



2020 CITY COUNCIL MEETING STAFF REPORT

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
From: City Administrator Kay Kuhlmann and Community Engagement Specialist Michelle Leise
Meeting Date: July 13, 2020
Agenda Item Number: 10.C.

Title – Consider Motion to Approve Task Force on City Government Policies and Practices

Purpose – The purpose of this item is for the Council to discuss and consider a motion to approve a community-based Task Force that will identify and improve policies and practices in local government that may be negatively affecting some residents, especially residents of color. The Council discussed options at its June 22 meeting and June 29 workshop. The Council is asked to discuss and consider a motion to create the Task Force with consensus on its general parameters, membership selection process, and timeline.

Recommended Action – Approve Task Force on City Government Policies and Practices with direction on the Task Force’s parameters, including membership selection process and timeline.

Attachments –

- Draft of Task Force Application Form
- Draft of Task Force Nomination Form
- Task Force’s First Focus Area: Public Safety (general concepts)

Alignment with 2019 Strategic Plan –

#59: Be more purposeful in monitoring, evaluating, reassessing, and improving our policies and systems so they are fair and equitable for all.

#60. Build stronger relationships with communities where trust has been broken or still needs strengthening in order to form long-lasting, respectful, shared commitment.

Background – At its June 8 meeting, Council discussed overhauling the city’s Racial Equity Plan, especially in the wake of the killing of George Floyd and racial unrest around the country and state. Council members acknowledged that institutional and systemic racism occurs throughout our society and that a priority should be made in identifying and improving policies within our own local government to help change this reality.

At the Council’s June 22 meeting, staff provided a new draft of Red Wing’s Racial Equity Plan, which includes initiatives in all departments. During that meeting and a follow-up June 29 workshop, Council discussed one priority in detail – creating a type of community Task Force that would identify and improve policies that unintentionally affect some residents in a negative way, especially residents of color.

After Council discussion at the June 29 workshop, the Council and Mayor came to consensus on creating a broad, multi-year *Task Force on City Government Policies and Practices* to demonstrate that the City is dedicated to reviewing and improving policies and practices throughout its organization – not just in one department or area.

To clarify, *policies* in city government are written laws (often called ordinances) that are written down and often put into the City Code. *Practices* are more informal; they are the way people work in their day to day environment and help create a culture within an institution.

Discussion –

The following is a synopsis for what we as staff believe to be the Council’s consensus. Council is asked to discuss any questions, concerns, suggestions, or changes at this July 13 meeting before next steps are taken.

Task Force’s First Priority

The Task Force’s first priority will be to work alongside the Police Department to explore policing policies and practices, discuss best practices and options for Red Wing, and make recommendations to City Council for positive changes. Attached to this report is a document with general concepts around this priority. When the Task Force meets at its first meeting, members will work together as a group to create priority focus areas of its choice. Staff and Council will also keep apprised of any changes at the state level that may happen in the Minnesota legislature’s special session regarding public safety policies.

Task Force Timeframe

The general timeframe for working with the police department and focusing on the public safety area will be roughly 18 months. That timeframe will be flexible to make sure the work gets accomplished.

When the Task Force’s work on public safety policies is complete, the Council—with recommendations from the Task Force—will decide the next priority area(s) for the Task Force to address. At that time, the Task Force will take a very short break and members will decide whether to continue or step off the Task Force. (Task Force members who step off will be encouraged to apply for other boards and commission positions.)

Department Staff as Partners

Department staff members will work collaboratively as partners alongside the community Task Force members during each meeting to strive toward the same goals, provide context, information, support, and help build trust. During the first 18 months, this department will primarily be the Police Department, with Chief Roger Pohlman and other Police Department staff members working closely with the Task Force.

The City’s Community Engagement Specialist will work closely with the facilitating consultant, other experts as needed, the appropriate city staff, and the Task Force. This position will help plan meetings, organize activities, and co-facilitate. When support staff is necessary, the Community Engagement Specialist will also play this role.

Consistent Connection with Council

The Task Force will report back on a regular basis to the Council through Council reports, presentations, recommendations and/or status reports. These check-ins at the Council level will allow Council to provide consistent feedback throughout the process and allow residents who

are not on the Task Force to weigh in on what's being discussed. It's anticipated that one or two members of the Task Force will present to Council. (Staff members will also be available to assist when needed and/or present information when necessary.)

