

Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Annotated Bibliography and Selected Interviews

This document contains the rapid research results of the Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Community Research Team.

On the recommendation of Vermont Partnership for Fairness & Diversity, the Bennington Select Board approved the formation of two Community Research Teams to conduct rapid research on the twin topics of Community Policing and Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement. The product of these Community Research Teams provides Bennington residents valuable information to engage town government as it implements the recommendations from the International Association of Chiefs of Police report.

Residents interested in participating on the teams submitted letters of interest to the Bennington Human Resources Department. Curtiss Reed, Jr. of Vermont Partnership for Fairness & Diversity and Jeanne Connor, Select Board member, interviewed twelve candidates and ultimately chose six to serve, three for each team.

The civilian oversight team conducted its research over a three week period beginning on July 20, 2020. Team members culled through hundreds of online websites and determined which ones they felt most relevant to Bennington. Neither the Bennington Select Board nor the Bennington Police Department played any role in what team members researched or selected to include in the bibliography; nor did they play any role in the interviews conducted by team members. All material presented has been vetted through the lens of community members

Bennington residents Alana Harte, Ed.D., Katie Berger, and Joe Holt comprised the Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Community Research Team.

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Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Annotated Bibliography

[“Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement: A Review of the Strengths and Weaknesses of Various Models”](#), Joseph De Angelis Richard Rosenthal Brian Buchner; National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement

This review evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of three primary civilian oversight models-investigation-focused, review-focused, and auditor/monitor-focused. It also includes a summary of each model as well as a list of cities and towns using each model. Table 4 (p14) outlines potential responsibilities based on each model.

[“Effectively Implementing Civilian Oversight Boards to Ensure Police Accountability and Strengthen Police-Community Relations”](#), Kevin King; Hastings Race and Poverty Law Journal

Independent investigatory boards, pure monitoring boards, auditing boards, and the potential flaws of each Also discusses the authority needed to legitimize the board, including powers to subpoena, discipline, and access records.

[“About the Civilian Oversight Board”](#), City of St. Louis, MO

Details the mission, goals, strategies, and responsibilities of the civilian oversight board in St. Louis, MO.

[“Application for Appointment to Civilian Oversight Board”](#), City of St. Louis, MO

Requirements to be a board member

[“Civilian Police Oversight Agency Policies and Procedures”](#), CPOA

All guidelines, policies, and procedures for Civilian Police Oversight Agency in Albuquerque, NM.

[“Civilian Oversight and Police Legitimacy in an Age of Conflict and Distrust”](#), Ellen LoCurto-Martínez; University of Tennessee at Knoxville

**click PDF upon opening link*

A dissertation that includes a comprehensive study of civilian oversight. Includes models of civilian oversight committees (pps6-8), effectiveness of civilian oversight committees (pps8-9), effective civilian oversight in general (pps 138-144), and how establishing a community oversight committee can contribute to police legitimacy (pps 43-44). Also includes numerous relevant surveys of civilians and members of law enforcement.

[“Civilian Oversight as a Public Good: Democratic Policing, Civilian Oversight, and the Social”](#), Danielle Hryniewicz; Contemporary Justice Review

Research notes that discuss numerous benefits of civilian oversight, including increasing accountability, and generating public agreement.

[“Police Are Learning To Accept Civilian Oversight, But Distrust Lingers”](#), Martin Kaste; National Public Radio

An article that addresses friction between officers and civilians when attempting to establish civilian oversight in St. Louis, MO.

[“A Current Sampling of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Practices in the United States”](#), Rebekah Hollwedel, Tim Burns; Office of the Police Ombudsman

In this study, researchers outline benefits and limitations of oversight, as well as types of oversight, and brief overviews of civilian review boards in nine cities.

[“Overview of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement in the United States”](#), Barbara Attard, Kathryn Olson; Accountability Associates

This report addresses oversight approaches, including conducting misconduct complaint investigations, auditing/monitoring investigations or other police practices, creating civilian review boards or commissions. For municipalities choosing civilian review boards as the oversight technique, there are several recommended board responsibilities, including representing all stakeholders, clearly defining clerical tasks, establishing how board members will be trained, and creating clear procedures for the law enforcement agency to handle the board’s recommendations. The report also discusses ethical considerations, the factors contributing to effective oversight, and a rationale for community outreach. A list of cities that have implemented different models and a description can also be found in this report.

[“The Long Battle for Civilian Oversight of the Police”](#), Jamie Smith Hopkins, Kristine Villanueva; The Center for Public Integrity

In this article, writers detail the difficulties and concerns in the process of establishing civilian oversight.

[“Amid Brutal Responses To Protesters, Will Moments Of Solidarity Bring Real Change?”](#), Eric Westervelt; National Public Radio

"Topping the change list [of needed police reforms], he says, is implementing quarterly, verifiable anti-bias training for all area police officers and robust countywide civilian oversight with subpoena power."

[“Tendencies of Large Midwestern Civilian Review Board: Does Race Matter?”](#), Andie Mary Mouzes; California State University at Sacramento

This thesis offers a comprehensive definition of civilian review boards. There is also a rationale for civilian review boards, which addresses the complexities of inter-office investigations into alleged officer wrongdoings.

["Policing Today"](#), Gregory F. Treverton, Matt Wollman, Elizabeth Wilke, Deborah Lai; JSTOR

**click PDF upon opening link*

A brief and basic look at the history of community-policing and reforms are presented in this chapter of Moving Toward the Future of Policing. Types of policing are explored. Civilian oversight boards are briefly mentioned and it's suggested that the police department could have representation on the committee (including a police chief.)

["Police and Justice Functions"](#), Angel Rabasa, John Gordon IV, Peter Chalk, Christopher S. Chivvis, Audra K. Grant, K. Scott McMahon, Laurel E. Miller, Marco Overhaus, Stephanie Pezard, JSTOR

Chapter Five of From Insurgency to Stability is about building systems for policing, as well as challenges and missing elements in policing. It is mentioned that "The standard way to avoid these disadvantages while gaining the advantage of knowledge of the human terrain, is to have national standards, policies, and general oversight."

["Thousands of Complaints Do Little to Change Police Ways"](#), Shaila Dewan, Serge F. Kovalski; NYTimes

Civilian review boards are one way to organize and address reports, and are needed because without investigation and consequence, thousands of complaints are ignored.

