

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: HarrisonburgVA.gov <noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Monday, June 8, 2020 9:08 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: Form submission from: Agenda Comment Form

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Submitted on: Monday, June 8, 2020 - 9:07pm

Name: Ivan Christo
Type of Meeting: Harrisonburg City Council
Date of Meeting: Tue, 06/09/2020
Agenda Item Number: 8
Comment:
June 8, 2020

To the City Council,

This letter is a collection of concerns, questions, and proposals from some of the citizens of Harrisonburg regarding policies that affect the Black community, with emphasis on policing and the Justice system. These questions were collected and expanded upon by Trevor Chase and Ivan Christo. Some items include specific demands and questions, while others are general areas the public would like for you to explore. We hope you will address and begin to consider all of these items when shaping policies and budgets.

Community Justice/Police Review Board:

- The Community Criminal Justice Review Board needs to be accountable to the guidelines laid out in the Virginia Statute for Community Criminal Justice Review Boards (Va. Code 9.1-180). As deduced from the City website, the current Community Justice Review Board meets bare minimum requirements.
- We would like to see the board composed of Harrisonburg and Rockingham citizens, who are intentionally not part of the judicial system in order to maintain impartiality.
- The board's duties shall entail the reviewing of police actions with the ability to administer appropriate punishment.
- Meeting twice a year is not sufficient to meet the responsibilities of the Community Criminal Justice Review Board Statute.
- The Review Board needs to meet later than 4 PM for greater community accessibility, and needs to be open to the public, much like the School Board and City Council.
- The Review Board should release data freely so it could be examined by the general public.
- The City and County should fund this Review Board to demonstrate a commitment to knowing how to better reform our Justice system

Use of Force:

- Fees for Use of Force Data should be waived to allow for more transparency.
- Citizens have requested a release of the data for the 2018 Police Assault Incident (English claimed he would release it)
- If the Police are "self reporters" of use of force - Body Cameras need to be on at all times
- What conversations are officers having so the cops don't reach for the gun too early? (Training?)

Body Cameras:

- Body cameras need to be on at all times
- There need to be consequences when body cams go off - this especially includes calls and use of force.

-Police Chief English said body cams can not be on for a whole shift because of "battery limitations." Body cams have a long battery life, however, cams/batteries can be swapped if there are battery limitations.

Reallocating Budget:

-Hopefully the focus of funding can be away from policing, and move towards social reform, which could have a stronger public safety effect in the community.

-Police reform goals funnel money into carceral expansion, which has a negative impact on the Black and minority community.

-Examples of reallocation with positive social benefits:

-Roberta Webb Daycare Center

-What does the Police Department need with a "Mine Resistant Vehicle" (\$733,000.00) and a "Turret, Combat Vehicle" (\$18,576.88)

Police Training:

-Consider longer police training.

-Consider issuing a prejudice survey for police in training.

-Expand training on non-invasive holding methods and de-escalation tactics.

-Question from a citizen: What training do officers go through to protect people of color who have disabilities who may not be able to effectively communicate?

Racist and Biased Policies:

-Harrisonburg City needs to re-examine laws and policies that negatively affect the Black and minority communities (we acknowledge that some of these laws may lie at the State-level).

-We need to provide alternative solutions for drug abusers / addicts / relapsers instead of jail time and judicial entanglement. This duty seems to be a part of the State's statute for a Community Criminal Justice Review Board.

-Harrisonburg Police Department should stop cooperating with ICE.

Police in Schools:

-Because of the current climate, the citizens are hesitant to allow police to remain in schools. Consider re-evaluating their presence and purpose there.

Thank you for reading these topics. I sincerely hope the concerns of many Harrisonburg residents — particularly those most threatened by policing — will persuade the Council to adjust policies and budgets to improve the safety and welfare of the Black community, and community at large.

Sincerely,

Trevor Chase & Ivan Christo

Contact: Yes

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Pamela S. Ulmer

From: HarrisonburgVA.gov <noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 4:38 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: Form submission from: Agenda Comment Form

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Submitted on: Friday, June 5, 2020 - 4:38pm

Name: Kyle Lawrence
Type of Meeting: Harrisonburg City Council
Date of Meeting: Tue, 06/09/2020
Agenda Item Number: 6.a.

Comment:

I am very excited to see the City moving forward with this project the time is right given the increased number of people walking and biking in light of COVID-19. This is an important first step to connect the Bluestone Trail and the Northend Greenway through Downtown Harrisonburg.

Kudos to Public Works for moving forward with a temporary version of this project to create safer spaces for walking and biking and not waiting for full funding to completely construct each section. I hope we can see more temporary projects that create safer spaces for walking and biking using affordable materials rather than waiting for multi-million dollar capital projects.

Contact: No
Contact Info: