

## South Portland Police Services Review Working Group

# Meeting Notes for Meeting Two

Tuesday, November 17, 2020, 4:30pm–6:00pm, Online

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## Attendance

### Working Group Members Present

- Aaron Amede, Resident
- Kathleen Babeu, Social Services Director
- Dana Baldwin, Behavior Health Liaison
- April Caricchio, Councilor
- Craig Freshley, Facilitator
- Greg L'Heureux, Finance Director
- Margarita Salguero-Macklin, Resident
- Timothy Sheehan, Police Chief
- Pedro Vazquez, Resident
- James Wilson, Fire Chief

### Working Group Members Absent

- None

## Meeting Objectives

- Establish our Operating Guidelines, Project Outline, and the dates of all our meetings.
- Achieve consensus on a definition of “escalated response” and begin to discuss evidence and examples.
- Get to know each other and look forward to our work together.

## Agenda

4:30

### **Opening**

Facilitator Craig Freshley will welcome everyone and explain the meeting agenda and a few meeting guidelines.

4:35

### **Setting the Stage**

We will review our charge from City Council and also Operating Guidelines and a Project Outline developed by the facilitator. We will discuss these things to make sure we all understand and approve how the Working Group will conduct its business.

- 4:55      **Escalation and Evidence**  
We will discuss the meaning of “escalated response” and explore if we think there is evidence or examples of this in South Portland. In our discussion we will turn first to the expertise and experience of Police Chief Tim Sheehan, Behavioral Health Liaison Dana Baldwin, and Fire Chief Jim Wilson.
- 5:35      **Meeting Schedule and Next Steps**  
We will establish dates and times for all Working Group Meetings through February. We will also discuss immediate next steps including the Agenda for our next meeting.
- 5:50      **Closing Comments**  
Each member of the Working Group will be encouraged to make a brief last comment such as a reflection on our first facilitated meeting and/or a hope for the future.
- 6:00      **Adjourn**

## Opening Remarks

Facilitator Craig Freshley made the following remarks.

- To prepare for this meeting and this work, over the past couple weeks I have had had one-on-one conversations with each member of the Working Group. I asked about your goals and your concerns and I have asked for your advice. Based on those conversations I developed our Operating Guidelines and the agenda for today’s meeting.
- The City Council order that formed this Working Group was initiated by Councilor Misha Pride. I have talked with Councilor Pride who explained to me this was in response to constituent concerns reflecting national concerns. By establishing the Working Group he makes no judgement against the South Portland Police Department.
  - In fact, even though there were calls to defund the police, the City Council decided not to do that. Rather, let’s take a look to see if national concerns ARE South Portland concerns. That’s what this is about.
- I get that there are strong feelings on both sides of this.
- On the one hand, I have been told that
  - Black and brown people and LGBT people in South Portland are afraid of the police.
  - I have been told that the arrest and summons rate among black and brown people is higher than that among white people.

- And I have heard horrific stories from across the country about escalated responses when a uniformed, armed officer engages with a black or brown person. We all witnessed what happened to George Floyd and many others.
- Yet on the other hand I have also heard much praise for the South Portland Police Department.
  - This Police Department was the first in Maine to complete the IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police) One Mind Campaign. In fact, 100% of the officers CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) trained.
  - Also the first to adopt a body-worn camera policy and program.
  - Also this department is amongst a small group of Maine law enforcement agencies to achieve national accreditation through CALEA and also Maine State accreditation.
- And I have heard much praise for the Police Chief and for Dana Baldwin, the Department's Behavioral Health Liaison.
  - Yet this work is not about people. It's not about Dana or the Chief or any particular City Councilor or any particular person.
- This work is about the system of call response here in South Portland.
- Is it a problem here? That's our question.
- And if so, how can we improve the system.

## Operating Guidelines

Facilitator Craig Freshley explained the following guidelines.