["Practices in Modern Policing Community Participation and Leadership"](#), International Association of Chiefs of Police

**click download Key Takeaways*

"The committee is a mediator. We can listen to the public's concerns and respond to them without appearing biased." "All the training the police department gets, we usually get in a condensed version," explains Hille, who stresses that the APD educates ACPAC but does not control its agenda. "He established the [Citizens Police Review Board] to "improve communication between the police department and the community, to increase police accountability and credibility with the public, and to create a complaint review process that is free from bias and informed of actual police practice." "Most people define us by our role investigating complaints, but we also have the opportunity to comment on policy."

["Civilian Oversight of the Police in Major Cities"](#), Darrel W. Stephens, Ellen Scrivner, Josie F. Cambareri

This research paper includes a description of common models, as well as "discusses the results of [a] survey and round table conversation and provides an overview of civilian oversight in major city police agencies. ... [and found that] (1) Because of significant variation of oversight from one jurisdiction to another, it is difficult to make broad generalities, and (2) there is a need for developing clear objectives, measurement, and empirical research to measure effectiveness of the specific models going forward"

[“Police Departments as Institutionalized Organizations”](#), Robert E. Worden, Sarah J. McLean

This chapter from the book *Mirage of Police Reform* grapples with the complexity of civilian oversight. While “there is no evidence that citizen oversight alters patterns of police behavior or performance,” there is evidence that “citizen oversight impacts ... the rate at which or complainants’ satisfaction with the complaint review process.” Furthermore, “citizen oversight elevates the confidence of the public in the integrity of the complaint review process... [and] serves the purpose of promoting police legitimacy, but it appears to be decoupled from the technical core of policing.”

[“Community Advisory Committee”](#), Town of Chula Vista, CA

The Police Department’s Community Advisory Committee of Chula Vista, CA operates as a liaison between the community and the Police Department. The committee includes two co-chairs—the chief of police and a community leader—13 community members with diverse perspectives on policing, a police department liaison, a legal advisor, and a secretary. The committee reviews policies for the department while helping the department understand community members. It meets at least twice a year and publishes agendas, minutes, and videos from each meeting.

[“Community Advisory Board”](#), City of Davis, CA

City of Davis, CA has had a Police Community Advisory Board since 2015. There are 13 community members selected by the chief of police and they do not have a term limit. The committee has no authority regarding investigations over police oversight; the board focuses on opening dialogue between community and police.

Some tasks of the committee include:

“1. Implement the recommendations contained in the Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

2. Engage with the police department; participate in meetings, surveys, and other activities.

3. Participate in problem-solving efforts to reduce crime and improve quality of life in Davis.

4. Work with the police department to ensure crime-reducing resources and tactics are being deployed that mitigate unintended consequences.

5. Review policies and practices, and advocate for early intervention strategies that minimize involvement of youth in the criminal justice system.”

[“Chief’s Community Advisory Board”](#), City of Walnut Creek, CA

The Chief’s Community Advisory Board is directed by the Chief of Police and aims to support communication between the community and the police department. Various viewpoints represented on the board of 10-15 stakeholders including those in “business owners, education, non-profits, public relations, faith community, youth representation” as long as they’re residents or business owners in town. Applicants are selected by the “Chief of Police, a community representative and the City’s Communications and Outreach Manager.”

The committee, which meets monthly, operates in an advisory capacity, as the “sounding board” for the captain. The committee will be provided with an annual summary of statistics, such as the number of police uses of force, the number of citizen complaints received.

["Advisory Boards"](#), City of El Paso, TX

The City of El Paso's Advisory Board operates under the discretion of the Regional Commander and appears to little more than a mouthpiece for the Police Department. It has no subpoena power or rule-making authority and is advisory in nature, and lists its responsibilities as "as working to promote programs that further support the Police Department's mission, core values and community policing philosophy."

The Board consists of at least ten members appointed by the Regional Commander, serving two-year terms. The the Regional Commander is also the Board's Chair. The monthly meetings are open to the public.

Prospective members must live or work in the city, must have a background check completed by the Police Department, must be approved by a vote by the Board, and must attend the Citizens Police Academy Basic Course.

["Police Advisory Board"](#), City of Grand Rapids, MI

The City of Grand Rapids' Police Advisory Board was established to enhance lines of communication between Grand Rapids residents, Police Department and City Council. The Board is purely advisory. The Board does not receive or review complaints initiated against police personnel, has no authority to investigate or participate in personnel matters, and does not play a role in civil or criminal litigation.

The board has seven members, a majority of whom must be Grand Rapids residents. They are appointed by the City Council and serve staggered three-year terms. Members may be required to attend a Police Department Citizens Academy. There are four meetings per year, plus special meetings as needed. All meetings are open to the public.

["Consent Decree"](#), UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, Plaintiff; v. POLICE DEPARTMENT OF BALTIMORE CITY, et. al., Defendants

This is the decree filed in 2017 in response to legal action by the DOJ against the City of Baltimore and its Police Department. To quote, "[The parties] are committed to effective, constitutional law enforcement. The purpose of this Agreement is to ensure that the City and BPD protect individuals' statutory and constitutional rights, treat individuals with dignity and respect, and promote public safety in a manner that is fiscally responsible and responsive to community priorities."

["Community Oversight"](#), Campaign Zero

Resource used by Brattleboro review happening this summer. This informative page contains a bullet list of high level policies for community oversight. Sited in the Battleboro Reformer article,

["Police review process begins in earnest"](#), July 9, 2020.

[Vermont S.119](#), State of Vermont

"An act relating to a statewide use of deadly force policy for law enforcement", passed by the Senate, in committee.

[Vermont S.219](#), State of Vermont

"An act relating to addressing racial bias and excessive use of force by law enforcement", passed by House and Senate, signed by the Governor on July 13, 2020.

["Police Accountability Series Part Two: Pittsfield Struggles To Establish External Police Review"](#), Josh Landes; WAMC, Dec 11, 2018.

This news article reviews progress made by Pittsfield MA to create an oversight board, compares other MA town approaches, quotes Brian Corr, president of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE), and Michael Wynn, Pittsfield's Police Chief.

["Oversight Unseen: Who's Watching the Vermont Police?"](#), Mark Davis; Seven Days, April 18, 2018

This long-form article is a snapshot of various opinions of Vermont's SPAC as of 2018. Quotes many people involved, including officers of NACOLE, lawyers at ACLU Vermont, Commission chair Nancy Sheahan, Director of the Vermont State Police Colonel Matthew Birmingham, and Burlington Commission Chair Christine Longmore.

