

The Procedural Justice Committee held a virtual meeting on Jan. 13, 2021.

Captain Rich Wilson of the Police Department joined the committee meeting to talk about a preliminary draft of city's police plan that ultimately will be sent to the state as per Gov. Andrew Cuomo's Executive Order 203. Wilson said the department's intention is to help facilitate this process for the city by drawing attention to existing policies and initiatives that answer the governor's order. Those matters involve a list of items, including Use of Force Policies, Procedural Justice, Implicit Bias Awareness, Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Programs, Restorative Justice Practices, Problem-Oriented Policing, Hot Spots Policing and much more.

Committee members and Wilson talked about how much information needs to be in each section. Wilson noted that the city's Police Policy is more than 600 pages long, and he sought to highlight the relevant parts pertaining to the governor's order.

Committee Co-Chair Yvonne Flowers said she would like to see more information explaining the use of force policy. "That should be elaborated on a little more," she said.

She and other members were concerned people reading the report would have to refer back to the actual policy on the city's webpage to get a clearer understanding of the issue.

Committee members pointed out that the wording of the report is going to be looked at closely by the public and should be easily understood.

Committee member Carmen McGill said it's important that whatever is in the final draft, that the committee weighs in and decides whether it agrees with the report.

Committee members also discussed the complaint form and how it can be improved.

In its recommendations sent to the city, the Procedural Justice Committee said, "The city should make the form more understandable and easier to use, including an introduction at the beginning of the form that explains how the form and process work. Submitted forms are to be reviewed by a member of the command staff and assigned to the appropriate supervisor

for action. The public needs more information about the outcome of these cases and the rationale for the decision. Until a Civilian Oversight board is created, a mediation between the officer and complainant should be considered as part of the complaint process.”

Wilson said the department is looking into making some revisions to the complaint form. He also pointed out that he had provided links to the existing form for Committee members and would need more feedback if they were looking for other changes.

Committee member Tom O’Neil said the city and committee already have gone “well beyond” what was asked by the state. He said people have had adequate time to be heard.

Wilson said the city is continuing to work on the report, will make additions to it and keep the committee in the loop regarding any new developments.