

Minutes of Listening Session for the Coalition on Community Safety and Engagement, Town of Yorktown held via Zoom Video Conference on Thursday, November 19, 2020, 363 Underhill Avenue, Yorktown Heights, New York 10598.

Representatives from the Town of Yorktown Present:

Matthew J. Slater, Supervisor
Edward Lachterman, Councilman
Vishnu Patel, Councilman
Alice E. Roker, Councilwoman

Diana L. Quast, Town Clerk

Robert Noble, Chief of Police
Adam Rodriguez, Town Attorney

Members of the Coalition on Community Safety and Engagement Present:

James Poulin
Paul Cirillo
John Lanza
RoseMarie Panio
Toni Reynolds
Liz Rivera
Rabbi Robbie Weiner

Community Partners Present:

Daks Armstrong, Yorktown for Justice
Judyth Stavans, Yorktown for Justice

Mary Patricia Long, Legal Aid Society
Steve Ronco, Westchester County District Attorney's Office

Members of the Public Present:

Ariana Aboulatia
Zachary Bocian
John DelVecchio

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Good evening, Yorktown. My name is Matt Slater, Town Supervisor. Thank you for joining us. This is another meeting of the Yorktown Coalition on Community Safety and Engagement. This is our second listening session. We had a workgroup meeting last week where Chief Noble provided more education and a great presentation on some of the policies of the police department. But I'm going to ask everyone who can to please rise and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance and we'll begin that way. Thank you.

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Thank you. And if you can all join me in a quick moment of silence. We pray for our neighbors, we pray for our neighboring communities, we pray for our loved ones who are battling this terrible COVID virus. And as we pray for guidance, understanding and peace in these difficult times. I really should have let Rabbi Robbie lead us in a moment of silence.

Rabbi Robbie Weiner:

You did a great job. That's actually a great lead in to encouraging everyone to join our interfaith Thanksgiving service on Sunday, four o'clock, that's with all the churches and synagogues in the area. Four o'clock Sunday, go to the First Presbyterian Church website.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

That's great. I'll be there. I didn't realize that, it was like calling for the ball when I got Michael Jordan on the screen.

Rabbi Robbie Weiner:

No, no, no, you did. Fabulous.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

All right.

Rabbi Robbie Weiner:

I'm glad to know, I am retired. That was good.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Thank you again, everyone for joining us. This is a listening session of the Yorktown Coalition on Community Safety and Engagement. As a reminder, this is in response to Executive Order 203, that was passed down by Governor Andrew Cuomo following the murder of George Floyd amongst other events within our society. We have met several times so far. We have some great guests joining us. I just want to introduce quickly the members of the Coalition. We have Toni Reynolds, Jim Poulin, Paul Cirillo, Rabbi Robbie Weiner, our in house Michael Jordan, we have Liz Rivera, Peter Lanza and RoseMarie Panio, also joined by our Police Chief Robert Noble. And I see we have with us tonight members of the Town Board: Councilwoman Alice Roker, and Councilman Ed Lachterman. And I see that we have joining us quite a few. I apologize - my screen doesn't hold everyone. We have Daks Armstrong, from Yorktown for Justice, one of our Coalition Community Partners, and I see we have Councilman Vishnu Patel also with us. And if I haven't recognized her yet, I'll record if I did, I'll recognize her twice and that's our Town Clerk Diana Quast, who's been great helping us organize these Zoom meetings and her office has been great in producing minutes that we will be including in the final report. So again, this is a listening session. This is where the Yorktown Coalition is looking to hear from members of the public on their experiences and viewpoints of the Yorktown Police Department. I'm going to begin by stating that we have received several pieces of correspondence from the public. Some are signed, some are anonymous, and we also have correspondence from both school superintendents, Dr. Ronald Hatter and Dr. Brendan Lyons. All correspondence has been shared with the Coalition and that correspondence is being taken into consideration by the Coalition as we continue to proceed in our deliberations. I don't know if anyone from the Coalition wants to speak further on that. Okay, then having said that, we will begin with our listening session. Actually I will turn it over to our Town Clerk Diana Quast, who is going to be letting us know who we're going to be hearing from tonight.

