

**Request for Proposals (RFP) Scope of Work**  
**Town of Brattleboro - Assessment on Community Safety**

Issue date: August 7, 2020  
Response date: September 8, 2020

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**Preamble**

As approved by the Selectboard on August 18 and in furtherance of more than 15 hours of Consistent with Selectboard action on July 21st, and public discussions at Selectboard meetings on June 16, July 7<sup>th</sup> and July 21, and August 6<sup>st</sup> of this year, Brattleboro will begin a focused examination of how Town resources are currently utilized and can be best utilized to ensure equitable and optimal community health, wellness, and safety. The review will examine (but is not limited to): the Brattleboro Police Department, Town support for non-profit organizations, social service agencies, and other community resources, as well as identifying currently unmet community needs. This open process will invite in the wealth of knowledge and life experiences that our community holds about police, social services, racism, oppression, and alternatives to punishment and violence. We are working toward a community that is free of white supremacy in all of its manifestations.

~~At the request of -- and in collaboration with -- the Selectboard, This RFP is a call for one or more paid facilitators who will design and facilitate a community-focused process to conduct this study, and provide to the Selectboard recommendations on policies, organizational structures, redistribution of resources, and/or further studies needed based on gathered input. This assessment and recommendation will be due by December 31, November 2020. In your budget and proposal, please include stipends for those community members involved in the study that are also heavily impacted by police, policing, and involuntary hospitalization.~~

**Acknowledgements**

We acknowledge that what is now known as Vermont is a part of the traditional lands of the Abenaki; specifically, the immediate Brattleboro area is known to them as Wantastegok. The Abenaki and their ancestors have made this place their home for 12,000 years, developing an intimate knowledge and relationship with it. We acknowledge the original stewards of this land,

~~the Abenaki people and the Wabanaki Confederacy. We acknowledge their name for this area, Wantastegok. We acknowledge their land was stolen in 1753.~~

We further acknowledge the centuries where people in power explicitly (and implicitly) have used incarceration, policing, law-making, court orders, and other tools of public safety to prioritize white lives and safety over the lives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. As we bear witness in recent times, this oppression persists. These same tools have been used to control and oppress other marginalized groups of people: psychiatrically-labeled people, people who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness~~homeless~~, people who use or have used drugs, people whose identity challenges currently accepted gender roles and/or sexual relationships, and the list goes on.

~~Under this context, we acknowledge the many concerns community members proclaimed in several recent public forums. Causes for their concern run much deeper than can be addressed by police training. We – a conglomerate of community members who have/continue to experience(d) unsafe situations, and/or those who have and continue to uplift the voices of those who feel unsafe – submit this RFP in acknowledgement that something must be done with the way our town of Brattleboro provides public (community) safety.~~

## **Background**

During the Brattleboro Selectboard meeting on June 16, numerous community members called for the Selectboard to reject the proposed budget and direct police funding to other community safety initiatives, local nonprofits, and social service organizations. The Selectboard passed the budget, and but agreed to enter into a process of examining community safety, policing, and the budget.

In response, a group of Brattleboro town and area residents involved in diverse and collective movements for liberation and social justice put forward a Proposal (Community Proposal) on June 30, requesting a process that would take a real, deep, equitable, accountable look into policing and community safety. Many community members, social justice organizations, and people from groups especially affected by policing expressed a desire to enter this work together with the Town and Selectboard. (Over 150 individuals and 14 organizations signed on to this Community Proposal before the July 7 meeting.!) A Selectboard member, Elizabeth McLoughlin, also put forward a proposal on this date (McLoughlin Proposal).

At the next Selectboard meeting on July 7, community members highlighted key points of overlap and divergence between the Community Proposal and the McLoughlin Proposal. After a lengthy discussion, agreement about the community safety process was not reached. Continued conversation to discuss the process for examining community safety, policing, and the budget was scheduled for the Selectboard Meeting on July 21.

