

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION – THOUGHTS ABOUT THE NEXT POLICE CHIEF

April 28, 2014

Participating community members provided their thoughts on the following questions, with people also signaling support of a prior comment with a green dot and disagreement with a pink dot.

How do you want the Police Department/Chief to interact with the community?

- Police Chief should/needs to understand the community where he/she is serving (green dot)
- Needs to interact very closely with the community (green dot)
- Utilize listening skills
- Government holds a monopoly on coercive use of force. Police are the agents of that monopoly. They must realize it is not an entitlement. It is a responsibility with potentially grave effects. BE HUMBLE
- Join the Chittenden county domestic and sexual violence task force meetings (3 green dots)

What does public engagement mean to you when thinking about the Police Department?

- Transparency about who the candidates are and who is making the decision on hiring the next chief
- Utilizing Police commission as venue to solicit public participation in police issues (2 green dots)
- Responding promptly to emails (like Mike)
- When no one is afraid to approach a cop
- When cops walk and talk. Participate in public meetings not about police work. (green dot)
- New American afraid with the police. So, new chief needs to bring some awareness & programs. (green dot)
- Use proactive approach not expect people to approach police
- Creating, updating, and maintaining processes that seek to effectively include members of the community who may not be supported by our culture/society to believe their voices and experiences matter. This includes (but not limited to) people of color (specifically African American and Latinos), members of the queer community (especially transgender), youth and the poorest members of our city.

How can the new chief continue to build greater trust and respect between law enforcement and the community they serve?

- Include diverse population (green dot)
- Work closely with law enforcement & the community
- Make clear arrest and citations are a last resort
- Come out and meet people during “black lives matter” types of events (green dot)
 - Doesn’t have to be chief
 - Would be right to serve to serve hot chocolate or lemonade
- “Least force necessary” policy. Use techniques of non-violence. Use of active de-escalation (compassion). No strike policy. (2 green dots)
- Building, updating, and prompting ways for community members to share their grievances, negative experiences with officers and or staff in a way that keeps them (the community

member airing the grievance) protected and holds officers sighted in their grievance accountable

How do you currently stay informed about public safety and policing in Burlington?

- Work closely with media, city
- Nixle (3 green dots)
- Community events (2 green dots)
- ONE nest (green dot)
- Media, talking with people (green dot)
- I don't.....but feel guilty about it (green dot)

What other ways would you like the Police Department to keep the public informed of public safety issues/updates?

- By educating the uneducated people through other non-profit organizations who work closely with such kind of community
- By organizing different workshops & seminars
- Through media
- I want policing to be DRIVEN by comments made by citizens in PUBLIC forums, like neighborhood assemblies
- Walk up to citizens and start talking "How are you today?"
- More assertive, creative, and aggressive use of social media such as Facebook and Front Porch Forum around nuts and bolts issues such as the recent spate of break-ins in the NNE and car-bicycle accidents in the city and region (green dot)

What knowledge/skills/abilities/attitudes are most important when thinking about how mental health issues and substance abuse/prevention overlap with law enforcement?

- Recognizing the value that the mental health community brings to our city
- Ability to collaborate with local social service agencies to help
- Emphasizing the value of police not engaging with persons having mental health episodes to avoid that person getting arrested for assaulting an officer
- Recognizing how mental health difficulties are manifested in behavior
- "needs to be recognizing purely and correctly"
- Need to hire the right person to deal with mental health issues
- A basic knowledge base of psychological diagnosis and how it affects behavior
- Attitude equals empathy
- Training on mental illness and the ability to recognize different mental illnesses
- Continuation of partnership with crisis workers
- Require social services education; have background check to ensure emotional help
- Attitude that recognizes the ongoing research that shows effective ways to address substance abuse and mental illness. For example, increased treatment and support programs for drug users and community members with mental illness rather than incarceration. Building ways to connect and not isolate addicts, drug users and community members with mental illness.

What is the most important quality in the next Police Chief?

- A combination of communication, emotional intelligence, evenness, good judgement, knowledge and relational skills, good listener and a leader of people
- To listen and receive information with an open mind
- Willingness to learn more about the barriers that the homeless population faces and how that could affect their ability to follow the law
- Continued openness to the fact that we live in an increasingly diverse community with all the challenges that implies
- Ability to hear a diversity of concerns and experiences from the community, especially those of the most vulnerable and translate that into policies and procedures that will support the entire police force in addressing those concerns and experiences in a meaningful and continual way
- Good in building public relationships in the community
- Kind hearted and inclusive hearted
- Good listener, mediation skills able to diffuse or control a potentially critical situation

What qualities will be most needed in a leader 3-5 years from now?