Town Clerk Diana Quast:

We've had a lot of people request to come on whether they want to speak or not, I'm not sure. So I think that we're just going to have to go through the list.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

If we can start with the people who requested to speak.

Town Clerk Diana Quast:

Hold on one second. Zachary, did you want to speak tonight?

Zachary Bocian:

Yes, I think me and Miss Aboulatia would like to speak. So I'm going to let her start and give her the floor.

Ariana Aboulatia:

Thank you, Zack. Thank you, Miss Quast. I appreciate all that you've done to get us registered for this. Really appreciate your correspondence. I want to first thank everyone for having these sessions and being open to having these discussions with community members. The Supervisor, the Council Members, I want to say a particular hello to Rabbi Robbie. You Bat Mitzvah'ed me; it's been a while but you look great. My name is Ariana Aboulatia. I want to start by with a quick introduction. I went to Yorktown schools my entire life; I've lived in Yorktown my entire life. I was Senate President in 2012. I graduated high school in 2012. I went to college at the University of Southern California, a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. I went to law school at the University of Miami School of Law, I have a JD from the University of Miami with a concentration in Social Justice and Public Interest and I am currently an Assistant Public Defender at the Miami Dade Public Defender's Office. My job starts in January and I'm waiting for Bar results as of right now. So really, where I come from on the policing issue is that while I was in law school, one of the topics that I wrote about was hyper-virality of police violence, focusing at that time on cases such as Philando Castile and Eric Garner and obviously, the recent events really sort of play into that particular area. So, one of the things that I would like to speak about is body cams, and just how, from my scholarship from my research, I think that body cams can benefit the officers and the public as well. So, I'm going to try to keep it pretty brief. One of the things I wanted to start with is Sir Robert Peel, basically known as the father of policing. He had nine principles of policing. One of his main principles was that the power of police to fulfill functions and duties is dependent on public approval of existence, actions, behavior, and their ability to secure and maintain public respect. And really, body cams are a way to enhance that public approval, facilitate the maintenance of public respect because they benefit the public and they benefit officers. I have quite a few statistics here and the ones that I would like to start with are the local ones. Westchester Magazine ran an article in 2016 that noted Greenberg, Ossining, and Peekskill Police Departments all implement body cam programs for their officers. In the first year that Ossining used the cameras, there was a reduction in civilian complaints, which Westchester Magazine noted is a major indicator for public satisfaction with the department. In that same article, the police chief of Peekskill at that time, Eric Johansen, (I'm not quite sure if he's still the police chief there) noted the body cams help temper civilian behavior. He basically said when officers interact with civilians that civilians tend to be on their best behavior if they know that they're on candid camera, as it were, and that that can help protect officers. He also noted that they played an important role in the prosecution of cases. The Peekskill Police Department has used body cam footage and DUI prosecutions, resisting arrest cases, and even homicide. More recently, in the wake of the death of George Floyd, Supervisor as you mentioned, the Yonkers Police Department has recently agreed

to a 90-day trial of body cams. It does appear, I believe, that trial began in August, which would mean that it would be up right around now. But I believe that their plan is that they're going to attempt to free up the funding to continue to use body cams. So, I really wanted to start with those things because those are our neighbors, right? Greenberg and Ossining and Peekskill and Yonkers. And those statistics, in terms of body cams, being useful for prosecutions tampering down civilian behavior. If a civilian is going to be combative with an officer, protecting officers and enhancing public trust, those are statistics that are echoed really sort of throughout the whole country. There's a 2016 Global multi-site randomized controlled trial, where researchers found that body cams decrease use-of-force incidents, when officers activate the cameras upon arrival at the scene. In 2017, there was a randomized control trial with 400 police officers in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. The research team there found that officers with body-worn cameras generated fewer use of force reports and complaints from civilians, sort of as you saw in Ossining, fewer complaints from civilians, compared to officers without body-worn cameras. Also, officers with body-worn cameras issue higher numbers of arrests and citations compared to officers without body-worn cameras. Again, there is another one in another study in Rialto, California, which noted that there were similar decreases and civilian complaints lodged against officers who were wearing body-worn cameras, as well as decreases in use of force. There's another similar study in Arizona State, fewer incidents of use of force, fewer complaints, higher numbers of citizen complaints resolved in an officer's favor, regarding body cams. And, you know, one thing that I really want to highlight as well as that, there's a 2017 survey from the Pew Research Center, which found that 93% of respondents favored police wearing body cams. Similarly, 2017 survey from Penn State found that 88% of respondents feel safer around police officers when cops are wearing cameras. So, what all of these statistics are to say, and Zach, I think has dropped a few of these resources that I've said it because I know I've thrown a lot at you, but I want to be brief. And I want to respect your time. So, I apologize if it's if it's been a little bit of a resource extravaganza, but really what all these statistics are just say is that body cams facilitate the maintenance of public respect. They keep officers safe, and they enhance trust between the officers and the public. I think that our neighbors are using them, and we're seeing good results, and for those reasons I think that it would be extremely beneficial, again, for the officers, for civilians, that Yorktown also adopt a body-worn camera policy.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

