Collaborative Community Statement
Regarding the Brattleboro Policing/Community Safety Review Process

Summary Statement

We are seeking a review process focused on a comprehensive examination of community safety and policing in Brattleboro to determine whether the police force effectively meets the communities' needs, and to determine how to best fund and support community safety.

Many in our community do not feel, and are not, safe. Simply looking at the Brattleboro Police Department does not adequately address this problem. Even replacing each police task with an 1:1 equivalent task enacted by a social service organization does not create a solution. We need to examine how we are framing and funding community safety here in Brattleboro. We need to ask deeply into what our community needs to be safe, and listen, and build toward that horizon that we envision together.

We need to fund the community members who will do this work, with a skilled and appropriate facilitator on a timeline that respects the historical opportunity of this moment. Achieving the depth needed to conduct this meaningful work will only be possible with a genuine commitment of time and resources.

This is an opportunity to take a step back, assess community needs and define what community safety looks like. Then, we can determine the roles of policing, local organizations, Town government, and our community members in meeting these needs.

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, 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 "Liz" 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 divergence between the Community Proposal and the McLoughlin Proposal; namely:

1. **Paid Work** - the Community Proposal requested a paid facilitation team, and stipends for individual contributors from the communities most impacted.

2. **Scope** - the Community Proposal requested a more expansive process that would look at the totality of community safety within the Town of Brattleboro. A process that focuses on community desires, needs, and reports of harm experienced while considering how to utilize our Town resources to ensure community health, wellness, and safety.
3. **Community Decision Making Power** - the Community Proposal requested that the creation of the process and future decision-making be led by the community, (not the Police Department or the Selectboard acting alone) and that the voices of those most impacted by policing be centered and given power.

After a lengthy discussion, agreement about the community safety process was not reached. Continued conversation was scheduled for the Selectboard Meeting on July 21. Prior to this meeting, Selectboard Member McLoughlin submitted the Request for Proposals (RFP) copied below. Some community members involved in submitting the original Community Proposal met to discuss creating an addendum with more specifics, and instead took a look at McLoughlin's RFP. While there is appreciation for the work put in by McLoughlin, the Community Group has serious concerns with this RFP as written, and have crafted the following response.

Request For Proposals Response

While appreciating that a Selectboard member took initiative to begin work on this process, we know that everything worth doing is worth doing together. (If it affects the community, it should involve the community!) We are glad that McLoughlin's RFP is seeking to pay facilitators for their work, and that many of the specific requests for an open and accessible process have been included. There are, however, ways this RFP should be changed to be more in line with the vision of the Community Proposal.

Key points of dissent

1. Wider Scope Needed - We are seeking a review process focused on a comprehensive examination of community safety and policing in Brattleboro to determine whether the police force effectively meets the communities' needs, and to determine how to best fund and support community safety. Many in our community do not feel, and are not, safe. Simply looking at the Brattleboro Police Department (BPD) does not adequately address this problem. Even replacing each police task with an 1:1 equivalent task enacted by a social service organization does not create a solution. We need to examine how we are framing and funding community safety here in Brattleboro, not just look at how the BPD is doing. We need to ask deeply into what our community needs to be safe, and listen, and build toward that horizon that we envision together.

2. Community Decision Making Power - as requested in the Community Proposal, we continue to assert that future decision-making be led by the community, and that the voices of those most impacted by policing be centered and given power. If a Review Committee will be created, empower that committee to make recommendations and decisions. They should not just be an information gathering tool, but rather have the authority to craft proposals for change (if they identify that change is needed and possible) that will be approved by the Selectboard and Representative Town Meeting.

3. Chosen Framework & Leading Outcomes - The assumption that "BPD will be examined in accordance with Campaign Zero Solutions" is already supporting an outcome for community safety goals before there has been a process to examine and identify community safety needs. We don't support the goals of Campaign Zero (and neither do the founders of Campaign Zero, who themselves shifted their objectives toward defunding and abolition after concern about the soundness of their statistical analysis and feedback from communities that these objectives did not align with the long-term goals of anti-racist organizers across the country). This framework would exclude voices from this process. Much of the work ahead will inevitably be based on what other communities have found to be successful; however, at this point we are focused on process and not outcome.