Prior to the ~~July 21~~ meeting, Selectboard Member McLoughlin submitted a draft Request for Proposals (RFP). Community members involved in submitting the original Community Proposal met to discuss creating an addendum with more specifics, and instead submitted a response to the McLoughlin RFP which included an elaboration upon the Community Proposal.

At the July 21 Selectboard ~~m~~Meeting, discussion focused on the ~~McLoughlin RFP and the recently submitted~~ collaborative community response to ~~the McLoughlin RFP~~ this document. After a long discussion involving many community members, ~~T~~he Selectboard voted unanimously to accept the community submission in full, and empower the group of community members to take the existing language they had worked on, turn it into an RFP, and submit it for discussion and voting.

The group of community members provided a proposed RFP, as requested, and that document was reviewed in another long discussion involving many community members during the Selectboard meeting on August 6. At the end of that meeting, the Selectboard directed Town Manager Peter Elwell to revise the document, but only to the extent necessary for it to be in the proper format, to accurately reflect the Town's legal structure and the requirements of applicable State Statutes such as the Open Meeting Law, to establish a timeline that aligns with the Town's budget process and Representative Town Meeting (RTM) deadlines, and to ensure that participatory language in the document emphasizes transparency and eliminates exclusions. This document is the result of those limited revisions. After further review and community input, the Selectboard approved this RFP at its meeting on August 18.

## **Process Overview**

The numbered list below outlines the expected chronological process by which the study will be conducted.

1. The Town of Brattleboro seeks one or more individuals to serve as paid facilitators for a comprehensive examination of community safety within the Town of Brattleboro. The scope will include community desires, needs, and reports of harm experienced, a review of current systems and providers, and recommendations for ~~and outline~~ how to utilize our Town resources to ensure equitable community health, wellness, and safety.
2. Applicants will submit a detailed scope, schedule, measures of success, along with a budget. See below for a full list of facilitator qualifications.
3. The Selectboard will make the applications public and will choose the facilitator(s) based on the criteria in this document, ~~and recommendation(s) from the community leaders who proposed this process~~
4. Simultaneous with this RFP process, the Selectboard will be in conjunction with interested community members, the facilitator(s) will bottom-line creating a Community Safety Review Committee made up of a cross-section of Brattleboro-area residents. Applications will be solicited and in its selection of Committee members the Selectboard will prioritize inclusion of ~~Particular prioritization will be given to the inclusion of individuals from groups who experience more frequent police interactions, are more likely to be harmed in those interactions, and have been engaged in advocacy or~~

~~activism on these issues. This includes~~ Black, Indigenous and People of Color as well as other community members who are especially impacted: those who use drugs, psychiatrically labelled people, people with disabilities, domestic violence and sexual assault survivors, poor people, people who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness, LGBTQ+ folks, and more, while not excluding community members who may not identify as part of any traditionally marginalized population. Participation in this Committee ~~will be~~ is compensated at a rate to be determined by the Selectboard and ~~should be included in the overall budget for this project~~.

~~5. The Facilitator will lead the Committee through a process that meets the expectations laid out in the Assumptions section below.~~

~~5. The Committee's meetings will be open to the public and the Committee will operate in a manner that fully complies with all applicable State Statutes, including but not limited to the Open Meeting Law and the Public Records Law. In order to form the Committee, the Facilitator will reach out to the drafters of this proposal to invite them to participate and to help with outreach to impacted communities.~~

~~6.~~

~~6.7.~~ The Committee will advise the facilitator on gathering input from the community, provides guidance on areas to explore, participates in the interviews and data analysis (as appropriate ~~relevant~~), and jointly with the facilitator, crafts reports and recommendations.

