

**TOWN OF BRATTLEBORO
COMMUNITY SAFETY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2020
6:00PM**

**Note: This meeting will be held with no physical location using Zoom.
Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone using this link:**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84910966858?pwd=U1RyTFJlWGsvQ3lGMlByZzdLbUVHUT09>

Passcode: 739525

You also can call-in on a telephone by dialing any of these toll-free numbers in the United States:

877-853-5247
888-788-0099
833-548-0276
833-548-0282

The “Meeting ID” for this meeting is:
849 1096 6858

AGENDA

1. Introductions (name, pronouns, visual descriptions, associations/identities/roles that feel important to share, accessibility needs, other needs, intentions for joining Committee)

Shea welcomed everyone and gave an overview of the electronic public meeting format. Shared that we will be using “raise hand” feature to take public comment. Shared that the chat is disabled and wanted to wait for the group to decide use of chat.

Facilitators and Committee Members introduced themselves:

- Shea Witzberger, she/her they/them, white person with long braid in front of a window, part of CSR process from beginning, didn't know she would be a facilitator but is a facilitator, has held many community roles including working with groups who have experienced sexual violence.
- Emily MR, she/her, psychotherapist, mother, been involved in the CSR/RFP process, also didn't know she was going to be a facilitator. Is a facilitator of this process, is looking forward to what emerges.
- Kelsey Rice, she/her, longtime Brattleboro resident, single mother & survivor of domestic violence, interested/dedicated to the process, honored to be here and excited to work together.
- Lana Dever, she/her, identifies as a Black woman, is bi-racial, wants to acknowledge colorism- lighter-skinned Black woman often get a voice, mother, has been involved in Defund Movement/Defund413, prison abolitionist, believes in strengthening community ties
- Darlene Derby, she/her, mother & MiMa (grandmother). Works a lot in community, recovering addict, certified Recovery Coach, wants to help make Brattleboro a better community for self/grandkids.

- Laura Stamas, she/her, queer mom, educator, teacher, white person/shortish brown hair, nose piercing, inspired by work that's been happening, excited to be involved in next chapter.
- Annaliese Griffin, she/her, mom, on the board of Community Justice Center, volunteers as a member of COSA, working with people who have been recently incarcerated, work happening there with partnerships between CJC and Town is amazing her, excited to be on the Committee and continue the work
- Robert Oeser, white person, been in Brattleboro about a dozen years, when he first came he got involved with the Community Justice Center, retired from NY State employment- worked in a county jail and probation/parole officer for the State of NY. Justice of the Peace, thinks this is very important work, also recently involved in COE/Collaborative Neighbors- tried to get insights from people with lived experience.
- Maya Shulman-Ment, she/her, white Jewish woman, works at HCRS as a clinician with children and families, psychotherapist, connection to mental health field brought her to the Committee, worked at Brattleboro Retreat. Applied because a friend said she should, interested to get involved, personal philosophy that social work has to happen on many levels to be effective.
- Kazimir (Kaz) DeWolfe, they/them or he/him, white scruffy guy wearing a grey t-shirt and black bandana and glasses. Trans, queer, psychiatrically labeled, lived experience with forced hospitalization and forced medication and also takes medication voluntary. Disability justice activist. Lived experience of homelessness, substance use. Prison abolitionist. At times has difficulty with speaking and would like chat accommodation.

Discussion of use of Chat ensued in response to Kaz's request for accommodation. Committee decided to enable public chat in order to accommodate needs. Agreed that the facilitators will monitor chat for this meeting and speak Committee members chats as needed. Committee members who use chat for sharing can also raise hand to signal their comment in chat.

2. Discussion of Open Meeting Law/Meeting Requirements

- Understanding the law, Maintaining Creativity & Adaptability
- Working Groups with 4 or less committee members are not subject to the law

Emily spoke about Open Meeting Law attachments sent to the Committee and encouraged the Committee members to read the attachments. Explained the legal imperative of transparency and public participation in Committee deliberation and decision-making process, and balancing this with privacy in the information gathering process. Peter Elwell, Town Manager, was interrogated and responded that while individual Committee members and small groups of Committee members that do not constitute a quorum can dialogue with each other, he advised the Committee to be cautious about a series of dialogues that are suggestive or amount to a decision-making process.

3. Review & Discussion of the Proposal

- Scope of the Committee (See "Some initial ideas for Roles/Responsibilities of CSR Team members" on page 6 of the Proposal.)

- Potential working groups include:
 - BPD Review
 - Identifying/Connecting with Co-Facilitators
 - Safe Outreach and Data Collection
 - Others?

