



Police Commission Meeting - Tuesday, October 25, 2022 @ 6:00 pm. **Hybrid Meeting: In-Person & Virtual via ZOOM 10/25/2022**

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Meeting started at 6:03

Commissioners present:

Stephanie Seguino, Jabulani Gamache, Melo Grant, Suzy Comerford, Jack Keefe and Kevin Garrison.

Also Present:

Acting Chief Murad, Deputy Chiefs LaBarge and Labreque, Tammy Boudah, Howard Center, and Mohamed Ibrahim, Police Commission Clerk.

1. Agenda

1.01 Call to order

1.02 Roll call and determination of quorum

Quorum is complete.

1.03 Motion to amend/adopt the agenda

Motion to amend the agenda by Commissioner Gamache to remove item 5.02 Seconded by Commissioner Seguino. Agenda adopted as amended after unanimous vote.

2. Minutes

2.01 Approve minutes from Police Commission meeting, September 27, 2022

Motion to approve by Commissioner Comerford and seconded by Co-chair Seguino.

Motion passes unanimously.

2.02 Approve minutes from Police Commission special meeting October 17, 2022



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Motion to approve by Co-Chair Seguino and seconded by Co-chair Gamache.

Motion passes unanimously.

3. Public Forum

3.01 The public is invited to address the commission

Sam Powers, UVM student, delivers comments on the Police Department's analysis of public safety trends in Burlington. He noted "the number and nature of Priority 1 incidents is typically used as a proxy for the safety of the general population of Burlington. This can sometimes be misleading. Not all Priority 1 incidents are representative of immediate danger to the general public. Those incidents are: Overdose, Restraining orders service and violation, Kidnapping, Cruelty to a child, Stalking, Suicide attempt, Domestic assault, domestic disturbance, and missing person. These are all important indicators of harm to members of the Burlington community, but these specific incidents either involve a small number of connected individuals and/or do not pose a threat to the immediate physical safety of the community."

4. Chief's Report

4.01 Acting Chief's report

Points of discussion:

- Staffing and headcount situation didn't materially changed since previous meeting. A significant portion of officers are currently unavailable for patrol for a variety of reasons
- Support from other resources like Community Support Liaisons and Community Service Officers has been very helpful.
- Incident volume is up this year
- Discussion of how patterns have changed over the past several years and where we are this year.
- Gunfire incidents unfortunately have increased

5. Commission business

5.01 Tammy Boudah, Street Outreach Team, on de-escalation

Tammy Boudah, leader of Howard Center Street Outreach team.

I'll just tell you briefly that we are currently a team of five Outreach workers, our default position when we're not busy which isn't often is trying to do proactive engagement with individuals who will would be in the downtown area, generally folks who are homeless maybe on a fixed income, using substances in the area, purchase or just congregate with others common spaces that people who don't have a lot of means might use, we're downtown trying to create relationships with people so that if there is a crisis or a need for de-escalation we have that rapport in place but also to be sort of a roving information sign, have the ability to check in on people and make sure that people are doing well, if people start to



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decompensate or slip to hopefully be able to be there to offer them services to try to catch things before it becomes a crisis. When we're not doing that, we take calls for service from clients themselves from merchants from family members from concerned citizens and from dispatch, and typically our calls from dispatch are when a call comes in for a mental health issue that does not seem to be escalated to a point where an officer is warranted and they'll ask us to go and either take care of the incident ourselves or call for an officer should we need one, and that's a change. Up until 2021 it had always been a co-response so dispatch would call us and say hey so-and-so has gone out to so-and-so's house.

De-escalation: Our definition of it would be the use of communication or other techniques during an encounter to stabilize slow or reduce the intensity of a potentially violent situation without using physical force.

We go up to the point where words are no longer sufficient. That's where our purview ends. The crux of de-escalation is the person who is needing to be de-escalated is in a state of hyper arousal. What I mean by that is they are in that sort of flight or fight mode. The amygdala region of the brain is lit up. The person can no longer access rational thought and is pretty much out of control, can't control their reactions, can't control themselves, and our goal is to help the person recover their calm and return to that calm regulated state.

You use different tools your response is going to be different your choice as to whether or not you will respond becomes different depending on where you're at in that continuum before you do de-escalation work you really need to kind of do some self-checking, my team and I kind of check in with ourselves every day and throughout the day we will often like use each other as sounding boards.

Because you want to be aware of how you are feeling, where your mood is at? are you hungry are you tired are you cold are things triggering you? is today a day that you're not fit for human interaction. These are all things you have to ask yourself or you won't because your goal is that you're going to be the person who's going to create this core of calm, you're going to be the person that the person who is dysregulated can join up with and that's a horse parlance but means they sort of mirror your personality or what you're doing and kind of take on your energy.

At what point is de-escalation no longer practical or safe? The answer to that is when it becomes a situation that requires a behavioral intervention or containment safety concerns that would come to mind that we would look at that would tell us that we've reached that point that talking bargaining all these things these aren't going to work would be aggressive behavior in an unsecured setting where we're not able to have at least a two-person co-response, report of currently violent behavior, the person having a recent history of violence within the last week or so of a significant violent act in an unsecured setting or even in a secured setting, significant impairment due to substance use, and I would argue that the type of substance would also come into play as we have found recently that people who are dysregulated due to methamphetamine use are particularly prone to violence not able to regulate.

Some of de-escalation techniques:

- When you arrive to the place you must keep a space, which allows people to decrease their anxiety.
- Listening to what the person's experience.
- Aligning verbal and nonverbal communications



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- Be mindful of gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice and any judgmental comments.
- Allow them time to process and decide.

Four basic de-escalation methods:

- Verbal
- Redirection
- Grounding exercises
- Change of venue

5.03 Use of Force Reports, September & October till the 10th.

Commissioners had no questions or requests to view videos.

5.04 Setting agenda for next meeting

Commissioner Grant requests to do a public engagement update and a report on the IACP sessions attended by BPD on oversight as well as historical injustices in policing.

6. Commendations

6.01 Commendations that have been received for October 2022

No Commendations received from BPD for this meeting.

Co-Chair Gamache offered a commendation to BPD's detective Bureau on the swift apprehension of the suspect in the double murder that happened earlier on in October.

7. Anticipated Executive Session

7.01 Anticipated Executive Session

Motion made by co-chair Gamache and seconded by commissioner Comerford to enter executive session.

Motion passes unanimously.

8. Adjournment





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8.01 Motion to Adjourn by Co-Chair Camache and seconded by Co-Chair Seguino

Motion passes unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35.