**There was group Consensus to honor these guidelines.**

### Our Charge

This is an abbreviated version. For the complete version see City Council Order #63-20/2

1. Define "escalated response"

AND

2. Determine if there's evidence of escalated responses in South Portland due to the presence of a uniformed, armed police officer AND that individuals in need of assistance do not receive assistance.
  - a. We're supposed to use statistics and examples to answer this question
  - b. We're also supposed to consider cost savings, stress on police officers, and resident health and welfare

AND

3. Research and evaluate other response models and if they would be helpful or necessary for South Portland

AND

4. Provide a recommendation to City Council that includes
  - a. Review of options studies
  - b. Statement of the problem here in South Portland
  - c. Cost estimate
  - d. Measurable outcomes

OR

5. Provide a review of options and an explanation of why the Working Group believes there is not, or likely to be, a problem in South Portland.

#### Meeting Guidelines

- 1. Meetings are audio and video recorded**

Recordings are to be publicly available after each meeting.

- 2. Chat on the side**

Chat comments are saved and are provided to Working Group members and are publicly available after each meeting. The Facilitator and Working Group members are not expected to read or respond to Chat comments while the meeting is in progress.

- 3. Proper names in Zoom**

This is so complete and correct names appear for the benefit of viewers.

- 4. Facilitator in charge**

The facilitator will run the meetings including calling on people and calling for consensus and for votes.

- 5. Room for all views**

The facilitator will deliberately seek comments from the less talkative.

- 6. Written themes and conclusions as we go**

The facilitator will make notes on the screen for participants to react to.

- 7. Open mindedness and appreciated**

Withhold judgement – it's okay to change your mind – no one decides 'til we all decide.

## **8. Respect for all, always**

We don't take or make things personal. This is not about people but positions.

## **9. Let's model how to do this**

People are watching how we honor and blend our different views.

### Other Guidelines

#### **1. Stay on focus**

We will not stray from our charge

#### **2. No Chair or Vice-Chair**

All equal – facilitator serves the group as a whole

#### **3. Decisions by consensus with votes when needed**

- A. Work hard to understand the situation and each other
- B. Understand and try to accommodate concerns
- C. Look for agreement and be flexible
- D. Calls for consensus have three options
  - Support
  - Stand aside to allow to proceed
  - Block for the good of the group
- E. If the facilitator determines that consensus cannot be reached within a reasonable time, a vote will be called and the majority of those present will decide.
- F. All decisions of the group will be recorded on the spot in writing

#### **4. Agendas decided by the Facilitator with input**

Working Group members encouraged to email comments to the Facilitator after each meeting about the next meeting agenda

#### **5. Public comment via email**

- A. Anyone may email comments to [ServiceCallComments@SouthPortland.org](mailto:ServiceCallComments@SouthPortland.org) at anytime. All such comments shall be distributed to all members of the Working Group, the Facilitator, and the City Manager.
- B. All comments will be acknowledged but questions will not be answered. Comments should be respectful and helpful.
- C. The Working Group may allow additional means of public comment further along in its process and anticipates a more robust public input process at such time that City Council's takes up recommendations.

## 6. Notes provided by the Facilitator

Highlight notes of each meeting with basic information, themes, and conclusions will be prepared and provided by the Facilitator.

## 7. All documents publicly available

Via the City's website, all agendas, notes, and other meeting materials will be available to the public. Agendas will be posted on Thursday the week before any scheduled meeting.

## Comments about the process

- This is not a two-sided thing.
- We need to focus not just on black and brown people but also on poor people, house-less people, and others disadvantaged.
- Need to recognize that there are people not here with us but we need to recognize them anyway.
- Glad to hear we will be operating from a place of discernment, not a place of judgement.
- Use mechanical raise hands when possible, but not necessary.
- See us all as working for the best of the community and a police agency we are proud of.

## Escalated Response Definition

As per our charge, the group discussed how to define “escalated response.”