["DPS, State Police issue summary of 2018 internal affairs investigations"](#), Vermont Business Magazine, Feb 28, 2019

This article reviews SPAC's first ever public summary of the Commission's work, covering the year 2018. It lists 19 investigations from complaints, four of which were from citizens and 15 from employees. This is also a good introduction and explainer about SPAC.

["Oversight of Law Enforcement is Beneficial and Needed—Both Inside and Out"](#), Barbara Attard; Pace Law Review

"This article presents information about the current status of the oversight movement, gives an overview of the models of oversight in the United States, discusses the benefits and essential elements of oversight, and provides an insight into the work being done by the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) to establish standards and further the oversight profession."

["State Police Advisory Commission Brochure"](#), Vermont State Police Department

Brochure provides both commission and individual member contact information, summary of the role of the commission, and the establishing statute. The establishing statute outlines the duties, restrictions, and inner workings of the Advisory Commission. "The commission shall advise and assist the commissioner in developing and making known routine procedures to ensure that allegations of misconduct by state police officers are investigated fully and fairly, and to ensure that appropriate action is taken with respect to such allegations.

["Is Civilian Oversight the Answer to Distrust of Police?"](#), Priyanka Boghani; PBS

This article puts the need for civilian oversight into the context of deadly encounters between law enforcement and citizens. An interview with the director of operations of NACOLE answers questions about re-building a bridge between the police and their communities, and regaining trust surrounding law-enforcement through the use of civilian oversight structure being put in place. The D.C Office of Police Complaints is used as a model of praise for its effectiveness of being independent and conducting successful community outreach.

["Perspectives of directors of civilian oversight of law enforcement agencies"](#), Richard A. Rosenthal

This paper includes "interviews with civilian oversight of law enforcement (COLE) directors from throughout the USA with the purpose of obtaining their perspectives on what it takes to create and sustain successful COLE programs". The findings outlined themes and patterns in the attitudes of directors, and the conditions necessary to have a successful oversight committee. A notable pattern included in this paper is that most successful directors have come from diverse backgrounds and led diverse agencies.

["Community Oversight Paves the Road to Police Accountability"](#), NACOLE; Justice Forward Virginia

Although this PDF is unique to Virginia's Civilian Oversight Bodies, it gives a great summary of the factors that make civilian oversight meaningful and the characteristics that could lead to a less-successful model. This document is helpful when considering what is necessary in the success of a new form of civilian oversight, as well as determining what should be avoided.

["New Approaches to Data-Driven Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement"](#), Daniel Stageman

"Written by NACOLE and John Jay College, this essay introduces research papers written during the Academic Symposium, "Building Public Trust: Generating Evidence to Enhance Police Accountability and Legitimacy." Each paper is peer-reviewed in the context of modern national discourse on police accountability and legitimacy. Each panel covers a different issue covered in the jurisdiction of civilian oversight boards."

["Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement: A Review of the Strengths and Weaknesses of Various Models"](#), Joseph De Angelis, Richard Rosenthal; Brian Buchner

This 15 page PDF breaks down various models of civilian oversight that have been used as structures for monitoring law enforcement. The document begins with a history of civilian oversight, the goals that a model should meet, and the recent evolution of common models. As each model is broken down, helpful graphics are used to support the text.

["Are civilian oversight agencies actually holding police accountable?"](#), Ajilore Olugbenga

This article gives a basic overview regarding the components of civilian oversight agencies. In addition to breaking down the key factors of independence, resources, and powers, Ajilore also notes the need to learn more about the effectiveness of oversight agencies in order to enhance accountability.

[“Civilian Oversight of Police Has Benefits and Disadvantages”](#), Pete Eyre

Pete Eyre, the president of NACOLE, speaking with Brian Buchner, Pamela J. Meanes, and Jonathan S. Taylor, discuss the advantages and disadvantages that civilian oversight of police can bring with it. The interview discusses the additional accountability that civilian oversight can provide, and weighs in on the possible resistance and pushback that police officers may have after having governed themselves.

[“Oversight emerges as key issue in Burlington police reform efforts”](#). Aidan Quigley; January 26, 2020

This article references some of the 2019 incidents involving the Burlington Police Department that have resulted in calls for reform. The model of civilian oversight used in Burlington is discussed, explaining reasons why some people believe it is or is not effective. Quotes from those involved with the commission and PD are included, with a national discussion about other models of civilian oversight currently being used in the US.

[“Burlington Policing Committee Recommends More Oversight, De-escalation”](#), Liam Elder-Connors; Vermont Public Radio; February 19, 2020

This article summarizes the seven page report released by the 15-member "Special Committee to Review Community Policing Practices" formed in June by the Burlington City Council. The report recommends emphasizing de-escalation in the department's use-of-force policy and improving civilian oversight of police.

[“Burlington debates police oversight”](#), Jess Aloe; Burlington Free Press; February 14, 2020

This article highlights some of the proposed resolutions to Burlington's Police Commission's role in oversight. The city's mayor and police chief are proposing changes to improve trust with community members, including proposals that would allow the Commission involvement in investigating complaints against police. A recommendation made in the 2014 Diversity and Equity report, which said the city should implement something similar to the State Police Advisory Commission, is still being discussed by the city. This article contains graphics that illustrate the types of complaints that the Burlington PD sees most often, and quotes from local officials and activists.

[“Barre City Council votes to add Civilian Oversight and Advisory Board”](#), Eric Brown; WCAX; July 1, 2020

This article announces Barre City Council's vote to implement a civilian oversight board that would review and investigate violations of the policy of members of the Barre City Police Department. Details are still not final, but the council has agreed that the board will be made up of 5 members who must reside or work in Barre. The council noted that this new board is in response to “the overwhelming, and long overdue, call to reform the policing policies and practices across the United States”.

["Burlington, Bennington Officials Respond To Demand For Policing Reform"](#), Liam Elder-Connors, Howard Weiss-Tilsman; Vermont Public Radio; June 16, 2020

This article discusses the responses to the death of George Floyd in Burlington and Bennington. In Burlington, the PD budget was cut and the number of active officers hired by the department was reduced. In Bennington, Curtiss Reed Jr. was hired to help the select board explore the possibility of a civilian oversight board.