- Respect for democratic principles, transparency, insistence on public safety as mission not control. Accountability in public forums
- Commitment to best practice standards, evidence-based policies and procedures
- Recognizing the ways in which our community is growing and changing and growing and changing to meet new needs that may arise for the community
- Ability to know when to follow and when to lead
- Utilizing technology, like body cameras, in open dialogue with the community
- Involving all affected parties in excessive force disputes, including bystanders
- “Qualities needs to be increase as per the city needs and as per community needs”

What specific things would you like to see the new police chief due in terms of police operations?

Keep the same? Do less of or stop?

- I'd like more police presence in neighborhoods and less on church street
- More communication
- Discuss bicycle protection
- Less harassment of the homeless
- In 30 years, I have only been upset by two things done by BPD: 1) the preparation, action and outcome of the BPD's handling of the national governments political action 2) 1-2 instances of officers using lethal force too quickly
- Keep working with Women Helping Battered Women through the LAP
- Find new ways to support victims of domestic abuse when an incident results in the need for an emergency RFA
- New chief needs to be as skilled as the last chief

How might changes in technology affect BPD in the future?

- Social media means the reporting and accountability of police activity
- When a video recording of police activity is taken, that video should be held by a third party or an elected review panel empowered to elect what video to make public

- Continued support for body-worn cameras
- Supporting laws that protect people's privacy
- Continue to have advanced technology like body cameras

What knowledge/skills/abilities/attitudes about restorative justice, supporting victims and alternatives to the traditional criminal justice systems are needed in the new police chief?

- Understanding about domestic abuse, WHBW and how the lethality assessment protocol works and why it is important
- Prioritizing the needs and safety concerns of victims by soliciting their expertise on the needs and experiences of victims
- Ability to see "big picture" and to understand the perspectives of community partners even when in disagreement
- Conflict resolution skills
- Public speaking
- Solid understanding of these topics, knowledge of what's already happening in these areas, ideas for building on current programs and collaborations. Buy into the importance of this work within BPD and in the community

What knowledge/skills/abilities/attitudes about cultural competence are needed in the new Police Chief?

- Ability to be role-model for the department in acknowledging personal bias and being willing to lead discussion about the importance of anti-bias policy/policing standards
- Economic and social power are the locations of bias. Bias-free means all citizens, including the homeless and those being arrested are treated with dignity and respect
- Understanding of why one's culture might affect their ability to leave an abusive relationship and why the officers may be consistently responding to the same home because of that
- Respect and be a good role model for the diverse cultures of the community
- Hiring based on languages known

What knowledge/skills/abilities/attitudes are most important when thinking about the needs of area businesses? Schools and education?

- Attention to town/gown issues and how to integrate students and the academic community with policing issues. (3 green dots)
- Awareness of community policing strategies.
- Supporting/understanding alternative responses to shoplifting that allow businesses to feel supported.
- Marketplace – balancing people's rights with the desires of the businesses.
- Officer training so a new employee knows the community wants the noise ordinance enforced the 1st time. (no warnings)
- Mental health awareness and how to deal with these issues.
- Everyone needs a place to live.

Questions we are not asking but should?

- That depends on what questions you are asking. (green dot)
- What are the new chief's thoughts on how to serve or work with the homeless population?
- What are the new chiefs thought on how to reach new American population community?
- What is the chief's approach to using social media to inform and engage with the community?

How could the new chief help grow existing partnerships and/or build new partnerships with other agencies/programs/organizations?

- Built new partnerships with new communities
- Develop new programs for the new community
- Develop inclusive relationships
- Up-down (agency wide) messaging and culture among staff on importance of building/deepening of partnerships.
- Youth internships for community outreach (This would be much more likely to attract marginalized youth if it were a PAID internship.) (Yellow dot)
- Youth on the Police Commission
- Continue to utilize the lethality assessment protocol to its fullest potential, this will strengthen BPD's connection with WHBW.
- Having a relationship with the community and its members by having more involvement and different functions.
- Ability to reach out personally and connect.
- Remember you are a part of the community, not apart from the community. You hold the power of violence. Use it only at an absolute minimum!
- Proactive outreach to new American organizations to break down barriers and build bridges.

How can the new chief support greater police awareness and sensitivity to culture competence and equity in policing?

- Continued engagement with race-data collection initiative. (green dot)
- Implicit bias training for all officers and staff and ongoing programs available to and made mandatory for officers and staff who are reported, especially multiple times, as perpetuating racism and/or oppression of vulnerable individuals/groups of individuals in the community. (2 green dots)
- Offer training to the community and develop now programs.
- Support community events, being involved with a variety of people in positive situations.