### Ideas

- Something that otherwise would have ended in peaceful fashion but for the mere presence someone or something that brings some level of trauma, anxiety, or intimidation to a person suffering or in crisis.
- An interaction that starts civil and then turns contentious for whatever reason (for instance, due to the presence of an armed uniformed officers.
- Clarified that even though a response is not escalated, it still might not be appropriate.
  - Example
    - An individual who had no access to a bathroom and behaving inappropriately
    - No compassion for a frustrated person
    - Not listening well

- Inappropriate responses can contribute to escalation
- Pedro's story
  - Armed police response to children in the street seems out of balance with the threat
  - The activities and questioning of the officer seemed disrespectful and escalated
  - The Police Chief clarified that, from the call that comes in, the level of threat to safety is difficult to tell
- We need to stay focused on what's happening here in South Portland
- Recognized that we want the police to be proactive to protect safety, yet "proactive events" run a risk of escalation

### Consensus

After significant discussion and a recognition that this definition could be changed later, **there was group Consensus on the following definition:**

An "escalated response" is a civil situation that turns unnecessarily contentious for the mere presence of someone or something (such as the showing up of a South Portland armed, uniformed Police officer) that brings some level of trauma, anxiety, or intimidation to a person suffering or in crisis.

### Meeting Schedule

After discussion **there was group Consensus on the following meeting schedule:**

All meetings 5pm to 7pm on Zoom

- Thursday, December 3, 2020
- Thursday, December 10, 2020
- Thursday, December 17, 2020
- Thursday, January 7, 2021
- Thursday, January 14, 2021
- Thursday, January 21, 2021 (if needed)
- Wednesday, January 27, 2021

### Police Department Presentation

Police Chief Tim Sheehan presented a slide show called "SPPD CFS Workshop Presentation - 2020-11-17." The slides were explained quickly and there was no time for questions. The slideshow is available at the PSRWG page of the City's website.

## Closing Comments

- At the next meeting I hope we can see call logs from both the Police Department and Fired Department from the time of pre-COVID and pre-George Floyd.
- Craig will send the Chief's PowerPoint to everyone right away.
- Very encouraged by the apparent strong committee and dedication of people on this committee.
- Grateful to work with the police officers from a social work perspective. Our officers love helping people. And at the same time, there is always room for improvement.
- Dana clarified that she would not be going on calls without an officer. She likes the co-response model.
- Looking forward to this work.
- It would be good to have specific data by specific dates. Yet on the other hand there is a need to protect privacy and addresses.
- Chief Sheehan referenced a 15-page document that he recently sent to the Working Group.

## Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:15pm

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## Chat

Here is the record of Chat from the meeting:

00:29:42 Craig Freshley, Facilitator: -----

Today's Agenda

4:30 Opening

4:35 Setting the Stage

4:55 Escalation and Evidence

5:35 Meeting Schedule and Next Steps

5:50 Closing Comments

6:00 Adjourn

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All documents here:

<https://bit.ly/3f95eFO>

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From Me to Panelists and Attendees: (4:29 PM)

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ServiceCallComments@SouthPortland.org

All emails sent to this address will be shared with all members of the Working Group, the City Manager, and the Facilitator

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01:00:15 Adam Rice: i am the person april spoke with about the bathroom. the woman is banned from social service offices. she ultimately soiled herself and couldn't even access a place to change without facing arrest. we were able to remedy this luckily on sunday, but trespass orders and fear of arrest create huge barriers to accessing help.

01:02:14 Adam Rice: another issue is police throwing away belongings of unhoused residents living outside not by choice. we are finding people daily whom have had their tents cut by offocers and sleeping bags thrown away. this can result in health issues and death. policy change could easily end this from subjecting community members to additional unnecessary harm

01:03:00 Aaron Amede, Resident: thank you for that input Adam

01:03:13 April Caricchio, City Councilor: yes ty

01:04:05 Adam Rice: always happy to speak with yall further another time about the incidents in our unhoused community. im at 2073324533 whitefawkes3@protonmail.com and a resident of South Portland

01:05:26 April Caricchio, City Councilor: thank you and I believe we will all be having a lot of these conversations and your outreach work is extremely important.

01:12:22 Adam Rice: for context, there have been 3 overdose deaths at the location where we were surveilled trying to legally distribute narcan at that location. many people with substance use disorder are afraid to seek help when they fear arrest

01:19:27 Adam Rice: these same risks tend to occur wherever unhoused community members access emergency shelter. with many utilizing hotels in south portland, it becomes our local issue. i think by addressing trauma and stigma we may well see better outcomes from many interactions where nobody intended to cause harm. thank you to all panelists <3

01:24:20 April Caricchio, City Councilor: Chief Sheehan hope you are good with that definition?

01:49:28 April Caricchio, City Councilor: Chief can you send that via email?