



Minutes

Committee on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Wednesday, September 23, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89614024704>; ID: 896 1402 4704; Dial In: (301) 715 8592

Email comments prior to the meeting to sherrie.boak@lansingmi.gov

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Spitzley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT via audio/video

Council Member Spitzley, Chair
Council Member Dunbar, Vice-Chair- unexcused
Council Member Spadafore, Member

OTHERS PRESENT via audio/video

Sherrie Boak, Council Staff
Jim Smiertka, City Attorney
Lisa Hagen, Assistant City Attorney
Council Member Betz
Kim Coleman, HRCS Director
Nancy Mahlow
WLNS
Tashmica Torok
Jason Wilkes
Angela Waters Austin
Everardo Junior Cuevas
Michael Lynn
Racha Kardahji
Valerie Torrey
Morgan (no last name given)
Rachel Diskin

MINUTES

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER DUNBAR TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 2, 2020 AS PRESENTED. ROLL CALL VOTE, MOTION CARRIED 2-0.

DISCUSSION

RESOLUTION – Invest in the People of Lansing

Council Member Spitzley began with speaking to the responsibilities of Council for inclusion and the focus on the residents. The budget priorities were addressed at the last meeting, and the focus on this resolution will take a look at real world solutions.

Council Member Betz stated the one main reason for the resolution is the common statement of no justice no peace. There needs to be answers to the questions on how to keep community safe, what policies, what programs, and where do funds go to get “re-imagining” public safety.

The reason to introduce is to move dismantling white supremacy, and justice in the City. This would be have conversations, bring in people to bridge the gaps.

Council Member Spitzley confirmed the OCA did look at the document and asked for any topics they proposed for changes or suggestions. Mr. Smiertka did note that an Ad Hoc should be limited to time and scope.

Ms. Hagen began with their first recommendation:

- Whereas #5: suggested edit, change “are proven” to “may”. Lack of information/studies to show investments in education, healthcare, mental health programs, and social programs are proven to increase community safety. (Bit of a correlation does not equal causation issue.)

After Committee discussion it was amended to state “Whereas, studies that exist in education, healthcare, mental health programs, and community-led social programs may increase community safety in a more cost-effective manner than policing; and”

- Whereas #8: “reflective of a deadly skewing of our priorities”, this sentence should be modified. “Deadly skewing” is particularly problematic, and is not supported by the use of force data available to us

After Committee discussion it was amended to state ‘Whereas, the Police budget has grown 11% over the past 3 years, at nearly double the rate of the Public Services budget and while the Human Services budget has decreased; and”

Council Member Spitzley asked Council Member Betz to provide the Committee with the details on the comparison with Public Service and HRCS, so there can be a frame of reference.

Council Member Betz stated he could find that information for her.

- Therefore, be it resolved 1a: specify that the ad hoc is a Council ad hoc committee.
 - Committee to administer community budgeting process “to determine” the exact allocation of funds. Change “to determine” to “establish budget priorities.”
 - Specify that the committee will issue recommendations TO THE FULL COUNCIL on how to administer public safety.

Council Member Spitzley asked the OCA to confirm if a Committee can create an AD HOC or if it can only be the Council President. Council Member Spadafore recommended that if this Committee created a work group or subcommittee, then this resolution should establish what the work group or subcommittee will be charged with. The consensus of the Committee was to have this committee create the work group or subcommittee.

The Committee and Council Member Betz held discussions on his proposed language for a police budget reduction of 50% over a five-year period. Council Member Spitzley asked for recommendations, not just budgetary limits without recommendations. Council Member Betz stated he wanted more than just budgetary. Council Member Spadafore stated he could not support a 50% reduction, but would consider lowering the percentage compared to other budgets. Council Member Betz again asked for a new policy and recommendation in 5 years. Council Member Spitzley asked if 50% could be achieved by setting a goal to switch to more social programs, social measures and outreach. Council Member Spadafore noted he has heard of other communities doing 30% over multiple years and they achieved that by not doing any increases over those multiple years. He continued by noting that right now the system is that all residents call LPD for many things the LPD do not need to address, so the question is how to fix that because there needs to be a plan to reduce the work load. Council Member Betz suggested changed during contract negotiations and reductions of officers.

Ms. Torok made a statement in the Q & A asking for the Police Chief to attend and speak on prioritizing. Council Member Betz gave his opinion on how the police department was formed and his belief they systematically target black and brown residents and act against a certain group of people disproportionately. He asked for a reduction in violence but an increase in public services now, and dismantling the system. Council Member Spadafore suggesting keeping the language at 50% now and continuing the discussion at a later meeting. Council Member Betz asked Council Member Spadafore to accept 30% over 3 years, and Council Member Spadafore responded stating he would want the full Committee present before a discussion on this topic.

After Committee discussion the resolution was amended to remove “ad hoc committee” anywhere listed and replace with “work group/subcommittee” until a final determination on the final type is determined. The Committee also amended the last sentence a. to state “will be released to the Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion who will then share with City Council and the public.....”

The Committee had no changes to 2.a., but amended 2.b:

“...reduce the police budget and reinvest those funds into programs through a.....”

- Therefore be it resolved 3a: change “ensure” to “seek”. Change “deep participation” to “deep advice/input”

After Committee discussion the resolution was amended to remove “ensure” and replace with “seek broad and deep advice/input”. In addition the Committee chose to add in d. “shared with the Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion who will then share with City Council and the public by March 1, 2021.”

- Therefore be it resolved 4a: The resolution indicates that a “task force” must examine policies, discipline procedures at LPD. However, the task force has not been defined anywhere else in the resolution. We don’t know who it is comprised of, and we don’t know the specific role. This item requires clarification. I would also point out that reviewing policy/procedure and discipline practices is purely an administrative function. Therefore be it resolved 4e: should be changed to 4(c).

After Committee discussion the resolution was amended to change the date in this section of the resolution to March 1, 2021.

Council Member Betz noted that since the budget priorities are now complete for FY2021/2022 that 4. could be part of a project at a later date, and Council Member Spitzley noted that it would be the charge the work group or subcommittee could piece meal out with their goals and timelines.

The next Committee meeting was set for October 7, 2020 at 6 pm. The OCA was asked to provide the updated draft by September 30, 2020.

Public Comments/Listening Session

Limited to 3 minutes; sign up to speak at public comment will end 15 minutes after the first speaker starts.

Council Member Spitzley welcomed any public comments stating the sign up would end at 8:37p.m.

Ms. Torok acknowledged the conversation in the meeting, and asked the Committee to invite the Police Chief to be involved in the discussions.

Ms. Waters-Austin spoke in support of the level of conversation tonight, acknowledged Council Member Betz for his sense of urgency in the conversation, and recommended they review the . Recommend them to review www.breatheact.org.

Ms. Diskin acknowledged the committee for their participation and holding the conversations.

Morgan spoke in support of the urgency on action, appreciated the discussion of the committee and allowing participation by the public.

No further comment.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Submitted by, Sherrie Boak

Recording Secretary, Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee October 28, 2020