["Council creates police 'oversight' board, condemns racism, balks at displaying BLM flag"](#), David Delcore; Times Argus; July 1, 2020

This article gives a recount of the Barre City Council Meeting that resulted in the vote to create a "civilian oversight and advisory board" for the local police department. A vote also had to be made over whether to include "oversight" in the board's title. There was also a disagreement on a proposed policy that would have opened the door for the display of "special flags," such as a "Black Lives Matter" flag.

Interview Notes

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Interview Topics

These are based on questions in Appendix A of "[Civilian Oversight of the Police in Major Cities](#)," Darrel W. Stephens, Ellen Scrivner, and Josie F. Cambareri; U.S. Department of Justice, 2018

Name: **Tim Bombardier**

Date: 8/4/2020

Title/Position: Director of Public Safety City of Barre

Interviewer: Katie Berger

Discuss their agency's / town's / etc.'s civilian oversight or review body.

Chief Bombardier worked with the State Police for 27 years and was the Director of Internal Affairs.

Barre has a new civilian oversight committee being informed, but Chief Bombardier isn't sure if they know exactly what they're getting themselves into. Discussions still have to be had about what type of model the oversight body will be. At one time, there was a misunderstanding with some citizens that the oversight committee would have the ability to conduct investigations, which is not the case. The oversight committee will make recommendations to the city council, but could also see them being a sounding board for the chief of police.

Vermont law requires that there be a secondary review if there are instances that are sent down to be recorded at the Criminal Justice Training Council. There is already a 3 person panel in place for the city of Barre that is used for discussion of these cases, and these members have already asked to become members of the new committee.

The oversight committee will be made up of 5 citizens, volunteer based, and members will be appointed by the city council. One council member and the chief will be non-voting members. Complaints will be brought in through both the PD and the committee. The committee will start off as a sounding board, but once they have had a chance to learn more operation wise they could begin to give recommendations.

Discuss how the oversight body was formed.

Barre has had an advisory committee for around a decade. Unsure of what sparked the desire to move to a new model of civilian oversight, but suspects that it comes from the national member conversation. The death of George Floyd may have had something to do with the shift in conversation but Minneapolis is not Vermont. If you're from Vermont or you take the time to look around, policing in Vermont does not see the same things that other state's police force sees. However, Vermont can always do better when it comes to our awareness and preparedness of these types of situations.

Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the oversight body.

The committee will discuss and hear any complaints brought to the attention of the PD. Chief Bombardier is hoping that the people assigned to this committee take the time to look at what policies and procedures we have in place. The movement to want to defund or shift money around in law enforcement is a good example of people not understanding the policies and guidelines that are already in place in many PDs. Barre City Police has had a police social worker for going on 8 years. We have been pushing for an embedded mental health clinician for 6 years but we only got one as of yesterday. We have been pushing for a lot of alternative positions but

nobody wants to pay for them. What you're going to see is that more people will be embedded into the police department and there will be a more interprofessional approach to policing. However, police can't be replaced, no mental health clinician is going to want to go to a call without the police. Some of the issues surrounding defunding the police or implementing civilian oversight are oversimplified. Decisions need to be made by people who understand law enforcement.

Discuss opinions and advice.

In a perfect world, Chief Bombardier would take the SPAC model and do a regional version of civilian oversight versus a town-by-town model. Regional could mean broken up by county or by state quadrant. Vermont needs to look at the big picture and not have local governments interjected national issues into their small towns. If you want to make changes it has to encompass every community and every officer. A lot of Vermont PDs rely on their next door neighbors for backup. It is a lot easier for people to do their job when investigating these types of things, easier if multiple chiefs are involved in decision making if civilian oversight encompasses more than just one town and one PD. A quadrant model would give a mix of representation in each corner of the state.

To Bennington: Oversight is a misleading word that gives people the idea that they are going to be conducting investigations, etc. Would tell every PD in the state to look at Title XX, look at SPAC, and look at Act 56 requirements and learn from their structure and internal affairs process. Use this information as a base. This is not a bad process and not a bad idea if it is being done for the right reasons. Look at how a committee will make things better because change doesn't always make things better. There are so many policies, procedures, and laws within law enforcement that whoever is making decisions needs to understand. The members of the committee need to take the time to learn what is already in place.

Interview Topics

These are based on questions in Appendix A of "[Civilian Oversight of the Police in Major Cities](#)," Darrel W. Stephens, Ellen Scrivner, and Josie F. Cambareri; U.S. Department of Justice, 2018

Name: **Shawn Burke**

Date: 7/31/2020

Title/Position: Chief of Police S. Burlington

Interviewer: Katie Berger

Discuss their agency's / town's / etc.'s civilian oversight or review body.

S. Burlington currently does not have any form of civilian oversight in place. Conversations are beginning around the creation of a board and what that would mean. Currently, anytime that we have a misconduct case the city manager has final authority on any final discipline. Between the city manager's review, attorney's review, and occasionally other executive sessions there is a level of civilian oversight but not in terms of what there is a current appetite for nationally. Individual communities need to figure out how to introduce more civilian oversight into their PDs, including S. Burlington.

Community needs to decide what type of model they want to see in terms of civilian oversight, and whether it will be volunteer based or compensated roles. However, fiscally, it would be very economically difficult for this community to put together a paid commission. The S. Burlington complaint level is low. A more likely model is one similar to what the state police uses, something regionally.

Discuss opinions and advice.

The murder of George Floyd has been a watershed moment in American policing nationwide. The conduct that was captured in the video of the murder of George Floyd is beyond unacceptable, so that is questionable why it should be linked to a lethal use of force standard or more meaningful citizen oversight. That use of force was not at all lawful so a new legal standard would not at all help that scenario. However, more effective civilian oversight could have potentially rooted out an employee like Derek Chauvin earlier.

Chief Burke urges both his community of S. Burlington and other police leaders to be connected with their local constituents in this time of crisis. If you don't have a good working relationship with your community, it is very hard to reconcile your police force once you see them behaving in a way captured in a video in Minneapolis.

Chief Burke spent almost 22 years working as a police officer for the city of Burlington and has experienced what it is like working within a PD with a police commission that can weigh in on disciplinary decisions and provide feedback to the chief of police. Over the years this commission has been a very meaningful process but even Burlington is now having to explore changes to their commission and what more can be done at the civilian level.

It seems that the State of Vermont would benefit well from a model policy of what civilian oversight should look like. There is a call for more civilian oversight nationally, and if done right it will enhance the relationship between PDs and our communities. Vermont can really capitalize on our small size by creating a universal statewide model.