All right, thank you, Ariana. Really appreciate that. Zach, did you want to say a few words on the matter?

Zachary Bocian:

Absolutely. I want to thank Ariana for everything that she said and all the work she did. And I hope you guys will take a look at the links that we provided for you. I am going to follow her up and come from a little bit of a different perspective. A little background on me. I graduated from Yorktown High School in 2013. I graduated Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude from Elon University, and I'm currently a Dean's Merit Scholar at Rutgers Law School. So, I'm a baby lawyer, as they say, I'm coming to talk to you all as someone who loves where I grew up. I'm someone who cares about where I grew up. Someone who knows several of the officers currently serving and many who have come and gone. I want to contextualize a lot of what Ariana said in Yorktown's specific situation. We're not here to condemn or anything of that ilk of the police department. We think you guys are great and we want to make sure that work continues. The average cost of a body camera on a police officer is \$700 to \$800. It's a little more to mitigate that footage, transcribe that footage, and archive that footage. The Yorktown Police Department receives between \$10 and \$11 million of the town budget per year. That's also been increased since 2020. Calling into 2021 because the new budget preliminarily, just came out on the 16th. So, we have the great privilege

of reviewing that. Supervisor Slater I'm sure all the things I'm saying you already know. So, I apologize because you already know all of this. What I would really encourage you all to look at is taking the Yonkers instance that Ariana mentioned in the article we posted. That's only a trial run, but they're planning to implement it. The cost of running that body cam program per se or that service every year is about \$1.2 million, but they have 600 officers, and Yorktown has 59. So, I want to make sure that that's on everyone's frontal lobe and when they're thinking about how much this will cost when you're talking about apportionment of town tax funds, etc. That being said, there are 59 officers and not all of them are uniformed officers and not all of them need body cams. Not all of them are on patrol at the same time. So, when we're talking about cost effectiveness, this is entirely feasible and entirely within the capability of the town budget. Another thing I'd like to point out is body cameras are required for all State Police Officers. They are required for all County Police Officers, in addition to the municipalities that Ariana sighted, Peekskill, right next door, Ossining right next door, Greenberg, Yonkers, etc. When Governor Cuomo passed Executive Order 203, he wasn't talking about exceptions, he was talking about every single municipality within the state of New York to take a cold, hard look at police departments, even the best ones, like ours, and said, "What can we do better? How can we be better?" I don't think there's any problem in the Yorktown Police Department. I think that Chief Noble and Supervisor Slater would agree with me, but let's keep it that way. And let's ensure that we're not missing anything by having body cameras on every police officer on patrol, on every police officer that makes a stop, every police officer that might be put in a situation, an unsafe situation, like they are every day where they could use the footage to their advantage. We're not talking about executive oversight. We're talking about transparency. Thank you all very, very much.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Zach, thank you for your time. Ariana, thank you, again. Appreciate your comments. Well done. We are going to our Town Clerk Diana Quast to see who are next speakers are. Diana, do we have someone else signed up to speak.

Town Clerk Diana Quast:

That's all I know, that have requested to speak. There're several people signed on and I'm not sure if they're just listening or they'd like to speak.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Daks, I'm sure you are here to speak on behalf of the Yorktown for Justice tonight.