Periodically, the Task Force will make specific recommendations to the Council. Department staff members (such as the police department) will also be asked for their recommendations and/or thoughts on each recommendation. Council members are the final decision makers in all policy decisions. Any reports made to the Council will include the majority of viewpoints and include any dissenting viewpoints.

Public engagement on any topics of interest can be coordinated by the Task Force to gather a broader insight into a specific topic. Staff will be available to assist.

Meetings:

- All Task Force meetings will be noticed and open to the public. The notice will include that a quorum of the City Council may be in attendance, and all Council members are always welcomed to attend.
- All Task Force meetings will be audio taped and available online. Likewise, all Task Force meetings will have minutes recorded and available online.
- Childcare and transportation will be provided free of charge for all Task Force members who require it.
- Meetings will most likely be held at the Public Library, Sheldon Theatre, Community Development Building, or other large public space to accommodate social distancing. (The school gym may be another option to explore.) It is unclear how many people from the public will attend these meetings—or how many will be allowed with COVID-19 guidelines.
- Task Force members will plan to meet for two hours every four weeks. Occasionally there may be extra learning opportunities in between. Days and times for each meeting will be chosen once the Task Force members are named to try and fit people's schedules. This could include an evening or Saturday morning option if that works for most people.
- A process for creating a welcoming space, examining viewpoints, listening openly, and reaching consensus will be determined as staff works in partnership with the consultant.
- There will be the option of a local counseling service provider being available for any Task Force member who wishes to seek out assistance about what they experience during the public safety discussions. More research will be done on the options and the scope of service necessary for this.

Task Force Membership:

- The Task Force will be 12 community members, with two to three alternates chosen to fill the place of anyone who may need to step off unexpectedly. If the number of Task Force members increases, the amount of members should still remain an even number.
- All members will be age 18 and older.

- Emphasis will be on people who have not had past or present involvement in government. If someone is already a city board or commission member, this does not entirely make them ineligible for the Task Force, but the Council and mayor are also committed to reaching out to people who don't already have a voice in some way through government.
- It's important the Task Force is a varied group; emphasis will be placed on making sure people of color are members.
- The names of applicants will be kept private from the public. Names of Task Force members will be made public when the names have been approved.
- Background checks will not be done on applicants. Those with a criminal record or those who are undocumented will not be declined for that reason.
- If Spanish translation is needed for the meetings, this service will be provided.
- Members will be paid \$75 for each meeting attended.
- Does Council want a requirement on the residence of members? For instance, Council may decide it wants some members to live within the city limits. It may decide it wants some or all members to simply live within the school district limits because people who live within this extended boundary also experience the policies of city government. Or, Council may not want to make any restrictions at all on place of residence.

Membership Selection Process: Public and Council Working Together

- Short application and nomination forms will both be available to the public online and via a hard copy. This allows many members of the public to either apply themselves or nominate one or more people they think would be great candidates for the Task Force.
- City Council will get regular updates on all applications and nominations from the public. Council members will use this nomination and application information from the public in their recommendation process, and the mayor will use this information from the public in his selection process. Council members and Mayor Dowse are encouraged to reach out and talk to any residents who apply or who are nominated, and also to anyone else they want.
- The City will make the link and the paper copies available in many ways, reaching out to other organizations and individuals to help spread the word and get as many applications and nominations as possible.
- Each Council member will email a list of their recommended names to the mayor by the appointed deadline. This list can include any number of names—there is not a limit to the number of recommendations. Council members will rank their choices to the mayor and include a few notes so the mayor understands why each person was recommended.
- The mayor will choose at least one person from each City Council member's list of recommendations (which equals seven seats).
- The mayor will then use an inclusive selection process of his choice to fill the rest of the five seats on the Task Force. The names he'll consider will come from applications, nominations, the Council's recommendations, and from the mayor himself.