Select boards or city councils need to really consider labor laws and have a high awareness of police operations when structuring a new civilian oversight body and its policy. It is hard for a typical civilian to comprehend policing, particularly use of force cases, without background knowledge in law enforcement.

Each community is different and needs to figure out what oversight model is best for them. Many communities and PDs are too small to have an oversight body all to themselves, so exploring regional committees or commissions would make much more sense.

To Bennington: Understand where your blindspots are. The IACP report is very insightful and contains a lot of information for your existing select board to look at when discussing policy making or changes. Bennington PD will need to increase its transparency and information sharing. It appears that within the report there was a strong emphasis on traffic enforcement, that is something that police departments have historically done but what was the mandate that drove those outcomes?

Interview Topics

These are based on questions in Appendix A of "[Civilian Oversight of the Police in Major Cities](#)," Darrel W. Stephens, Ellen Scrivner, and Josie F. Cambareri; U.S. Department of Justice, 2018

Name: **Michael Fitzgerald**

Date: 8/6/2020

Title/Position: Chief of Police Brattleboro

Interviewer: Katie Berger

Background Information:

Citizen Police Communications Committee (CPCC)

The 5-member committee's charge was amended by the Selectboard on October 21, 2014 as follows "The mission of the Citizen Police Communications Committee (CPCC) is to facilitate mutually respectful communication between citizens and the Brattleboro Police Department regarding complaints, compliments or information concerning police procedures."

Discuss their agency's / town's / etc.'s civilian oversight or review body.

We have a review focused model of civilian oversight. The committee is volunteer based. The committee reviews complaints and internal affairs investigations that were generated by those complaints. Complaints are filed through either the review body or the PD. If we get a written formal complaint, the supervisor takes the complaint and puts it in the captains box. The captain will then look at the complaint and assign a lieutenant to investigate the complaint. Every complaint will generate some level of internal investigation, but that doesn't always mean there will need to be discipline or termination. Once the investigation is done the chief gets a copy of the complaint and the CPCC gets a copy of the complaint. A summary of the complaint is then given to the complainant, the officer, and the CPCC.

The first version of the committee was originally founded in 2002. From 2002 until about 2009 there was a big uptake in interest from people who wanted to be involved. In 2009 interest began to fizzle out and the selectboard was considering dissolving the committee due to lack of interest. When that information was released, quite a few citizens then spoke up in favor of maintaining the committee. The committee was revived and in 2014 the mission statement was revised. In 2015 the committee adopted bylaws.

Discuss how the oversight body was formed.

Creation of the oversight body was prompted by an officer involved shooting in a church with an individual suffering from a mental health crisis.

Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the oversight body.

The committee's biggest power is their ability to ask questions. They can ask questions about the investigation, what was or wasn't looked at, if more can be looked at, reasons for specific decisions, etc. If they aren't satisfied with the answers they receive then they can contact the chief, if they don't like that answer then they have the ability to go to the town manager or the select board.

If there is an officer that violates a policy that doesn't have to do with civilians then the CPCC is not involved in the internal investigation. CPCC is only involved in cases that have to do with complaints from the citizens.

Chief Fitzgerald would like to see the CPCC become even more involved in the PD. He'd like to see them involved in the PD's hiring process, do more ride alongs with officers to experience what they go through, and write and review policies. In order to accomplish these things we need to get individuals that invest a whole lot more time than an hour or two a month. It will be a much more difficult and time consuming position. Once you finally get people who understand the policies and have a good grasp on the functions of the PDs, you will have a good productive member. This model would take a serious commitment from both the PD and the committee members.

It would be difficult for the CPCC to ever become a paid committee. If the CPCC was now paid, why wouldn't any other commission also be paid? It would become a political question. There are pros and cons to having a paid committee but having a paid committee would have a lot stricter criteria. Members would have to be much more well versed in the legal aspects of law enforcement, know the judicial system, and know the police procedures.

Discuss opinions and advice.

The death of George Floyd has sparked more conversation in Brattleboro surrounding civilian oversight. Citizens seem to want to see the committee have more involvement with the PD, and not just deal with complaints and compliments. Citizens want a more robust committee, and so does Chief Fitzgerald. In his opinion, the CPCC has been critical to the success of the PD. To have a good working relationship with the committee is very important. A lot of people are very intimidated coming into a PD and making a complaint to a police officer about another police officer, so having a committee like ours helps build trust and legitimacy in the community. A citizen can go to the committee and say "I was wronged, here's my story" and feel that their case will be fully investigated.

Initially there was a lot of apprehension over the formation of an oversight body in Brattleboro. In the past 10 years, citizens and police officers have come to understand the value of it. At first it may have seemed like a "big brother" situation with someone always looking over the PD's shoulders. Now Brattleboro's officers see the value of having positive citizen involvement in what they do. There is now nonexistent pushback from the PD toward the CPCC.

To Bennington: When looking at creating some kind of committee, make sure that you have a robust oversight committee and look at what kinds of qualifications you want from your members. If you were in a community where the civilian oversight was able to assist in conducting an investigation for the complaint, the members would have to know labor laws, investigative techniques, etc. To have someone with that type of authority, they need to be very well trained and most likely paid. It might do more harm to the PD and community having a committee of people who only have to volunteer a few hours a month to be a part of it. Make sure people are doing it for the right reasons, and have specific qualifications that you deem necessary. Make sure you match the committee members with their charge and responsibility appropriately.

Interview Topics

These are based on questions in Appendix A of "[Civilian Oversight of the Police in Major Cities](#)," Darrel W. Stephens, Ellen Scrivner, and Josie F. Cambareri; U.S. Department of Justice, 2018

Name: **Captain Garry Scott**

Date: July 31, 2020

Title/Position: Director of Fair and Impartial Policing and Community Affairs

Interviewer: Alana Harte

Key Points

The Vermont State Police Department created the Fair and Impartial Policing Committee in 2009. The committee and the Director of Fair and Impartial Policing and Community Affairs serve as a point of contact within the state police department. There are 100 members statewide, including community groups, religious leaders, academics, and command structure from state police. The Fair and Impartial Policing Committee reviews policies and procedures on a range of topics from use of force and pursuit to hiring and recruiting and is separate from the civilian oversight committee, which operates through internal affairs.

