements – for WCDPS to include annual Unified In-Service Training for each of its members, including Public Safety Emergency Force (PSEF) Officers, in the areas of Bias Crimes/Incidents, Procedural Justice, Professional Communication and Tactical Perception (Cultural Competency and Implicit Bias).*

- Enhance orientation training for transfer officers – WCDPS should develop an expanded orientation training for transfer officers. Currently, the training for transfers at the Academy consists solely of firearms, Taser, O/C (pepper spray) and use of force. Recommended expanded training should include procedural justice, professional communications, tactical perception and crisis intervention training.*

- Increase training hours for the Police Academy's Basic Training Course for police officers to include one week devoted to Procedural Justice, Cultural Diversity, and Bias Crimes and Incidents.*

- WCDPS should develop and implement a Police Mobile Application allowing officers and members of the community to communicate and reference the department manual*

- Implement Project ABLE (Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement)*

- Identify liaison officers at each municipal police department who are trained to respond to hate incidents.*

- Update Section 273.01(3) of the County Public Safety Law in reference to hate crimes.*

- o This law, which requires local police departments to report hate crimes to the Commissioner of Public Safety should be amended to read "report hate incidents."*

- o Law should also include a requirement that the Commissioner of Public Safety furnish a copy of the incident reports to the Executive Director of the Westchester County Human Rights Commission*

- Allocate funding to support the uniform promulgation of Body Work Cameras (BWC) and appropriate shared-services databases.*

- Change Civil Service Law to extend the probationary period for new recruits for two years.*

- New actions by NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS):*

- o DCJS should reconsider the term Tactical Perception as it may not be well received by the community*

- o DCJS Law Enforcement Accreditation should be required for every Law Enforcement Agency in the state. At this time, approximately 25% of departments across the State are accredited. 50% of the departments in Westchester County have this accreditation.*

- o DCJS Training requirement standards should be amended to include mandatory leadership training for all second and third line supervisors annually.*

- o DCJS should mandate annual Unified In-Service Training for every police officer in the areas of Bias Crimes/Incidents, Procedural Justice, Professional Communication and Tactical Perception (Cultural Competency and Implicit Bias).*

Legislator Maher asked what is taught in terms of interrogation at the academy and for in-service training? Commissioner Gleason responded that generally in the County's

Department of Public Safety, interrogation is handled mostly by the detectives and not patrol officers. Therefore, it is not something that recruits get a lot of training on but is a bigger topic of conversation during criminal investigators courses and supervisor courses. Lieutenant Alongi responded that the interview and interrogation block for recruit school in one day which is the DCJS curriculum. He explained that it covers the basics of how to organize, how to ask questions, how to outline, how to establish rapport and so on.

Legislator Barr asked if the County Legislators could mandate that local municipality police department transfers must do training with the County Department of Public Safety? Mr. Bartlett responded that he believes that would have to come from DCJS and would require state actions. Commissioner Gleason responded that during this process the Department has already been doing some of these recommendations and have expanded upon or began implementing others if it were feasible. One that they have begun is developing a library of training videos that could be shared with other municipalities. Another one is enhancing orientation training for transfer officers coming into our department. Legislator Barr asked if the Department would need more resources to be able to go out to the municipalities and do more in-service training. Commissioner Gleason responded that they are currently at capacity for training with their current resources and if they were to start conducting in-service training for all the municipalities and departments in the County, they would need to expand the hours of operation and add more training officers to the program. Lieutenant Alongi stated that currently they are training anywhere between 22 and 29 different departments because sometimes with unified in-service training different departments find topics that they are interested in having their officers trained on. He added that they want to train all the departments in the County and the academy would be able to handle this training with more resources. He also noted that Legislator Barr brought up a hole in the training that covers transfers to municipalities, unless those officers come to the County for in-service training, the County may never have any dealings with those officers. Commissioner Gleason explained that the recommendation for all police agencies to become accredited would cause all officers within the County to be required to attend at least three days of mandatory in-service training with the County every year.

Legislator Shimsky asked who is it that trains the trainer and what kind of training do they get? Lieutenant Alongi responded that in order to become a trainer in the academy there is a couple of ways you can do it first is you have to become certified as a general topics instructor by the state and we give that course a couple times a year and it is called the instructor development course and during that course you have to learn to form a lesson plan, learn about how an adult learns compared to how children learn, and how to make presentations. For specialty topics, specialty instructor trainings are given by the state themselves so you would have to take State courses in order to be able to be certified in these areas to then become a trainer at the academy. The state has specialty certifications for almost every area such as use of force, mental health, procedural Justice and so forth. Commissioner Gleason added that recently the state has required field training officers to become a specific training, since years ago any officer could be a field training officer but now there is certain criteria that must be taught and certified for someone to teach a probationary officer how to be an officer. Legislator Shimsky asked what is the difference between field training and academy training? Lieutenant Alongi responded that field training is you are on the job training and academy training is the 21 weeks where the recruit takes courses both written and practical at the academy itself and instructed by academy instructors. He added that the field service training

is 160 hours, and it is not overseen by the county academy trainers but by the departments themselves.

Chair Smith asked about procedural justice and implicit bias training? Lieutenant Alongi responded that the WCPA has been doing procedural justice courses for a few years now in the recruit school and they started last year to provide it in the in-service training. He noted that last year NYS released a program called The Principal Policing Program which consists of procedural justice 1, procedural justice 2, and procedural justice 3. Procedural justice 1 covers procedural justice. Procedural justice 2 covers tactical perception. Procedural justice 3 covers tactical mindset (implicit bias). NYS created this three-part program in which each part builds off the previous. Lieutenant Alongi stated that after much fighting with NYS, they finally put out a train the trainer program which he and a few other supervisors from other agencies within the County took part of. This has given the WCPA a cadre of instructors to teach this program to recruits and in-service courses. He noted that this is not a NYS requirement, however the WCPA has added this to their curriculum. Chairman Smith asked what are the mechanisms used to measure the effectiveness of this training? Lieutenant Alongi responded that they focus on reality-based training and role play to best simulate this training. They use a diverse background of instructors to give recruits a real picture of the world and what they may be facing. The recruits are put into tough situations so that the instructors can evaluate how these recruits react. The WCPA covers over one week, 70+ hours of stress induced situations where recruits are faced with these situations. If the recruits do not behave or react in a manner that is appropriate, they are reevaluated and re-trained. Sergeant Brancamp noted that if recruits have issues with this training that their hiring agency is notified. Lieutenant Alongi added that NYS does provide them with packets that evaluate the scenario such as, did the recruit try to deescalate, did they act in a safe manner, were they polite and courteous, as well as police tactics, did they use their radio, did they stand correctly. Lieutenant Alongi stated that this is a program for building a better foundation for a police officer to understand how to interact with individuals and the community overall.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Legislator Shimsky, seconded by Legislator Cunzio, the Committee adjourned at 4:46 PM.