~~7.1. The Facilitator will lead the Committee through a process that meets the expectations laid out in the Assumptions section below.~~

8. By December 31, November 2020, ~~prior to the Selectboard review of the FY2022 Annual Budget~~, the facilitator and Committee will together make initial recommendations ~~on reallocation of BPD funding and other budget considerations. All new initiatives will be reviewed for compliance with newly adopted State and Federal laws.~~ This report will be presented to the Selectboard and released to the public, ~~particularly to organizations led by and/or serving directly impacted communities.~~

9. ~~The Selectboard will consider these recommendations in public meetings during January of 2021 as the Selectboard finalizes its recommended FY22 Budget and the warning for the RTM to be held in March of 2021. By March 2021, the facilitator and Committee will together produce a more complete report to present at Representative Town Meeting with more comprehensive recommendations for initiatives and next steps, including future phases of this process. All new initiatives will be reviewed for compliance with newly adopted State and Federal laws. This report will be presented to the Selectboard and released to the public, particularly to organizations led by and/or serving directly impacted communities.~~

10. The Town will act upon the recommendations received in a public ~~meetings forum~~ and provide quarterly updates at Selectboard meetings about the ~~i~~ implementation process.

~~10.11.~~ It is anticipated that there will be additional phases of this work beyond the March 2021 RTM. That may include continuing the Community Safety Review Committee and/or other initiatives. However, this RFP seeks proposals from potential facilitators for an engagement that will end in March of 2021. Any work beyond that date would be in accordance with a subsequent proposal.

## Assumptions of the Study

The following is a list of considerations, as requested by both Selectboard and Brattleboro community members, to provide a legal, open, accessible, and affirmative process.

1. Meetings that are open, accessible, and ~~that~~ affirmatively engage public participation in accordance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law.
2. Virtual options for participation, during the pandemic and beyond.
3. Childcare for participants, as necessary, for in-person meetings.
4. Interpretation and translation for those who are Deaf/Hard-of-hearing.
5. Thoughtful inclusion of those who may not speak English.
- ~~6. Opportunities for public feedback without police present~~
- ~~7-6.~~ A forum and process to collect community members' experiences with police and other emergency responders, including mental health crisis services, anonymously, without fear of retribution by police or the State.
- ~~8-7.~~ Prioritizing holding any in-person meetings in spaces where POC have built trust, comfort, and power - such as The Root Social Justice Center. These can be identified with input from the committee and/or the public.
- ~~9-8.~~ Meetings happening at times that are accessible to people - especially those most impacted by this system.
- ~~10-9.~~ Use anti-racist frameworks to ~~consider identify and challenge~~ white supremacy in examining policing and community safety. This should include, but is not limited to:
  - a. Ways in which town emergency response (such as police and ~~other~~ non-profit collaboratives) may cause harm rather than equitably cultivate safety and support.
  - b. Community safety needs that are unmet by these systems/programs.
- ~~11. Facilitators or committee members cannot not be part of the Citizen Police Communication Committee (CPC), the police, any individual that works in the police department or police union, or any Selectboard member~~
- ~~12-10.~~ Any individual who is involved in the Committee ~~who is also an employee of an agency that potentially may receive funding in this process~~ must be transparent about that any possible conflicts of interest based on employment or other affiliations. This requirement applies equally to all applicants during the application/appointment process and to all members of the Committee as the Committee conducts its business.

## Proposal Guidelines

The subsections below identify the different parts of the RFP responses we expect to be submitted. You may use the "Assumptions of the Study" section as a starting point for your proposal.

### *About Facilitator(s)*

In this section, provide a brief biography and description of the individual facilitator(s) which include a philosophy and qualifications to execute the scope of work. You may include prior

experience with qualitative research, social justice work, providing this type of meeting facilitation in a public setting, or other work deemed relevant. Please include a resume for each member of your proposed facilitation team.

### *Scope of Study*

The proposal must include a scope detailing the items below.