4. Short Timeline - Anticipating that this deep and significant work be completed within the next four months (by November 2020) is not realistic. Understanding the reality of budget deadlines, we propose that this process be conducted in stages. Phase 1 could address funding in the FY21 Town Budget, with additional phases continuing afterward to understand and implement community safety improvements. We hope this body understands the historical opportunity of this moment to not just grasp low hanging fruit, but to engage in a long term look at creating community safety & wellness.

5. Valuing Community Work - Many community members are actively engaged in the work of community safety, are heavily impacted by carceral systems, and/or have deeply studied these systems. Over 150 individuals and 14 organizations signed on to the Community Proposal that was debated against a proposal written by one Selectboard member. We ask that the knowledge and labor of these community members and this community process be listened to and valued.

Thank you to those Selectboard members who have played a part in the larger community process. We request that all Selectboard members step into deeper collaboration with the many community members already investing their time and energy into these projects. It would be much more desirable and effective to work together to create mutually beneficial processes rather than pit proposals created in community process and proposals created alone against each other!

Agreements Needed

It is important to establish agreements for clarity and mutual understanding before a Request for Proposals is created and approved.

1. Facilitator Qualifications: Establish agreements around the qualifications, perspectives and experience of those who will be sought as facilitators.
   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 (e.g. 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, etc.)
- 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). 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 (e.g. BIPOC, LGBTQ+, low-income, psychiatrically labelled people, those in recovery and/or actively using, etc.)
- Experience in rural communities

2. Review Committee Selection: Establish agreements about how to define and choose the "cross-section of Brattleboro citizens" that will be solicited for the review committee. It is important that folks are not chosen solely based on population data. Consider weighting the feedback of individuals from groups who experience more frequent police interactions and are more likely to be harmed in those interactions. This includes Black, Indigenous and People of Color as well as the narratives of other community members who are especially impacted: those who use drugs, psychiatrically labelled people, people with disabilities, domestic violence and sexual assault survivors, and poor people, homeless people, LGBTQ+ folks, and more.

3. Compensation Agreements: As is standard with this type of research, individual participants should be financially compensated for their time, emotional labor, and transportation through a stipend. Establish, or be prepared to establish, this budget.

4. Bid evaluation criteria: Establish the criteria/rubric for bid evaluation with community input.

5. Timeline: Create an agreed upon phased timeline. Understanding the reality of budget deadlines, we propose that this process be conducted in stages. Phase 1, to end in November 2020, could address funding in the FY21 Town Budget, with additional phases afterward to continue understanding and implementing community safety improvements. The details can be adapted by facilitators once chosen, but should be crafted with the understanding that this is deep, meaningful work that will only be truly possible with the commitment of time and resources.

Request for Proposals • Scope of Work
Town of Brattleboro • In-service Training

Issue date: July 22, 2020 **Response date: August 21, 2020**

Preamble

Consistent with Selectboard action on July 21st, and public discussions on June 16, July 7th and July 21st of this year, Brattleboro will begin a focused examination of the Brattleboro Police Department (BPD). A citizen review of the policies, training, procedures and budget of the current Brattleboro Police Department will be conducted through a public examination process. This RFP is a call for one or more paid facilitators charged to facilitate a citizen committee to conduct this study.

Background

Brattleboro, population 11,332 (US Census estimate 2019), is a town in Windham County, Vermont. Chartered in 1753, the Town of Brattleboro (Town) is the most populous in southern Vermont. The Town is governed by a five-member Selectboard elected by eligible citizens. The Select Board, as the legislative branch of town government, hires and supervises a Town Manager. The Town Manager hires and supervises the Brattleboro Police Chief who in turn supervises the Brattleboro Police Department.

Town of Brattleboro Population Data

Black or African American alone (a)	0.9%.	102
Asian alone (a)	2.5%	283
Two or More Races	4.3%.	487
Hispanic or Latino(b)	3.2%	362
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	90.4%.	10,244
White alone	92.0%	10,425

(a)Includes persons reporting only one race
(b)Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories
Source: U.S. Census July 1, 2019

The adult population of people of color is increasing slowly in Brattleboro. However, students of color now account for approximately 20% of Brattleboro's school enrollment. That is far more racial diversity than existed in local schools during prior generations.