The community policing model is not just segmented actions, but it's a philosophy and approach. The process to "understand people and community, have conversations, clear expectations, build trust, cannot be crisis-driven." There should be relationship-building over time, handled proactively. For example, officers go to the pride center to facilitate conversation and establish trust, because there's "significant distrust [of police] in the LGBT community. Repairing the relationship "happens over years." The police department should foster community relationships by "offering resources, explaining systems [of policing], bringing community members into ride-alongs."

The committee has strategic goals and looks at data for all levels before presenting a plan. The community should be familiar with how the agency functions, and what the strategic goals are; community members seeking change should especially know what police are currently doing and how the department operates.

Community leaders can return to membership to communicate agency plans and procedures.

The agency is focused on the use of data for improving policing, and fairness.

Interview Topics

These are based on questions in Appendix A of "[Civilian Oversight of the Police in Major Cities](#)," Darrel W. Stephens, Ellen Scrivner, and Josie F. Cambareri; U.S. Department of Justice, 2018

Name: **Jon Murad**

Date: 7/30/2020

Title/Position: Acting Chief of Police of Burlington

Interviewer: Katie Berger

Discuss their agency's / town's / etc.'s civilian oversight or review body.

Police Commission, outlined by city charter. Representative volunteer body selected my city council. 7 members, residents of Burlington, unpaid, meet monthly. Commission is used for a variety of Burlington PD decisions, most commonly with regard to discipline. The primary function as dictated by the city charter is a review board for discipline that is issued to officers. Resolution was passed by the city council about a week ago that proposes some changes to the structure and responsibilities of the Commission. How those changes will be implemented is still in the works, the Commission is currently in a state of flux. City Council makes decisions on who is on the Commission.

Discuss how the oversight body was formed.

Chief Murad became Deputy Chief about two years ago, is unsure of the early stages of the Police Commission but knows that it goes back more than 20 years.

Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the oversight body.

Minimal power but will be provided with records, questions are being discussed about what power they should have, if they want it they get it. There are very few reasons why the Commission will not be able to see records for their review.

The 15 member Special Committee to Review Policing Practices was convened in summer of last year and tasked to look at use of force policy and civilian oversight. The policy that came out of this process seems complete now. Chief Murad believes it is "as cutting edge as any policy in the country" and "a model that the state will look at as the state starts to talk about creating a model policy for all agencies". Questions about oversight were really focused on when it becomes possible to have an empowered oversight body with things like subpoena power and the ability to make disciplinary decisions. These are not things that you want unpaid citizens doing. You need staff, attorneys, and training to do these things. The committee decided in the end that for a 44,000 person city, even though it is large for Vermont, is not at a point where this type of model would make financial sense. There seems to be a threshold for when a community needs and can make an oversight body of that type work, and it is a big threshold (250,000 people or more for the most part).

The Commission can review any complaint that comes to them or to the PD, but can't necessarily investigate. We've had one instance where the Commission handled the investigation of a complaint from the start, but usually the complainant is contacted and the PD begins the investigation to start. Vast majority of the time the complaint does not need to be investigated by internal affairs, etc. Burlington receives a lot of complaints that do not need full investigation. Complaints can go directly to the PD or the Commission. The PD has an online portal for

complaints, they can come through the Criminal Justice Council in Burlington, come through local politicians, through the Commission members, etc.

Discuss opinions and advice.

There were differences of opinion between committee members about the changes in policy, all of which is documented in the report that can be obtained through city council presented in February of 2020. Some people in the committee think that there should be total civilian oversight, others think it is the prerogative of the chief, others think it should be the prerogative of the mayor.

The culture within the PD toward the body is very cooperative, which probably has to do with the fact that the Commission has been around so long. There are longstanding members of the community that make sure the Commission cooperates well with officers. The body is well established and the relationship between the Commission and the PD is transparent.

When creating a new civilian oversight body, have clear and simple starting points, don't bite off more than you can chew. Make sure that your body is collaborative and doesn't come off adversarial. Ultimately, final decisions must always rest with the police chief. Discipline has to be issued by the chief, but the body can be involved in the discussion. The body can't be adversarial at its root and has to be made up of people who want the PD to function collaboratively with the community in ways that are fair and effective. There is a great deal of responsibility attached to being one of the members. They will be agents of the city, and should be bound with rules surrounding privacy and boundaries.

Prior to the murder of George Floyd, the document that the Policing Practices Committee came up with solidified what the Commission was already doing. Essentially, what was working well was just put in writing as official policy. The goal was to come up with a policy that wouldn't change chief to chief and worked well for the city itself. We were already doing what many Americans are now calling for PDs to do in terms of civilian oversight. Despite the great passions of this moment in history, there seems to be no need to change what it is that Burlington was already thinking about regarding the Commission.

Interview Topics

These are based on questions in Appendix A of "[Civilian Oversight of the Police in Major Cities](#)," Darrel W. Stephens, Ellen Scrivner, and Josie F. Cambareri; U.S. Department of Justice, 2018

Name: **Randall Harp**

Date: August 4, 2020

Title/Position: Commissioner- Burlington Police Commission

Interviewer: Alana Harte

General Information:

Burlington's Police Commission has seven members. Civilians nominate themselves and are selected by city council to serve a three-year term. The committee's primary role is to make sure community members' concerns are addressed when policies are discussed in the bi-monthly meetings.

Civilian board has to have adequate authority in order to be meaningful for the community. BPC has observational and consulting powers. The police commission views deliberation and related information that the chief of police uses in disciplinary matters. The BPC provides input into the deliberation, and the chief of police ultimately decides how to proceed.

Possible and Previous Changes:

Commissioners must live in the City of Burlington, but may live in the same ward. In the future, there may be structures providing equal representation for all seven wards of the city. This way, there isn't an over representation of areas with a higher business concentration, or any particular socio-economic level.

Perhaps in the future commissioner will be an elected position, instead of appointed.

"In 2001, the BPC changed from a governance body to a primarily advisory body." Through this change of function, commissioners' responsibilities shifted from a decision-making structure to one of advising.

Suggestions and Considerations for Implementation in Bennington:

Have transparency to the greatest degree possible in order to ensure public confidence. The board's role, authority, and all related processes should be completely clear to members, the police department, and the community at large. For example, "When the commission became an advisory body [in 2001], there was significant confusion about the role that the commission should play in police discipline. The commission has attempted to clarify that role over the years."

Also, in Burlington, the board reviews all police complaints. There must be clarity about what classifies as a complaint, including in-person reports, emails, etc. that are not funneled through the designated site for complaints. How do these get documented and how are they shared with the commission?