- A description of how you will work with the Community Safety Review Committee to lead this inquiry, assessment, and identification of recommended actions, anticipated definition of community safety that aligns with anti-racist principles, and identifies how current policing practices and criminalization policies affect community safety.
- A methodology to include public opinion in a way that is safe, legal, ethical, and thoughtful.
- A methodology for assessing existing systems and the organizations that operate in and on those systems, including how to obtain information from those organizations in a manner that is safe, legal, ethical, and thoughtful.
- A preliminary list of potential participants, including organizations, groups of people, and/or individuals to be considered.
- ~~A list of potential risks to be addressed in conducting the study.~~
- ~~A brief description of the possible end products of the process.~~
- \_\_\_\_\_

### *Schedule*

Please provide a list of milestones and corresponding dates by which you will measure progress in this process, keeping in mind that the initial report and recommendations are due by December 31, 2020, and that this initial engagement will end in March of 2021. ~~the following dates with regard to the FY2022 Brattleboro Town Budget~~

- ~~Beginning of Selectboard budget deliberations in November~~
- ~~Representative Town Meeting final vote on FY2022 budget on March 20th, 2021~~

### *Measures of Success*

Identify, in your opinion, how success should be measured regarding public participation/involvement and the end products requested in this proposal. Feel free to use the section "Assumptions of this Study" as a starting point.

### *Cost*

Include a budget with all anticipated costs. ~~This must include, but is not limited to, the payment for your services and stipends for participants—especially for those most heavily impacted by policing, unwanted crisis interventions, and lack of community safety.~~

### *Format & Supplemental Documents*

~~Proposals should be comprehensive, yet concise. Include proposed budget, timeline, resumes of all on the team, your qualifications and approach.~~

### Facilitator Qualifications

Qualities we are seeking in a facilitator:

- Anti-racist. A helpful way to think of this is a person experienced in “identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.” [*NAC International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity*]
- Experienced in creating spaces and processes where many voices are included and power differences do not result in less privileged people being excluded.
- Experienced in qualitative research methods (i.e. semi-structured, interviews, focus groups, community forums, ethnographic observations, participatory research).
- Familiar with and open to creating new/decolonized systems instead of only looking for solutions within currently operating systems (i.e familiar with restorative and transformative models).
- Ability to handle sensitive data in an ethical, legal, and culturally-appropriate way.
- Incorporates processes for transformative and liberated work that includes somatics (body-based practices). Uses these processes to "get" information from our community that is not traditional and in a way that is easy for people to interpret and participate in.
  - For example, creating art, movement or other initiatives where our community can express their experiences in a way that feels accessible to them. This will include people who have been harmed or alienated by prevailing processes (i.e. the “sit for 3 hours and respond to questions by an authority figure” scenario).
- Experienced in working with groups that have been historically marginalized by police and social services (i.e. BIPOC, LGBTQ+, low-income, psychiatrically-labelled people, those in recovery and/or actively using).
- Experienced in rural communities.

### Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
Meets Facilitator Qualifications	35
Comprehensive and Achievable Scope	35
Thoughtful Measures of Success	20
Budget	10
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

## Delivery of Proposal

Electronic submissions should be sent to: [townmanager@brattleboro.org](mailto:townmanager@brattleboro.org)

Via U.S. mail: Town Manager

-Town of Brattleboro  
-230 Main Street, Suite 208  
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

## Questions Concerning Proposal

If you have any questions concerning this ~~RFP, bid~~ please submit them by August 31 via email to ~~the following individuals:~~

Peter Elwell, Town Manager, at townmanager@brattleboro.org

- ~~HB Lozito, Executive Director of Out in the Open, hb@weareoutintheopen.org~~

## Registration of Interest

Please email Town Manager Peter Elwell to express your initial interest in potentially submitting a proposal in response to this RFP. All registered individuals or groups will receive written answers to any questions submitted by any potential proposer, so that all potential proposers will have access to the all the same information from the Town of Brattleboro.

## Response Date

Proposals ~~must should~~ be received by 23h59m ~~on August 30th~~ September 8, 2020.