Beginning in 2017, the Brattleboro Selectboard and Town Manager have engaged in discussions and actions with the community regarding diversity, inclusion and equity. Bias Training has also occurred and is continuing. With the recent focus on race and policing on a national level, the Selectboard and the public seek to begin a conversation resulting in a comprehensive examination of the Brattleboro Police Department.

Brattleboro welcomes all. This welcome must include persons of color, in particular, both as visitors and as residents. Through this examination process, we can establish that this

welcome is shared by the BPD. Upon completion, our town government can be a reflection of our town values.

Objective of the Study

1. The Town of Brattleboro seeks one or more individuals to serve as paid facilitators for a comprehensive examination of the Brattleboro Police Department.
2. This process begins with this call for paid individuals to serve as facilitators.
3. These facilitators will assist the Selectboard in the selection of a volunteer public committee that represents a cross-section of Brattleboro citizens.
4. This facilitated public committee will meet with the public to hear ideas/comments/testimony regarding the BPD.
5. The facilitators and committee will also seek information and engage in discussions with the BPD.
6. The target date for completion of this process is November of this year, prior to the Selectboard review of the FY21 Annual Budget.

Assumptions of the Study

An open, accessible and affirmative process would include:

1. Meetings that are open, accessible and that affirmatively engage public participation
2. Virtual options for participation, during the pandemic and beyond
3. Childcare for participants, as necessary, for in-person meetings
4. Interpretation and translation
5. Opportunities for public feedback without police present
6. A process to collect community members' experiences with police and policing anonymously, without fear of retribution by police.
7. Prioritizing holding any in-person meetings in spaces where POC have built trust, comfort, and power
8. Meetings happening at times that are accessible to the majority of people
9. BPD will be examined in accordance with Campaign Zero Solutions: https://www.joincampaignzero.org/solutions.
10. All meetings are subject to the Vermont Open Meeting Law.
11. Facilitators will not be part of the Citizen Police Communication Committee (CPCC), the police, or the Selectboard

Scope of Study

The Town of Brattleboro seeks to retain individuals to facilitate the following scope of study:

1. The facilitators will begin by assisting the Selectboard with an open call for the public to volunteer to join this public committee. Committee members will be engaged by the Selectboard at a public meeting.
2. The committee will be led by identified facilitators to assure that the committee's work is equitable, accountable, and collaborative, and non-confrontational.

3. The committee will meet as necessary – for this scope of work a total of eight meetings are estimated (including presentation of findings at a Selectboard meeting).
4. Listening sessions will be held by the committee for public input, including people who do not wish to engage with the police. Meetings can be held without the police present.
5. The facilitated committee or a designated sub-committee will conduct an independent citizen review of current policing practices, policies, training and budget as benchmarked against Campaign Zero Solutions.
6. A policy team may wish to draft policy statements.
7. A training team may wish to develop an innovative training course specifically tailored for the BPD based upon this work.
8. Non-profit conversations: facilitators and committee will hold sessions with the non-profits who currently work with BPD on Project Care to discuss potential expansion of this collaboration into other areas of policing beside opioid use and to hear their perspective on police practices. What might these agencies do with more money? What tasks currently performed by the BPD might be undertaken either in partnership with social services or only by social services? Can restorative justice programs be expanded? This effort will focus on measures to reduce the number of people who are introduced to the criminal justice system through the BPD.
9. Report to Selectboard and public: The committee will report its findings to the Selectboard and the public. All new initiatives will be reviewed for compliance with newly adopted State and Federal laws.
10. The town will act upon the recommendations received in a public forum. Implementation of new policies, operations and/or budget decisions will be determined by the Selectboard, Town Manager and/or BPD. Changes to BPD budget, increased funding to restorative justice, and/or non-profit social service agencies will be determined by the Selectboard and RTM.

Bid Proposal Format

Bids shall be no longer than fifteen (15) pages in length, single-spaced and use not less than 12pt font. Pages must be numbered. Bids should be comprehensive, yet concise and include:

1. A brief biography and description of the individual facilitator(s) which includes a resume, philosophy, and qualifications to execute the scope of work including prior experience providing this type of meeting facilitation in a public setting.
2. A vision or methodology for conducting this process.
3. A proposed budget.