Daks Armstrong:

No, we have another speaker on behalf of Yorktown for Justice, but I would love at some point to just make some comments for myself. But Judith, do you want to speak for Yorktown for Justice?

Judyth Stavans:

Yes, actually. I would love to do that. Am I on now?

Supervisor Matt Slater:

You're on. Thanks for joining

Judyth Stavans:

I'm on. Okay. Hi, everyone. I'm Judyth Stavans. I'm a 25-year resident of Yorktown and my son went through the Yorktown schools. Full disclosure. We're also members of Temple Beth Am. Thank you, Rabbi Robbie. And I'm here tonight as a member of the Yorktown for Justice group,

and we've put together some information and I'm going to read that to you. Our organization brings together our residents and neighbors to work collaboratively towards equity and justice in our community through education, advocacy, and activism. We were specifically invited by Supervisor Slater, thank you to act as advocates before this Coalition. As advocates, we offer the following recommendations to further elevate Yorktown as a model police department. Number 1 - collaboration with community responders. As Chief Noble has noted during these meetings, his officers are often called upon to respond to social and mental health situations, which are better handled by mental health professionals. The law enforcement action partnership is a national group of police, prosecutors, judges, corrections officials, and other law enforcement officials advocating for criminal justice and drug policy reforms. That group believes that now is the time to initiate a conversation about a robust alternative 911 response that involves trained community responders, and I think we started doing some of this already in Yorktown with some of the other programs responding to drug situations. There's usually a need to de-escalate in these situations and we know our officers are really excellent at that. Sometimes bringing an officer with a weapon can be a liability to a person with a mental health disability or someone who is already acting in an irrational manner and can result in a tragedy. Several of the tragic deaths we've seen this year, not here in our town, might not have occurred if an unarmed community responder was sent and was successful. We don't ever want to see something like that happen in Yorktown. We're hoping that we will seek to create a program where community responders trained in mental health issues can be called upon. It could be in partnership with neighboring towns or with the County. That's point Number 1. Point Number 2 - I am actually not even going to go through because Ariana Aboulatia and Zachary Bocian, excuse me for not pronouncing your name correctly, have pretty much covered it. We agree with everything they say about body cams, both for the benefit of the community and for the benefit and safety of our officers. So that's Point Number 2. Point Number 3 - training priorities in the current social environment. Yorktown for Justice believes that there should be enhanced training on implicit bias annually conducted by independent experienced trainers. Implicit bias reflects societal systemic norms that shape our attitudes towards others, whether it's racial, ethnic, or other populations. This is the source of most of the bias-based acts by not just police but by all of us in our society. Training can provide the tools to adjust automatic patterns of thinking, and ultimately eliminate discriminatory behaviors and practices. We know the department has an in-house trainer and we don't doubt his abilities. However, we think the addition of an outside trainer would enhance this crucial training for our department. So we're hoping to add more to that. Point Number 4 - we believe that a civilian board, a civilian review board can have a positive impact on the Yorktown Police Department by increasing its credibility and transparency in response to complaints from the public. Currently, oversight is internal among the department's leadership complaint which needs to be made by a civilian to the police. If there is a need for further action, the Town Board will be the final arbiter. We believe that there's an inherent problem with this arrangement, and this belief is based in part on our experience in preparing to present information to this Coalition. We heard detailed incidents, mostly from Yorktown residents of color, in which they describe what felt to them like abuse of police power here. We're not talking about killings, obviously, you know, major problems like that. This is more on the level of kind of relatively small offenses now what people refer to as micro aggressions that people of color face daily, some of the stories involved with what sounded like racial profiling. However, none of these individuals felt safe enough to come forward and openly tell their stories to this Coalition. How then could they be expected to come forward to complain to the police department itself? So, it ends up with no complaints, where there actually are some in the community and they're not necessarily being addressed. To be sure, these incidents are a minority of incidents. We're not saying this is pervasive, but, you know, people of color are a minority in this town, and we want to see all of our community members treated the same and we know that the department strives to do that. In our outreach to the community seeking comment on any

interactions with the police, we received a lot of feedback, some of it very angry, from people who felt the police in this town were nothing but wonderful, and were wondering why we were questioning them. That's precisely the point - the majority doesn't always know what's going on with people who are not the majority. They're not walking in their shoes. I was at the first listening session for this Coalition, a young man suggested a civilian review board and his suggestion was dismissed. But at the same session, people who spoke of the place in laudatory terms were greeted with enthusiasm, probably because most of the members here have had positive encounters with the police and can't imagine that anybody wouldn't. And again, if that's your experience, that's what you understand. It's this kind of not seeing the full picture that we would like to expand. People are concerned that they won't be heard. They don't want to go to the people that they think might be having problems. We believe that Yorktown needs a civilian review board that takes complaints from the public as a way inspire more trust and faith in the police. That obviously doesn't need to be a full-time position but we definitely need some conduit outside of the police department for people to make complaints that will only be better for everyone. Our last point, is collection of data about police interventions in light of the argument we made about the majority may not be able to see or understand what happens to the minority. We believe Yorktown would benefit from having statistics on routine traffic stops and other police interactions, specifically as it relates to race and other protected categories. Chief, you stated that they started to collect such data and enforce instances, which is great. We're hoping to see that expanded for all interactions. The data can reveal trends in the police department's interacting with what kind of outcomes and whether it's close to the demographics of the town. Those are our points. The members of Yorktown for Justice commit to working with the police and the Board to bring positive change to the Yorktown Police Department, adjustment to the police department as well as other institutions, including our schools, we will work in a collaborative manner to find and apply for funds to enhance the security and safety of all of our residents, including the youth, and racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ people, and truly make Yorktown a town which will attract young people and businesses both small and large. It's been said that crisis can bring opportunities that can benefit all. We love Yorktown. We all do. And we genuinely believe it can be a model for the future. And we thank you very much for your time.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Thank you.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

Thank you.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

That was great. We appreciate it.

Judyth Stavans:

Thank you.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Diana, do we have anybody raise their hand, if anyone wants to speak who's has not signed up? You can raise your hand right on Zoom. We can see it and we will call you out. I know Daks. You said that you wanted to say a few words. Daks Armstrong, resident, citizen of Yorktown. I don't know if you want to take time now to give us your thoughts.

Daks Armstrong:

I was actually thinking about the prior meetings and I see we have more people and new faces. I wanted to give people the opportunity to speak. I feel like I speak a lot. So, I'd like to defer a little longer. Just to give people an opportunity. But I do want to speak at some point.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

No promise here. We've got Steve Ronco from the DA's Office joining us again, we appreciate it.

Steve Ronco, DA's Office:

Sorry, I am late.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

No problem.

Steve Ronco, DA's Office:

I was over in Peekskill's meeting.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

No problem. Is there somebody on from the Legal Aid Society? I think I see someone's trying to unmute, I'm sorry.

Mary Pat Long, Legal Aid Society:

I'm not very high tech. But I'm on, Hi.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Good evening. How are you?

Mary Pat Long, Legal Aid Society:

Good evening. This is Mary Pat Long and I work for the Legal Aid Society.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Thank you so much for joining us tonight. We really appreciate.

Mary Pat Long, Legal Aid Society:

Thank you, these police officers know me, I cover Yorktown. I would like to say two things, this woman who just spoke, Miss, I hope I said your name right? Judyth Stavans. I thought you did an amazing, amazing job. I thought everything you said was spot on. And I've worked in Yorktown with the police department for I don't know how many years, probably 20 years, and there's lots of good guys in that department. I have lots of positive experiences, but I know there's always room for improvement. And what you spoke about before about systemic racism and bias - you don't know, it's funny, because I'm white, obviously, you can see that, I'm 63 and I'm white. My experience - I mean, I only have the life experiences that I've had, and those that I've heard about from my clients, and life is not the same. If you're 63 and white, and female, I could drive probably with no license plate, no insurance and, you know, people look, I just look different. Anyway, I just know that we don't all walk in the same shoes. I really love what this committee is doing and I really respect everybody for being on this. Steve Ronco and I work together all the time. He knows that I'm very committed to the work that he does and I'm very committed to the work that I do. We want to make our community better and safer and stronger. So, I think this is a great committee.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Mary Pat, thank you. We really do appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to join us.

Mary Pat Long, Legal Aid Society:

Thank you, sir. I had a flood today. That's why I'm a little bit late. We had a flood in our laundry room. I really just think this is a great committee. I really, really love the work you've put together.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Thank you so much. We appreciate it. It's been a great collaboration with lots of members of our community. As you can see, I don't know if you have anything specific but because since you've been so involved for the last 20 years, is there anything that you want to just raise with the Coalition?

Mary Pat Long, Legal Aid Society:

I love what I heard a moment ago about the mental health component of law enforcement. I think that's big. So many of my clients suffer from mental health issues and they react to force differently than I might act. I actually did get stopped by a police officer in Harrison once when my father was dying, and I cut off a police officer right by the police station. And when he pulled me over, I was hysterical. And he thought I was a lunatic. He had every reason for thinking that I was a lunatic, and he was harsh with me. It was kind of a good experience for me to see what it's like to have a police officer be harsh, but he thought he had, what they call them an EDP - an emotionally disturbed person - because he kind of did have an EDP. He was a little harsh, and I think was a very good experience for me to realize that, you know, he must have had his experiences, and I had my experiences, we need to know how to walk in another person's shoes. So, I think that is what's so great about this experience.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Couldn't agree with you more, and I've made similar comments to what you mean. I only know I grew up in this town, just like Zach and Ariana and all I can tell you my experiences are based off of, frankly, what I look like, different than other people. So, it's important for us to hear some of those perspectives, something that Councilwoman Roker and I have spoken about in the past and understanding those perspectives. We really do appreciate you joining us tonight. It's been great to have you here.

Mary Pat Long, Legal Aid Society:

Thank you.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

So, if there's anyone else who wants to speak if you can just pop up the hand icon, I'm going to do my best, and with Diana, our Town Clerk we'll do our best to scan to see if there's any other tiles that have a hand up. I know that we've got Daks Armstrong warming up in the in the bullpen here for us.

John DelVecchio:

I had a question. I didn't know if you saw it yet.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Oh, can you give us your name for the record?

John DelVecchio:

Sure, John DelVecchio.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

John, how you doing?

John DelVecchio:

Good. How's it going? good, I'm sorry, I missed the first part of what you said. And I do agree with the mental health components, which was just being spoken about, is really important. And I don't know how it works out or how Yorktown does the funding for that, but I think seeking additional funding in the budgets for maybe someone to work alongside with the police department. They're two separate jobs, two completely separate jobs. But someone may be in the back end working along with the police department. Obviously the police officer does one job, the mental health professional does another job. So not one doing the other job. It's just basically supplementing what we have in effect. I think that's a great idea. The other part I had was a question. I just heard something about racial profiling or something in Yorktown where people were afraid to come forward? Was that actual cases? Or was that just basically based on hearsay or something?

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Those were comments that we've received tonight from members of Yorktown for Justice.

John DelVecchio:

Okay. I was just curious, because I missed the first part of what was said. That's all I want to add. Thank you.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

John, thank you so much for joining us tonight. We appreciate it. Are there folks who want to say a few words or give us feedback, discuss our police department or their interactions with our police department, perception of our police department?

Mary Pat Long, Legal Aid Society:

May I just add one thing, I think that the Yorktown Police do wear a hat, the law enforcement hat, and then I don't want to say the mental health hat. But when they stop somebody, they have to make an assessment pretty quickly about whether the person does have psychiatric issues and mental health issues. So, they do need some training. It's a life and death matter, if they stop somebody. They do need to be able to make an assessment, you can't always have a social worker, you know, at your elbow, so the training is vital for their safety. Not just for them, it's for everybody's benefit for them to have training on how to assess.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Couldn't agree more and Chief Noble last week who provided a very in depth presentation on all the training that our police officers receive on an annual basis. EDP was one component that they do receive training in.

Mary Pat Long, Legal Aid Society:

I'm sorry, I missed it. I just got this invitation today from my colleague, Sherry Wallach. I'm very sorry, I missed the earlier meeting.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

It's okay. And just so you know, all of our videos and recordings of our meetings are all up on the CCSE website on the Town's webpage. So anyone who can't make a meeting or wants to hear what we've been talking about, they're able to access that at any point in time, including all of Chief Noble's PowerPoint presentations, as well. Those are all readily accessible and publicly available.

Mary Pat Long, Legal Aid Society:

Thank you.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Oh, absolutely. And of course, we encourage anyone to take a look and continue to provide feedback to us as to what they see, in any way. I think we're all saying the same thing that we can take a great department and make it even better. We're always open to those suggestions. Is there anyone else, other than Daks, who wants to say a few words tonight? Daks, you may be up then.

Daks Armstrong:

Thanks. Hello, everyone. How's everyone doing tonight? Supervisor Slater, I had a couple of questions that I wasn't clear on. There's a funding source attached to EO 203, isn't there?

Supervisor Matt Slater:

So, by not complying with EO 203, there is DCJ's money that the State would then withhold.

Daks Armstrong:

Okay, so it's a penalty, but they're not providing any funds.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

The State is requiring that all municipalities with a police department or a police force to go through this. If they choose not to, then it would withhold State funds. So, it's not that they're offering State funds for programs. I wish.

Daks Armstrong:

And is this going to be our last listening session?

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Well, I know that the Coalition is going to meet next month after Thanksgiving, and we're going to have that conversation to see if we feel that another listening session is warranted.

Daks Armstrong:

Okay, so, some other housekeeping before I make my statements. The team wanted me to remind you that there were some letters sent in, and they would respectfully request that some of those be read. Some are anonymous, some are named.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

The Coalition has reviewed all the letters. We have received letters that were signed, we've received letters from some of our community partners, including the Central School District, we've received letters from individuals who requested to remain confidential. We've been advised, frankly, by our attorney, that the best course of action is, instead of a case by case basis, which muddies the waters that it's better to be an all or nothing category. So, the Coalition is very much taking into consideration all the correspondence, they have every letter that we've received, every

email that we've received, and then rather than picking and choosing which ones we read publicly, the Coalition believes it's best to acknowledge them. We have them, we've recognized them.

Daks Armstrong:

Well, then for the record, if we have letters that we have permission to request to be read, would you read those for the record?

Supervisor Matt Slater:

The letters that we have are not signed by individuals.

Daks Armstrong:

Okay.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

The Coalition felt that it wasn't proper to read those publicly, since they are not signed by individuals. The letters - I know which letters you're referring to, Daks - I have right here, but one is not signed. And the second is signed by a proud Yorktowneer and for those reasons, the Coalition did not feel again, we're not reading the signed letters either, but especially since those are unsigned letters, but we have them, we acknowledge them, the Coalition has them in their possession. We've processed them, and we will most definitely take them into consideration as we move forward.

Zachary Bocian:

So, I really want to interrupt just really quick, you're not reading them why?

Supervisor Matt Slater:

The letters are unsigned.

Zachary Bocian:

And why are you not reading them? Because they're unsigned?

Supervisor Matt Slater:

We have our town attorney who can explain to you what his legal advice was to us.

Zachary Bocian:

I just want to clarify, thank you.

Town Attorney Adam Rodriguez:

I mean, there are a variety of reasons. But ultimately, the better course, is to take a clean position with respect to whether their letters are going to be read or not and that's what the Coalition has done.

Daks Armstrong:

Okay. Just a clarifying point. And that was for the unsigned letters. And what about the letters that were signed by community members?

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Again, the Coalition has taken the position that since we aren't reading the unsigned, we did not feel it was fair to read the signed. So, all correspondence has been circulated to the Coalition. They have them all. It's there, and they're most definitely part of the process; they'll be part of the record. And that's the decision of the Coalition.

Daks Armstrong:

Okay, I just wanted to thank everyone for all the work that you've put in, and the time I know, we've all done long hours, I'm exhausted. So, I want to acknowledge everyone, and thank everyone. There were a lot of great points that were brought up tonight and I think that they mirrored some of the things that I have previously suggested and that's why I wanted to defer to others. But I'll just reinforce and support some of the statements that were made tonight, specifically, body cameras, which I think have a lot of merit and do protect and support both sides of the conversation. I was actually speaking to one of our officers, one of our Yorktown officers, and we had a nice conversation. He actually - I was surprised to hear his views on all of this - was very supportive of the body cameras, he said he thought it was a great idea. He gave me a really great idea that I wanted to share that with the Coalition. There are only four officers on duty at any given time. So, you really wouldn't have to pay to outfit 50 officers simultaneously, you would only need four, or maybe five body cameras to really start a program. You could have an auxiliary body cam you can have for that. I know from talking to officers is that they sign out the tasers so the tasers aren't particularly their own taser, they sign them out on a daily basis, they could sign out the body cameras in a very similar fashion, they go on duty, they sign it out, they bring it back when they're off, they sign it, they sign it back in and then the next officer can sign it out. And I think that's a way to have the program and also be efficient with funds and with money. I think as you see the merits of the program every year, you can add on additional cameras. So just something to present to the Coalition to think of moving forward. I do support a Civilian Complaint Board for all of the reasons that were shared. I know that there are people that don't feel comfortable coming forward for a myriad of reasons. As a counselor, I see plenty of students on a daily basis that deal with implicit bias and being made to feel uncomfortable for their gender, for their race, for their sexual orientation and they suffer in silence. I see students that deal with mental health issues and suffer in silence. So, I'm sure if our high schoolers are doing that and they're growing into adults, and they're repeating very similar behaviors. So, I would ask you to really take those types of things into consideration. I, as a black man, have been harassed by police on numerous occasions. I've never gone to report it, it doesn't mean it didn't happen. So, I would just want you to keep that in mind and to Miss Pat, the attorney, I'm sorry, I missed your name. Because I'm trying to read it off of the screen.

Mary Pat Long, Legal Aid Society:

It's Mary Pat, I love what you're saying, I'm following you 100%.

Daks Armstrong:

Thank you so much. And to your point, I just wanted to support something that you said - you have clients that are scared and are uneasy around police - I have to say I personally am as well. I don't feel in danger if I were to be stopped by the Yorktown PD but that doesn't mean I don't feel uncomfortable if I'm stopped by the Yorktown PD. And for that type of reason, I have always kept an expired license in my vehicle. And people say, why would you keep an expired license in your vehicle? So, if I forget my wallet, and I get pulled over, I don't end up in the police precinct arrested. That's why. Because I know that if I am pulled over without ID, I'm going to jail. That may not be the case for everyone, but I'm pretty sure it is the case for me. It's not something that I openly share. But I share it with you today because it's relevant to the conversation and to what we're talking about. And we should be sensitive to those that suffer in silence, regardless of what they're suffering from. Thank you for your time, everyone.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Thanks, Daks. Is there anyone else who wants to speak before the Coalition? If anyone's reached out to Diana Quast our Town Clerk and raised their hand. Diana do we have anybody else signed up that you're aware of?

Town Clerk Diana Quast:

Zack has his hand up. That's all I can see.

Zachary Bocian:

I interrupted rudely before, so I'll lower it. Sorry.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

All right. Well, if there is no one else who wants to speak, I want to thank the Coalition for their time and their efforts. I want to thank our Town Clerk Diana Quast, for her continued efforts to help with the process. Thank you to our Chief Robert Noble, for being here. And to all of our participants. Another great conversation. And our next meeting is scheduled for December. And we will have a work session meeting for the Coalition to deliberate on the things that we've heard tonight.

RoseMarie Panio, CCSE:

Do we have a date yet, Mr. Supervisor?

Supervisor Matt Slater:

I know that it's part of the schedule, and honestly, I'm blanking on it off the top my head, I apologize. But we will, we'll definitely make sure the Coalition members know and will publicize it as well. I think it's probably on the Community Calendar. I apologize for not having that readily available at my fingertips.

Daks Armstrong:

And will YFJ be invited to that also?

Supervisor Matt Slater:

It'll be the same type of work session in the past, but yes.

Daks Armstrong:

Excellent. Thanks so much.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

You're welcome, Daks. Okay, with that being said, we again, appreciate everyone's time. Wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving. A very safe Thanksgiving and we will talk to everyone in December.