Shea offered an overview of the Proposal. Some decisions of the Committee are already made in the Proposal, important to review it as Committee members are able. Shea shared that Shea and Emily have experience with facilitation and space-holding, and as white people have gaps in skills and access and safety in engaging with some communities. The facilitators have built in capacity for hiring co-facilitators who have trusting relationships with some communities in order to attune to safety needs.

Shea shared about the potential Committee roles as defined in the Proposal and gave a brief, paraphrased summary of the process up to this point. Discussed goal of scheduling a regular meeting time and this Committee will decide how information will be gathered. Shea expressed that part of the Committee role is to also hold the facilitators accountable.

Drift Mavyn (they/them) Committee member, joined the meeting at 7:00pm, had internet issues, social worker at the Brattleboro Retreat, queer, trans, non-binary, white privilege.

Maya asked a question about how we are going to balance Open Meeting law/transparency and also privacy of information. Discussed that we will continue to gain clarity, and make decisions about process in the Committee meetings, and then individual work can occur for information gathering sessions.

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Kelsey asked about addressing accessibility needs for information gathering and when Committee members can share their testimony. Shea shared that accessibility needs are accounted for in the budget (childcare for people to share their stories without fear of developmental impact on children, language interpreters, ASL interpreters, technology support). Kelsey asked for more clarity on when testimony in the Committee might happen. Emily directed folks to page 12-14 of the Proposal for clarity on schedule- information gathering sessions will happen mostly in mid-Oct through November. Emily spoke to the potential to engage creative strategies/styles for information gathering, as well as a range of options for how to engage (and how publicly or anonymously).

5 minute break occurred

Lana asked what the Selectboard is required to do with this information and what the Police department is required to do with the recommendations. She expressed concern about asking people about their stories without clarity on how/if the information in the report will be used to inform decisions at the Town/Selectboard level. Emily responded that the facilitators will be working with the Police on information gathering about the community safety responses of the Police Department. Emily shared that the Town has been amenable to the review process and

a meeting with the Police Chief and Town Manager and Facilitators is being set up. Emily expressed that the systems review will focus heavily on the Police as the Town Department most directly charged with issues of safety, danger and harm; and will also review other safety professionals and crisis responders. Emily and Shea shared that this Committee will create a report with recommendations for the Selectboard and Town government, and that the reasoning for the 12/31 deadline is to line the report up with the development of next year's budget. Shea and Emily expressed that this isn't the beginning or end of the work, but instead it is an important piece of the work that will continue to require a "dance" of pressure and collaboration.

Kelsey asked for a list of what was sent to the Police about documentation and information for the systems review. Emily will send this information to the Committee.

Darlene asked about expectations for the process and stipend. Emily shared that the SB voted on \$750 stipends for each Committee member, and that the base commitment expected as outlined in the Proposal is attendance and participation in weekly meetings (up to 12), recognizing that not every member will be able to attend every meeting. There will also be opportunities to get involved in other pieces of the work.

Gary Stroud asked if we would consider an alternate and expressed interest. Bob Oeser asked if an alternate would count towards the quorum. Emily and Shea will check in with the Town Manager to better understand the protocol around alternate, and bring that information to the next meeting.

Kelsey asked about asking for all training documentation from the Police. Emily expressed that that has been requested and we will follow up on that. Lana asked if we will be connecting with the CPCC. She expressed that she feels we owe them that opportunity to dialogue with us. Others agreed. This will be further discussed.

4. Somatic/Grounding Practice - introduction, practice, discussion

Emily led a brief 1 minute grounding practice and offered for folks to turn off their videos. Emily expressed that subsequent meetings will start with an optional grounding practice. Shea shared that this is partly because of requests in the RFP process based on people's experience of Town meetings being disconnected and disembodied.

5. Committee Roles:

- Timekeeper,
- Note-Taker (submit notes within 5 days post meeting),
 - vote to adopt

The Committee discussed and agreed to adopt the plan for Committee members to volunteer for Committee Roles of Timekeeper and Note-taker at the beginning of the next meeting, and then after that at the end of the meetings for the next meeting. The group agreed that other roles can be determined and added as needed.

6. Committee Agreements - Develop initial agreements together in the meeting,
 - vote to adopt

Shea asked Committee members to raise their hand if they are able to stay past 8pm, and many members raised their hands but not all. The group agreed to wait until the next meeting to create Committee Agreements to ensure that all committee members who attend a meeting could be present for the agreements.

7. Review of Schedule & Planning Next Steps

Discussion ensued about timing of Committee meetings. Emily proposed Tuesdays 6-8pm since it was the heavy favorite for tonight's meeting. Bob and Drift expressed concern about conflict with Selectboard meetings and the group agreed to take the Committee scheduling discussion to a Doodle Poll in order to adjourn the meeting on time.

8. Adjourn!

Lana Dever made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Laura Stamas seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:09pm.