Bid Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
Experience as Facilitator	40
Methodology for Conducting this BPD Examination	40
Budget	20
Total Points	**100**

Delivery of Bid

Via U.S. mail:

Town Manager
Town of Brattleboro
230 Main Street • Suite 208
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

Electronic submissions should be sent to: townmanager@brattleboro.org

Questions concerning Bid

If you have any questions concerning this bid please submit them via email to Peter Elwell, Town Manager; townmanager@brattleboro.org

Response date

Bids should be received by 23h59m on August 21, 2020

July 2, 2020

Selectboard,

As a group of Brattleboro Town and area residents involved in diverse and collective movements for liberation and social justice, we have come together to ask that the process by which the Selectboard looks at police and policing in Brattleboro this year is transparent, inclusive, equitable, accountable, and just.

We believe in an open process that invites 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.

Together, you have a real opportunity to use the power you hold to move this conversation, which the Selectboard has been a part of for many years, forward in tangible ways that benefit us all. We ask that you make these commitments to your community about this process.

We ask that you commit to an open, accessible and affirmative process that truly investigates the role of police and policing in Brattleboro. An open, accessible and affirmative process would include:

- Meetings that are open, accessible and that affirmatively engage public participation whenever possible
- Virtual options for participation, during the pandemic and beyond
- Childcare for participants
- Interpretation and translation
- Opportunities for public feedback without police present
- A forum and process to collect community members' experiences with police and policing anonymously, without fear of retribution by police or the State
- Prioritizing holding any in-person meetings in spaces where POC have built trust, comfort, and power
- Meetings happening at times that are accessible to the majority of people
- In-person meetings held without the presence of weapons

While all people have a stake in ending white supremacy and oppressive carceral systems, this process must uplift the voices of those in our community most impacted by those systems.

- We ask that you commit to inviting in the wisdom of marginalized communities who are already doing organizing work focused on social justice, healing, and liberation, such as The Root Social Justice Center, Susu Healing Collective, Out in the Open, The Hive

Mutual Support Network, Families United, Green Mountain Self Advocates, Brattleboro Solidarity, Lost River Racial Justice, as well as others organizing around liberation.

- Uplifting these voices means giving people from these organizations, communities, and experiences leadership and power in this process, and ensuring that their invaluable perspectives and lived experiences will be respected and honored, not tokenized or disregarded.

We ask that you commit to a process that is equitable, accountable, and collaborative, not extractive.

- We ask that you engage a paid facilitator or facilitation team that is not part of the Citizen Police Communication Committee (CPCC), the police, or the Selectboard to ensure accountability and ensure that it is someone's primary role to keep this process moving forward.
- In order to honor the time and labor of the marginalized people who must be included in any authentic process regarding this issue in our community, we ask that you pay participants from impacted communities a stipend for their time, labor, and wisdom.

We hope that you all choose to use the opportunity of this process to take a real, deep, equitable, accountable look into policing in our community. If you do, many community members, social justice organizations, and impacted people are ready to meet this moment and enter that work with you.

Signed,

Brattleboro for All
Brattleboro Solidarity
Out in the Open
The Root Social Justice Center
Lost River Racial Justice
350 Brattleboro
Wild Carrot Farm

Amber Arnold
Abby Mnookin, Co-Director, 350VT
Sonia Silbert, Co-Director, 350VT
Shea Witzberger
Anna Mullany
Malaika Puffer
HB Lozito, Executive Director, Out in the Open
Robin Morgan
Anne Louise Wagner
Calvin Moen

Eva Westheimer
Fhar Miess
Ain Thompson
Tara O'Brien
Mel Motel
Donna Macomber
Mel Baiser
Alex Fischer
Sally Fletcher
Ryan Stratton
Allison Korn
Anneke Dunnington
Daniel Grover
Jonas Fricke
Kendra Dias
Laura Goldblatt
Sara Kermenski
Lissa Schneckenburger

Diana Whitney
Maria Ogden
Ward Ogden
Emily Moore
Lauren Breunig
Christine Colascione
Aliana Bloch
Karen Saunders
Laura Stamas
Moxie Mehegan
Ashlyn Bristle
Ellen Tumavicus
Lija Katrina
KariLyn McLellan
Eliza Beadslee
Frank Osten
Jackson Stein
Deidra Razzaque
Hannah Lindner-Finlay
Zoe Reichsman
Kaitlin Ford
Felix Seidel
Megan Grove
Kevin Berry
Audrey Morin
Marissa Ashmore
Molly Steinmark
Lucie Foster
Sharon Fantl
Emily Marker
Amy Majer
Eli Holmes
Anna May Seaver
Suzanne Vaine
Rebecca Baiser
Alyssa Todd
Brittany Dunn
Mackenzie Reilly
Eli Coughlin-Galbraith
Simon Reynolds
Hannah McNeill
Echo Marshall
Jackson Stein