There is also some uncertainty amongst the community in the City of Burlington about the commission's role and established range of authority. Town members' expectations of the board can be managed through a solid understanding of the board's purpose and functions.

Review NACOLE models

Some cities have opted for an independent investigatory staff, which is typically expensive.

Community needs to know who's accountable when there's dissatisfaction around a disciplinary decision. What are the next steps? What does the police department do to increase confidence in its policing if the discipline doesn't meet public expectation or leads to unrest?

Board members and others making decisions need to be knowledgeable about relevant laws and policy, especially if they're going to be involved in discipline.

Interview Topics

These are based on questions in Appendix A of "[Civilian Oversight of the Police in Major Cities](#)," Darrel W. Stephens, Ellen Scrivner, and Josie F. Cambareri; U.S. Department of Justice, 2018

Name: **Col. James Baker (Ret.)**

Date: 8/7/2020

Title/Position: former head of VT State Police, former interim head of the Vermont Police Academy, former chief of the Rutland City Police Department, and director of advocacy for the International Association of Chiefs of Police

Interviewer: Katie Berger

What is your experience with oversight bodies?

Has had experience with SPAC which oversees the internal affairs process within the state police. SPAC had the authority to release reports to the public but SPAC was always confidential which isn't the transparency that the general public is looking for right now.

Experience with Rutland City Police Commission which oversaw the PD, hired chiefs, and reviewed complaints made to the PD. Rutland has a good model to base other VT police commissions off of, holding the police chief accountable for disciplinary actions made toward other employees.

Opinions and Advice:

Citizens need to be able to "touch the process" when it comes to internal affairs. PDs need to be open to the public in order to gain their trust. There needs to be a formal process for how to deal with complaints that is reviewed by some kind of citizen body. Citizens shouldn't be able to have subpoena power but should be involved in review. Police officers have rights just like anyone else.

The oversight body needs to be independent from the select board, such as a police commission.

The PD needs to accept a greater form of oversight. The town manager and chief needs to understand that this type of change needs to happen.

Unions need to come to a realization that if they don't come to the table to agree to some sort of oversight they're going to have a harder time in the long run.

Murder of George Floyd has created an overreaction that all police officers are bad. Oversight isn't control; it should be a collaborative process that ultimately helps a PD. People need to realize that police officers have rights too when it comes to investigating complaints.

Bennington PD needs to do a better job connecting with the community. Need to avoid "one offs" where the police chief speaks to groups of people who will always agree with them and support them. Giving freeze pops out isn't enough. For the Disenfranchised folks that don't feel like the system is made for them, all this is white noise. They need to be engaged and feel like they are being heard. Bennington needs to listen, not talk to engage citizens. Can't just go to places like the Elks Club or Lions club where everyone will love you. Not talking to the people who you need to hear perspectives from.

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/vermont-city-of-vergennes-tried-to-confront-race-and-policing-and-it-imploded>

This article explains how the dealing with BLM has blown up in Vergennes. Gives good insight as to what will be difficult in Bennington and what to avoid. Good example of what could go sideways when trying to implement oversight.

Members of the oversight committee should have set terms with criteria and expectations of who you are looking for. Set terms so people can't sit on the board forever. The more people filtering in and out the better relationship with the community. The board needs to look like the makeup of Bennington, can't just be made up of straight white guys.

<https://www.benningtonbanner.com/stories/letter-proposed-blm-mural-undercuts-tolerance,610769>

This article has all the buzz words for someone claiming that they aren't racist or biased. Select board needs to be very careful with how they manage these issues. Smart to bring back Curtiss to consult.

Need to listen to the "naysayers", can't just blow them off.

Interview Topics

These are based on questions in Appendix A of "[Civilian Oversight of the Police in Major Cities](#)," Darrel W. Stephens, Ellen Scrivner, and Josie F. Cambareri; U.S. Department of Justice, 2018

Name: **Jerry O'Neill**

Date: 8/6/2020

Title/Position: Former US Attorney, Former Chair of Burlington Police Commission

Interviewer: Katie Berger

What is your experience with oversight bodies?

Chair of Burlington Police Commission from approx. 1998-2017. Witnessed Burlington Police Commission evolve over time, originally the members of the commission received badges, could use them at traffic stops. O'Neill had badges taken away since the commission members had no more rights than an everyday citizen. Originally the commission hired the police chief, now it is the mayor.

Usually had very few complaints coming to the commission at their monthly meetings. Never had legal authority to demand information but always were respected enough to get answers to their questions about complaint cases.

Never can remember an instance where the commission didn't agree with the final disciplinary decision of the chief. We aren't there to decide what the punishment should be, we don't have the experience or the background, that's the chief's job.

Some people who were able to get on the commission had an agenda. They wanted to join because of some political motive rather than an interest in good policing.

Commission used to be 5 members, now it is 7. The terms are 3 years long and in theory you are only supposed to serve 2 terms. However, none of Burlington's commissions ever paid any attention to that role. Used to be that with 5 members, there could not be more than 3 members on the commission from the same political party. Once a year the city council would look at the applicants for new members and they had the ultimate decision on who got on what commission, and it could be a very political process.

Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the oversight body.

Need a balance of police being authoritative toward citizens and collaborative. Some situations they need to be armed and in control, other times they need to walk around and interact with citizens in the street building connections.

A commission should never be in charge of a PD, that is the chief's job. The Commission is just there to ask and answer questions on behalf of their fellow citizens.

Opinions and Advice:

Police unions can be major impediments to the progress of civilian oversight. Police officers have so many procedural protections that it makes it hard for civilian oversight to work. Although the ultimate disciplinary action may be termination, unions can mean that a terminated officer gets reinstated. Unions can protect officers who have been unlawful.

Murder of George Floyd is creating a pendulum effect. Change will be drastic and overdone at first and people will find that they need to pull back. People don't realize how much our society relies on good policing, and the solution isn't restricting them. What we will see is smaller communities swinging toward more civilian oversight, but perhaps more important would be weakening the power of police unions. The general public doesn't realize how much power the unions have and that some of these changes that are being proposed will do nothing to root out "bad apples" if the unions remain as in power as they are now.

The ideal oversight body in the state of Vermont is relatively small, probably around 5 people, appointed in as non political a way as possible, people that have an interest in policing, people with some sort of policing experience (public defenders, prosecutors, etc.), opportunity to ask the right questions of a PD. Oversight bodies should have access to every complaint and a direct relationship with the police where there is an open dialogue.