- The mayor will make all final choices to the Task Force, per the process outlined above. Council will be informed of those choices at its nearest Council meeting. *This seemed to be the consensus of the Council. Please clarify if this is not your understanding.*

Proposed Timeline

- Monday July 13 – Council discusses and approves the Task Force and finds consensus on its parameters, including the selection process and timeline.
- Tuesday July 14 – Application and nomination forms go out to public (if approved by the Council.) These forms will be available in Spanish and English.
- Wednesday August 5 at 4 p.m.– Deadline for nomination form.
- Friday, August 7 at 4 p.m. – Deadline for application form.
- Wednesday, August 12 at 4 p.m. – Deadline for each Council member to get his/her list of recommendations to the mayor.
- Friday, August 14 – Mayor uses his selection process and makes his list of selections and alternates (on or around this date).
- Week of August 17 – Mayor contacts people who have been selected and gets approvals from members.
- Monday, August 24 –Mayor shares final names of Task Force members with Council and public at this Council meeting.
- Mid-September - First meeting.
- Other potential things can happen this summer right away—before the Task Force begins:
 - ✓ Police and community can start planning for National Night Out (held Tuesday, October 6)
 - ✓ Police officers engaging even more with kids and families in parks throughout summer
 - ✓ Other ideas that will build relationships and a stronger sense of community

Financial plan and impact – Funding for this initiative is not confirmed based on the scope of the work and the consultant. Staff will bring back estimates to the July 27 Council meeting.

Alternatives –

- Approve the Task Force and its parameters as written above
- Approve the Task Force and its parameters with modifications
- Deny the Task Force and request something different
- Table the Task Force and request more information

Recommended Action – Approve Task Force on City Government Policies and Practices with direction on the Task Force’s parameters, including membership selection process and timeline.

Task Force on City Government Policies and Practices

First Focus Area: **Public Safety**

Task Force members will meet for an estimated 18 months for its first priority area: Public Safety Policies and Practices.

City's Statement of Commitment and Support:

We the City of Red Wing support our Police Department and respect the important work they do. We also support the call to review police policies and practices and ensure they work for our entire community. We look forward to collaborating openly with the residents of Red Wing and the Police Department to build trust and provide a system that works for everyone.

The Task Force will create its own mission statement when it meets.

The following is a list of general concepts for the Public Safety portion of the Task Force. The Task Force will create its own goals and priorities.

Ideas for Short-Term Goals

- Increase police understanding of how it feels to be a person of color in the world and what that experience can feel like to some people in Red Wing.
- Increase residents' understanding of a police officer's daily experience and what that can feel like in Red Wing.
- Strengthen personal relationships among police officers and neighborhood residents.
- Utilize data and identify where change is needed and progress can be made.
- Provide recommendations on police policies and practices to the City Council.
- Provide recommendations to City Council on creating a permanent Resident Advisory Board.

Ideas for Long-Term Goals

- Increase trust among the police department and residents who feel trust is lacking
- Strengthen communication and understanding between the police department and all residents, including residents of color.
- Improve public safety policies and procedures so any racial disproportionalities are eliminated.

Foundational Documents of the Task Force

The Task Force follows through on goals set forth in these City documents approved by City Council.

--Red Wing 2040 Community Plan

Strategy 13.A.2: Provide community policing innovation that delivers equitable and consistent service for all members of our community.

--2019 City of Red Wing 10-Year Strategic Plan

#40: Maintain and improve our community policing framework that focuses on top-quality equity training, ensures practices are fair and consistent for everyone, and integrates police officers directly into the neighborhoods in which they serve.

#39: Expand hiring practices so police and fire department employees better reflect the demographics of the community.

--2020 City of Red Wing Racial Equity Plan

Goal #3: All residents feel their neighborhood is safe and any racial disparities in the criminal justice system are eliminated.

--Police Department Vision Statement

The vision of the Red Wing Police Department is to be a leader in the law enforcement community through collaboration and innovation, recognizing the historic and diverse nature of our community and contributing to the highest quality of life for our citizens.

What the Task Force Would Do:

- Learn about the issues, including seeing things from other people's perspectives
- Maintain open dialogue among all parties with the understanding that all are coming with good intentions to make positive change
- Review current local policies and procedures
- Research best practices and compare them to Red Wing
- Collect and analyze updated local data
- Listen to other residents' opinions
- Work to provide other engagement activities if desired
- Provide recommendations on police policies and procedures to City Council.
- Work in collaboration with others who will provide information and/or expertise.
- *Task Force will add to this list*

Possible Topics for the Task Force

For now, these examples are listed in no particular order. When the Task Force meets, it will create its own list of priorities and decide what to focus on first.