Jessica Gelter
Rose Alexandre-Leach
Tabitha Celani
Doran Hamm
Lindsey Britt
Maeve Campman
Ellen Graham
Tim Guarente
Jean Davis
Isabel Williams
Nathaniel van Osdol
Maya Shulman-Ment
April Judd
Hayle Wesolowski
Rebecca Jones
Samia Abbass
Branch Gold
Israel Cavanagh
Caitlin Burlett
Julia Cavicchi
Doran Hamm
Charlotte Nicholson
Toma Cernea-Novac
Marisa Keller
Izzy Snyder
Emily Hartz
Jenna Sciolla
Anna Bario
Kristopher Cain
Anna Riechmann
Ava Howard
Audrey Morin
Freesia Capy Goldfarb
Sandy Klein
Ronald Schneiderman
Mary Stowe
Jonathan Gitelson
Arthur Davis
Saskia Bailey-de Bruijn

To: Tim Wessel, Brandie Starr, Daniel Quipp, Ian Goodnow and Peter Elwell
From: Elizabeth McLoughlin
RE: BPD Examination Process
Date: July 2, 2020

INTRODUCTION:

Consistent with statements made by Selectboard members when voting for the town budget on June 16, 2020, the following program and process is offered to my fellow Selectboard members for consideration to begin a focused examination of the Brattleboro Police Department (BPD).

The key elements of this process are to ask for volunteers to serve as moderators/facilitators and to ask for volunteers to form a public committee. Both the facilitators and the public committee members will be selected as part of a public call for volunteers at public meetings by the Selectboard. This facilitated public committee will meet with small groups of the public to hear ideas/comments regarding the BPD. The facilitators and committee will also engage in discussions with the BPD. This public process will be focused on reviewing existing policies and suggesting new policies and new training for the BPD based upon Campaign Zero, or other established criteria and in full compliance with newly adopted State and Federal laws. The target date for completion of this process is November of this year, prior to the Selectboard review of the FY21 Annual Budget. All meetings will be governed by the Vermont Open Meeting law.

Attached to this memo is a page from the Campaign Zero Solutions website: I encourage reading of this plan, it is a very thorough set of criteria to work from. https://www.joincampaignzero.org/solutions.

GOALS:

Goal #1: Citizen review of policies, training, procedures and budget of the current Brattleboro Police Department through a public examination process.

Goal #2: As stated in the Brattleboro marketing campaign, we welcome all. This welcome must include persons of color, in particular, both as visitors and as residents. Through this process, we will establish that this welcome is shared by the BPD. Upon completion, our town government can be a reflection of our town values.

THE PROPOSAL

1. The Selectboard will ask for volunteers to serve as moderators/facilitators to engage the public in discussions and examination of the Brattleboro Police Department. Facilitators will be selected at a public Selectboard meeting.
2. This facilitator team will provide outreach to persons currently engaged in equity and justice matters to raise interest in participating in an examination of town police based upon national review criteria of progressive police measures as outlined in Campaign Zero Solutions (or other criteria). The result will be an open call for the public to volunteer to join this public committee. Committee members will be engaged by the Selectboard at a public meeting.

The committee will be led by identified moderators/facilitators to assure that the engagement and discussion is non-confrontational.

3. This facilitator team will meet with police chief to discuss police engagement in this process, to review and understand current policies, and to provide a background of understanding to the Campaign Zero Solutions (or similar criteria).
4. The committee will meet as necessary. An initial meeting will establish a common vocabulary focusing on Campaign Zero (or similar criteria), and initial discussions held to make sure all parties and the public understand the focus of this process is to discuss issues related to police policies, practices, training and budget.
5. Small listening sessions will be held by the committee for additional public input, including people who may have had bad experiences with or do not wish to engage with the police. Meetings can be held without the police present. All meetings are subject to Open Meeting Law.
6. The facilitated committee or a designated sub-committee will conduct an independent citizen review of current policing practices, policies, training and budget as benchmarked against Campaign Zero Solutions or other criteria. A policy team may want to draft policy statements. A training team may want to develop a training course for the BPD based upon this work.
7. Non-profit conversation: facilitators and committee will hold sessions with the non-profits who currently work with BPD on Project Care to discuss potential expansion of this collaboration into other areas of policing beside opioid use and to hear their perspective on police practices. What might these agencies do with more money? What tasks currently performed by the BPD might be undertaken either in partnership with social services or only by social services? Can restorative justice programs be expanded? This effort will focus on measures to reduce the number of people who are introduced to the criminal justice system through the BPD. These groups from Project Care are:

    - Groundworks Collaborative
    - HCRS
    - Turning Point

    But would add:

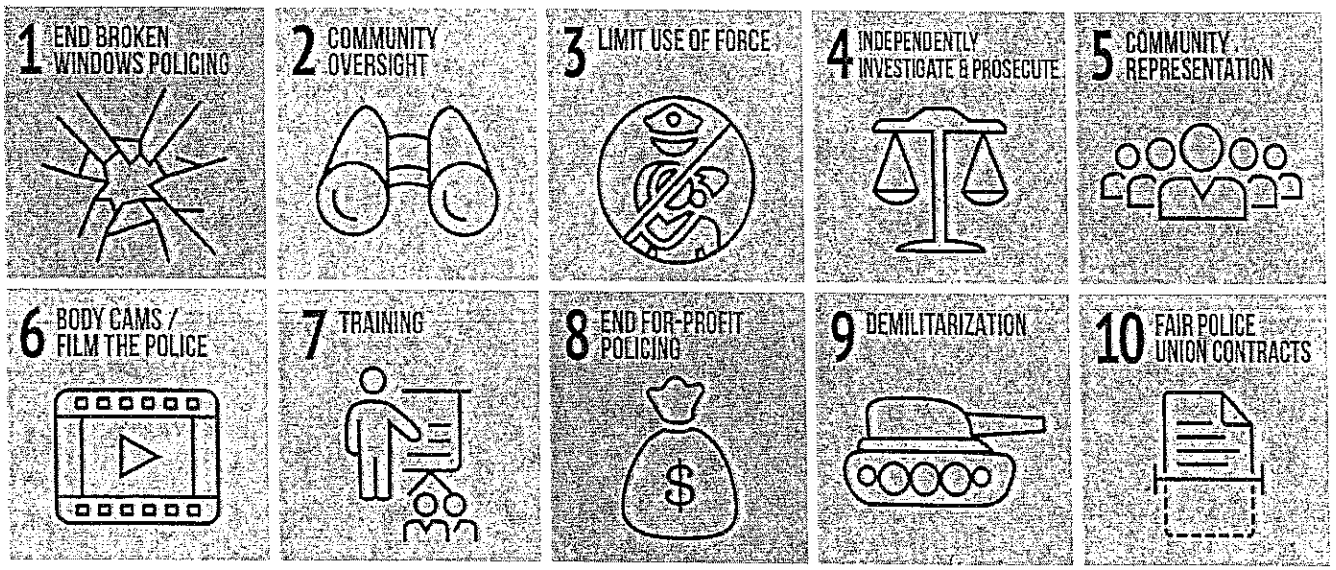
    - Youth Services
    - Women's Freedom Center
    - Brattleboro Community Justice Center
    - DCF

8. Report to Selectboard and public: The committee will report its findings to the Selectboard and the public. All new initiatives will be reviewed for compliance with newly adopted State and Federal laws. Discussions of police policies, training, procedures and budget will be examined, suggested timing will be established as either short term or long term measures. The town will act upon the recommendations received in a public forum. Implementation of new policies, operations and/or budget decisions will be determined by the Selectboard, Town Manager and/or BPD. Changes to BPD budget, increased funding to restorative justice, and/or non-profit social service agencies will be determined by the Selectboard and RTM.

CAMPAIGN ZERO

WE CAN LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE THE POLICE DON'T KILL PEOPLE

BY LIMITING POLICE INTERVENTIONS, IMPROVING COMMUNITY INTERACTIONS AND ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY.



WE CAN LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES DO GOOD, NOT HARM.