It is better for citizens to complain to the PD before the commission. The PD should have the opportunity to investigate and right a complaint from the start. If a complaint with respect to a police officer is made to the public before the PD, that could be very unfair to the officer in many situations. Certainly some situations should and will eventually be known publicly, but more often than not a complaint is a misunderstanding that can be amended. If someone is dissatisfied with the result of the complaint, that is when they should come and see the commission. If a complaint is not handled properly through the PD, that is how you know the chief needs to go.

Never heard of an instance in VT where someone was retaliated against for making a complaint.

To Bennington: If you create your own board, spend a lot of time outlining the purpose and roles of board members. Define its function and relate it specifically to what is realistic for your own PD and town. Keep it small, no more than 5 members in a town the size of Bennington. Maintaining a good perspective on the commission is important. Members aren't there to make decisions or have power. Members should never be elected. Look for people who are genuinely interested in police function, not people who have some sort of agenda, people who will keep confidentiality, people who want to help achieve good policing on behalf of fellow citizens. The board "oversees" the PD, but at an appropriate distance. Citizens need to feel that if they come to the board they will be heard. If the PD is doing a good job, then the board shouldn't have much to do.

Interview Topics

These are based on questions in Appendix A of "[Civilian Oversight of the Police in Major Cities](#)," Darrel W. Stephens, Ellen Scrivner, and Josie F. Cambareri; U.S. Department of Justice, 2018

Name: **Nancy Sheahan**

Date: 2020-08-07, 1pm

Title/Position: Chair, Vermont's State Police Advisory Commission

Interviewer: Joe Holt

Discuss their agency's / town's / etc.'s civilian oversight or review body.

Can you give a snapshot of SPAC?

Chair Sheahan says that SPAC meets every other month, but can also meet at other times as needed. She says their primary responsibility is to review internal investigations, and that while they hear about every investigation, they're not involved in cases unless they're escalated. They engage in a dialog with the State Police about recommendations for handling cases. They also oversee policy decisions, but this doesn't come up frequently (tasers, for example), and hear requests for release of records.

Does SPAC have difficulty with gathering records or evidence for review?

Chair Sheahan says that they never have problems with internal requests, and that SPAC member can make an appointment with the Office of Internal Affairs at any time.

Comments on confidentiality vs. transparency?

Chair Sheahan says there's a movement toward transparency within SPAC and the State Police, and more of a willingness to make records available to the public. She views this as a good thing. She did caution that they have to operate according to the statute that created SPAC, and according to the limits described within union contracts.

Does Bennington need a civilian oversight body?

Chair Sheahan feels that oversight committees are "great", and believes that there is broad support for oversight committees among officers of public safety and administration officials.

Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the oversight body.

What do you think a civilian oversight body should look like?

Chair Sheahan believes that the SPAC model is an effective model worth emulating.

What should the composition of the oversight body be?

Chair Sheahan feels the body should be as diverse as possible. She believes that it's helpful to have involvement from special interest groups, such as victim advocates. She advises to look at the Bennington community for how the body should be made up and feels that everybody should be heard from. She cautioned against having a one-sided body, consisting of all only "pro police" or "anti-police" members.

She points out that it's valuable to have professional expertise represented on the committee, and mentioned that SPAC has a retired state police officer on the commission, by statute.

Discuss opinions and advice.

Any advice you'd like to give to Bennington as we consider creating an oversight body?

Chair Sheahan encourages us to get input from the Bennington Police Department. She also encourages us to seek out and hear from people who feel they've been shut out of the process. She advises us to approach the formation of a commission with flexibility, recognizing that every community is different. She says, "Don't be afraid to tweak it," and "Look at other communities."

Interview Topics

These are based on questions in Appendix A of "[Civilian Oversight of the Police in Major Cities](#)," Darrel W. Stephens, Ellen Scrivner, and Josie F. Cambareri; U.S. Department of Justice, 2018

Name: **Senator Dick Sears**

Date: 2020-08-05, 10am

Title/Position: Vermont State Senator, Bennington District

Interviewer: Joe Holt

Discuss their agency's / town's / etc.'s civilian oversight or review body.

Does Bennington need a civilian oversight body?

Senator Sears thinks that this is definitely something that's needed. He believes that Bennington needs to have more confidence in its law enforcement. He found it significant, in the IACP report, the number of people who expressed a lack of confidence in the police department.

How do you think an oversight body could be most effective?

Senator Sears said that the body could take many forms, while admitting that he doesn't have that much knowledge of how police commissions work. He believes the any oversight body needs to have clout.

In reference to the recent police misconduct case handled by the Select Board, he expressed that if both sides could've spoken to such a commission or oversight body, it would've given people more confidence in the process and in the police.

He also believes that a commission would help people feel more comfortable making complaints, as well as compliments.

Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the oversight body.

What do you think a civilian oversight body should have the authority to do?

Senator Sears believes that a body should be able to make recommendations directly to the Select Board, and hear and moderate citizen appeals. He questioned how a board should deal with police discipline, again expressing that he's not that knowledgeable about specifics, and encouraged us to look at what's being done at the state level.

What should the composition of the oversight body be?

He believes that it's important that the body is representative of a broad diverse group, and not weighted heavily to village merchants or people interested in local development. He suggested actively involving people with diverse incomes and people with criminal records.

He encouraged us to look at the "[Justice Reinvestment](#)" act at the state level, which included the ACLU, the head of racial diversity, and law enforcement, among others.

Discuss opinions and advice.

Any advice you'd like to give to Bennington as we consider creating an oversight body?

Senator Sears expressed great respect for Curtiss Reed, and implored us to "pick his brain." He said, "Please listen to IACP." He felt that historically, a lot of the decisions by the Select Board were made on the Town Manager's recommendation, but that given the volatile nature of police and

community relationships these days, it's important to have outside agencies advising the Select Board.

Any other advice regarding oversight and community policing?

Senator Sears felt that it would be prudent to review police contracts, especially with regard to disciplinary procedures and immunity, believing that this can be improved. He also felt that the relationship between the town, the state police and the sheriff needs to be re-examined.

He suggests creating new relationships with different community service providers and the police department. He said, "More and more we're seeing individuals going through mental health crises where the police department is asked to be involved," particularly with substance abuse, and that it's critical that mental health workers, from UCS or a new agency, be very much a part of community policing.