- Education
 - “A Day in the Life” of a police officer
 - “A Day in the Life” of a person of color in Red Wing
 - Possible Public Speaker Event for the Community

- Data Collection
 - Look at current data compared to the past and compared to other communities
 - Review how data is gathered, analyzed, shared, and utilized to make our community better

- Understanding and Addressing Barriers
 - When residents don’t call the police when needed
 - When language barriers are a problem
 - Other areas

- Law Enforcement Tactics and Strategies
 - Use of Force
 - Profiling
 - Diversion
 - Equipment
 - Discipline
 - Investigatory Practices
 - What are early “win-win” changes that can be made quickly?

- Training Practices

- Hiring Practices

- Other Internal Policies and Practices

- Ways to Become More Transparent

- Ways to Strengthen Relationships with Community

- Cooperation with Other Agencies (local, county, state)

- Priorities and Budget

- Creation of a permanent Resident Advisory Board

Nomination for Task Force on City Government Policies and Practices

**Do you know someone who would be a great candidate for the
Task Force on City Government Policies and Practices?**

Please nominate that person here.

You may nominate as many people as you want.

The City of Red Wing acknowledges that institutional and systemic racism and the bias of white privilege exists throughout society. The goal of this Task Force is to take intentional steps in identifying and eliminating that systemic racism throughout city government by working together as a community to improve policies and practices in every department so local government works well for everyone.

The first estimated 18 months of this Task Force will focus on improving public safety policies and practices within the Police Department. A diverse group of 12 community members will make up the Task Force.

Nomination Deadline: Wednesday, August 5 at 4 p.m.

- Your own name: _____
- Your contact information (email or phone number): _____

- Name of the person you are nominating: _____

- Contact information for the person you are nominating (email or phone number):

- Why you are recommending this person? _____

Please mail or deliver this form to: City Hall, 315 West 4th Street, Red Wing, MN 55066.

Attn: Michelle Leise / michelle.leise@ci.red-wing.mn.us / 651-212-3812.

You can also take a photo of this completed form and email it to michelle.leise@ci.red-wing.mn.us.

If you do not receive a confirmation call or email within 24 hours after you submit this form, please call 651-385-3608 to make sure your nomination has been submitted.

Online option: To fill out this Task Force nomination form or an application form, go to the City's website: www.red-wing.org.

(Turn over for more details on the Task Force.)

More Details about the Task Force

- The Task Force will consist of 12 community members. Emphasis is placed on creating a diverse group of people who are not usually part of government.
- Free childcare will be provided at each meeting.
- Transportation can be accommodated for members.
- Task Force members will receive \$75 for each meeting attended.
- Task Force members must be 18 years or older.
- Background checks will not be done on applicants.
- Task Force meetings are open to the public.
- Task Force meetings will be audio taped and available for the public online.
- The public is encouraged to fill out applications and also nominate others for membership. You may nominate multiple people.
- Each of the seven City Council members will review all applications and nominations received from the public, reach out into the community, and make his/her recommendations to Mayor Sean Dowse.
- The mayor will select at least one Task Force member from each Council member's recommended list of names. The mayor will then use a community selection process to choose an additional five members to equal the final 12. Two to three alternates will also be chosen.
- The Task Force will be announced in late August.

Application for Task Force on City Government Policies and Practices

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Application Deadline: Friday, August 7 at 4 p.m.

- Name _____
- Contact Information (email and/or phone number) _____

- Please explain how your experiences and perspectives make you a good candidate for the Task Force. If you wish, also share your hopes or expectations for the Task Force and anything else you feel is important.

- Attendance is important. Meeting days and times have not been chosen yet. Please mark which days and times of day you are available at least some or most of the time. (Mark all that apply.) If you wish, note specific days of the week next to the time of day.
 - Mornings: 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.
 - Noontimes: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
 - Afternoons: 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
 - Late Afternoons 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
 - Early Evenings: 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
 - Late Evenings: 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
 - Saturday mornings 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Please mail or deliver this form to: City Hall, 315 West 4th Street, Red Wing, MN 55066.
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