

## Village of Brockport Advisory Committee on Police Reform and Reinvention

Meeting Minutes September 23, 2020, 7PM, LGI Room, Oliver Middle School, 40 Allen Street

Attending in person:

Co-Chair Mayor Margay Blackman, Co-Chair Trustee Annie Crane, Chief Mark Cuzzupoli, Village Clerk/Manager Erica Linden, Lt. Steve Mesiti, Monroe County Legislator Jackie Smith, Karen LoBracco, Dan Brockway, Patrenia Owens, Robert LeSuer, Melanie McDonald, Orlando Benzan

Attending via Zoom:

Katy Wilson, Howard Ward

Excused: Bill Plews

Virtual Public Participation: Livestream on Facebook/Village of Brockport by Susan Smith; email questions or comments to [mblackman@brockportny.org](mailto:mblackman@brockportny.org).

Guests: Lee Struble and Clifton H, Manns, Sr. from WSM Trainers and Consultants

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm

**Lt. Mesiti** was asked to speak and answer questions about training and use of force, especially those issues not answered in our last meeting.

Points made by Lt. Mesiti:

### Training:

- All the agencies in Monroe County cooperate and work together on training.
- Reality Based Training (RBT) evolved from firearms training, which had been mostly target training and therefore not dynamic enough. Realistic scenarios are set up to test the officer's reaction and train toward the desired goal. "The body can't go where the mind has not already been." Soap/paint cartridges are used as ammunition in RBT. Officers are stressed during RBT. Part of the training is dealing with the stress. RBT is stopped when the Officer errs, to work through the scenario, with a thorough debriefing afterwards. Not all RBT is firearms based. Some RBT is practice talking through a situation.
- Enhanced training provided by the County: topics are chosen by the agency Chiefs by consensus and have included de-escalation drills and school shootings.
- In house training: Classic firearms training in the spring and Reality Based Training (RBT) in the fall. Also CPR and taser refreshers.
- Specialty training BPD has received includes K9, drug recognition, defensive tactics, and Taser instructor.

Discussion:

Q: Karen asked about topics covered in the Academy that are not covered in Brockport's in-house training.

A: Chief answered that the Academy's curriculum includes firearms, defensive tactics, pepper spray, tasers and decision making.

Q: Jackie asked about de-escalation training.

A: It is actually part of all training.

Q: Bob asked if any assessment was done to demonstrate proficiency.

A: Some training involves testing; some are just participation and in some the Officer must demonstrate proficiency in a technique before progressing in that training.

- Tasers- Brockport and East Rochester were the first in the County to acquire. Lt. Mesiti stated that use of tasers saves lives. They got a bad rap in the beginning, as some people did die after their use. As a result taser use has been refined. It is a last resort before use of firearm. Use involves two darts, straight fishhook style, 3/4" long that stick in the body. Officers aim for one above belt-line, one below. Darts interfere with the nervous system system. The goal is to disable the back.
- Pepper Spray: We use non alcohol based pepper spray because alcohol based spray would present a fire hazard if the person was also tased.
- Hollow-point bullets vs ball ammunition: we use hollow point. Ball ammunition can keep going through a person and wound more than one person. Can also go through walls and fences. Hollow points expand on impact, cause damage and stop. The hit ratio when firearm is uses on the scent is about 30%. The goal is to have the bullets on target do the job and minimize other persons getting harmed.

Q: Bob asked if the intent is to kill when a firearm is used.

A: The intent is to stop the threat. Unfortunately that often results in death.

Q: Dan asked if they had done research into less-lethal ammunition such as rubber bullets.

A: Rubber bullets are shotgun ammunition.

**Lee Struble and Clifton H. Manns, Sr.** introduced themselves and provided some of their background information. Mr. Struble's career has been in campus safety, Mr. Mann's in the Rochester Police Department. Their firm specializes in racial diversity training. Most of their clients have been colleges and universities, but they are currently working with more police departments.

Their programs include “train the trainer” programs to enable departments to do diversity training in-house. There is a need to sustain and refresh this type of training. They are frequently called in after there is an incident. Their comments:

- Training is expensive, as it pulls officers off patrol and incurs overtime. The Rochester Police Department cut budgets for training twenty years ago and we see the results now.
- Their program consists of a two day training. Day one is a presentation of the historical connection between racism and policing. In many parts of the country, policing started with slave recovery. They discuss the origin of the N-word. There is usually a small group project overnight. Day two involves compliance, communication, verbal judo, role playing, and ethical intervention (how to take over from another officer). Each training is individualized to the particular needs and situation of the organization receiving the training.
- The train the trainer program is a three day course taken after the two day course.
- There is currently very little training in communication, and it is important of be able to communicate when angry or stressed. Diversity training and effective communication go together.
- Police Unions are powerful and are legally required to represent their members, regardless of the offense.

Q: Jackie asked if BPD has received this type of training.

A: Chief replied probably portions of it.

Dan commented that in order for diversity training to be effective the trainees need to be open to the training. Q: How often do they get resistance? A: We need to engage to make a difference. That is why 90 minute online training usually doesn't work.

Q: Melanie asked if any chiefs have gone through the train the trainer program.

A: some, but usually it is a training Sargent. Some Chiefs sit through the training with their officers.

Q: Bob asked the Mayor and Chief - Given that training is hard, expensive and hard to assess, how do we decide how much of taxpayers money to spend on it?

Q: Karen commented that we live in a racist society. One way to address that is through personal reflection. We can provide policy, but not thoughts. Are you training for policy?

A: training provides more tools and dialog is very important.

Q: Melanie told of being on a field trip with inner city students and being followed by police. Were they being followed because of unconscious bias? Can a two day training effectively deal with unconscious bias?

A: it's a start. Cited Michael Jackson song about the *Man in the Mirror*.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm