

Advisory Team Meeting #6
December 9, 2020
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

(Recording provided for this section; available on the Policies and Practices Project web page)

Team Members Present

Steve Blaine, Juan DeLaFuente, Alexis DeVries, Michael Holmes, Sara Kern, Cory Koplín, Doug Larsen, Samantha Malcom, Liz Magill, Yadira Ramos, Cholwe Walker

Team Members Absent: Thomas Young

Facilitators

Dominique Johnson, Lead Facilitator from the Center for Policing Equity;
Michelle Leise, City of Red Wing Community Engagement Specialist & Secondary Facilitator

Meeting Notes

Welcome and Getting Grounded:

Definition of Ready:

Team members will have read over the identified areas of the Data Guidebook.

Definition of Done:

Team members will have a general understanding of how the City of Red Wing currently collects police department data and what other cities are doing to collect data. Team members also will have discussed general ideas on what other information is needed and what possible recommendations they want to start discussing related to data.

Around the Table

Team members did a short check-in with each other. Each person said one word on how they were feeling tonight and explained one small thing they did over the weekend that brought them some joy, relief, or relaxation.

Progress and Steps Taken So Far

Michelle Leise reviewed with the team its first recommendations that they decided at the last meeting. These recommendations will go to the Council in early 2021. (That format is yet to be decided but most likely the Advisory Team and Council will meet first in a workshop format to discuss the recommendations.) Those recommendations are listed on the meeting attachment that is also on the website page.

“The Value of Collecting and Analyzing Proper Data”

Presentation and Q&A Period with Expert Rob Kenter of CPE and Team Discussion

Chief Pohlman made a brief statement that he has been talking with Rob Kenter over the last week and learning about new ways of collecting, analyzing, and sharing data that will help Red Wing’s police department become better in this area. Chief Pohlman stated he would like the RWPD to learn more and he was excited to introduce Rob to the group.

Rob Kenter, as stated on the agenda, is Director of Law Enforcement Field Engagement for the Center for Policing Equity. Until retiring in April of 2020, Rob served for more than 30 years with the Norfolk Police Department and during his last six years served as a special assistant to the Chief in charge of special projects, research and data analysis. Rob now assists communities like Red Wing in thinking more broadly about policing and data and how communities and police departments can collect and utilize data to work better together.

Rob presented information, answered questions, and helped the team as it started to talk about next steps and recommendations. Rob covered these major areas:

--*Crime patterns.* Rob explained that violent crime generally happens in small, geographic areas called hotspots. They have characteristics such as high degrees of poverty, high blight, low social capital (for example, neighbors don’t know each other), and high amount of transient residents. There is also a high amount of chronic, preventable diseases. That all creates an atmosphere where crime can thrive. Within that, there is often a small amount of people responsible for a large amount of crime.

--*Data Collection.* Rob explained that CPE has the largest database of police behavior in the world. They collect in three major areas of police behavior:

- Use of Force
- Pedestrian Stops
- Traffic Stops

Rob said often CPE collects and analyzes this type of data for cities (usually large cities), looks to see where there are disparities, and gives recommendations back to the communities so departments and communities can work together to change things. Communities need race data in order to identify disparities.

(Note here: CPE is working in a different context with Red Wing; the partnership with Red Wing can include but is not specific to data, and CPE has not contracted to collect or analyze specific data for Red Wing.)

Rob said that Red Wing currently collects race data for police calls that involve use of force, and that information could be analyzed now to see what those numbers say. Red Wing does not currently collect race data for traffic stops and pedestrian stops.

Rob reiterated that the state of Minnesota does not mandate race collection for pedestrian stops and traffic stops. Rob stated that he and Chief Pohlman have talked since the last Advisory Team meeting in November, and the Chief has decided to start collecting race data in these two areas moving forward.

Rob said many police departments have big gaps in their data, just like Red Wing's gaps. Many town and cities around the country don't collect good data. Rob recognized and applauded Red Wing for identifying this need and working to change that.

Rob pointed out advantages of collecting race data. One benefit is more accountability of police officers in their actions. Another benefit is creating a more efficient department where officers are able to focus their efforts on the highest areas of need.

Rob said that consistently around the country, CPE has found that members of the black community are stopped and searched at a higher rate. In those same stops, evidence of a crime is found at a much lower rate in black people that are stopped and searched than in white people who are stopped and searched. That is the definition of burdensome policing – when the stop rate is high and the evidence of a crime is low.

Rob discussed the high rate of death among young black men is due to police violence. The current rate in the United States is 1 out of every 1,000 young black men is killed by police violence. (*Source: The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (August 20, 2019).*)

Note: While this rate of 1 in every 1,000 young black men is correct, a mistake was inadvertently made during the presentation, which Rob later corrected via email to Advisory Team members. Rob said this rate meant that police violence is the number one leading cause of death in young black men; it is not—it is often viewed as the sixth leading cause of death. Rob cited a study by Edwards, Lee, & Esposito, which is now included on the website. A separate article on the website summarizes that study and others.

Rob stopped to answer any questions.

Questions from the Advisory Team came up regarding the following topics. To listen to the questions and answers in their entirety, please watch the meeting recording; a link is on the project web page.

Topics included:

--The various issues around data collected in smaller communities are different than those collected in larger cities because the numbers overall will be so much lower.

--How departments can be more efficient with their time once they can see where the most violent crime is happening – and how to do that in a smaller town.

Dominique stopped to ask the group if they agreed with the department collecting race data for traffic stops and pedestrian stops. Team members agreed this is a good idea.

The main question: What is the best way for police officers to gather this information? Some cities use the officers' *perceived* notion of the race of the person as they're making the stop. Other cities have the officers ask the person being stopped (with a script that is well prepared to avoid doing any additional harm).

Members discussed different ideas for getting the information out to the community so people would know why officers would be collecting this information.

Team members felt they may be able to do surveys, or some kind of informational campaign, to let the community know why this is happening.

While members overall felt that the need for collecting this data is important, some felt uneasy about how exactly to go about it and how to communicate that with people who are being stopped by police.

Officer Huberty and Chief Pohlman said they are there to listen to the team and incorporate the team's input into their work.

Members also discussed the issue that many people in Red Wing don't feel racism exists in town.

One member also brought up the idea of the City doing an informational campaign around the idea that racism does indeed exist – something educational. One member said that Red Wing still needs a place for people to go for people who feel they have a racial complaint in the community. This is necessary in order for people to learn about the problem and it is necessary for people to feel they've been listened to.

One member explained a specific situation and said there are reasons for the lack of trust between the police and some members of the community.

Chief Pohlman described that the department has three levels of complaints when complaints come in from the public to the police department. Most complaints from the public about officers are handled internally by the department itself; some of the higher-level cases are handled externally by another agency.

Rob said there are ways to make those complaints more accessible. Chief Pohlman said the department has put funds toward a Tip 411 program where people can make anonymous tips to the department.

Rob said there are models around the country that give citizen review boards more authority so the review and discipline of officers is not handled solely on an internal basis. Those systems allow a citizen board to review those complaints. Chief Pohlman said that in the state of Minnesota, even if there is a citizen review board, the chief law enforcement person decides if and what the corrective action is for an employee.

Rob summarized that as we talk about data, it's important to remember that we're trying to understand the full context of the situation in Red Wing, learn where the gaps are, and find ways to change any disparities. Working to get the data collected is a start, but data is not everything that's needed to make positive change.

The meeting ended with the decision to collect more data but without a clear path on the best way to do that. More education will need to happen within the department, team, and the community.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

The next meeting is Wednesday, January 13 at 6 p.m.