

Answers to questions from Community Forum, June 19, 2020

- 1. An accusation has been made that the testimony given by certain NPPD officers during the Paul Echols trial may have been inaccurate. Does this accusation rise to the level of an investigation by the Police commission?**

If this accusation has merit, it should be handled directly in court. If a court determined that an officer deliberately and knowingly made inaccurate statements, we would investigate this as a disciplinary matter. However, if a citizen has a complaint against an officer, that complaint should be directed to the police chief.

- 2. Is this [forum] a new approach?**

There will be many different forums offered to ensure we are welcoming all feedback and questions from all of our citizens. We are also supportive of affinity groups forming so people have the opportunity to share stories and experiences. Full and complete transparency as we consider reforming and transforming our police force and other community services

- 3. How do you justify holding two [concurrent] positions [as both Police Commission and Town Board?]**

The residents of the town chose us in an election to serve all town residents. The Town Board has been given the authority to serve as the police commission in service to the residents of the town. If this structure is determined to not serve the best interest of the town and an alternative structure that is better and legal is proposed, it will be considered

- 4. Will you support the Governor's new guidelines?,**

Certainly his directives and requirements, but where we have our own authority, we will always act to serve the residents of the town to the best of our ability. That is our pledge and oath of office.

- 5. Will you support the formation of a community-led Police Commission?**

We will support a community led and represented coalition to review the police commission, the law enforcement agency itself, and other municipal functions. In addition, we will lean strongly to follow the recommendation of the coalition regarding suggested changes as long as those changes continue to serve our community.

- 6. Is the Town Board going to make the STAT act [<https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/brad-hoylman/senate-passes-hoylmans-police-stat-act-requiring-public>] retroactive to previous complaints, rather than a clean slate, to see what has transpired over the last few years?**

Most of the information required to be made public under the Police STAT act will be through the courts. The legislation authorizes the Chief Administrator of the Court to proscribe the forms needed to comply with reporting requirements laid out in the bill. The NYS Office of Court Administration's expanded reporting requirement data must include;

- Aggregate number of misdemeanors/violations charged
- The offense/violation charged
- Race, ethnicity, age and sex of individual charged

- Whether the individual was issued a summons or appearance ticket, was subject to custodial arrest, or whether an arraignment was held as a result of the misdemeanor/violation
- Location where the alleged misdemeanor/violation occurred
- Disposition of case
- If the case is dismissed, why it was dismissed
- Sentence imposed, including fines, fees, and surcharges
- The chief administrator of the courts is required to include this information in its annual report to the legislature.

The legislation requires the chief of every police department, county sheriff, and superintendent of state police to promptly report to DCJS any arrest-related death. An arrest related death is defined as a death that occurs during law enforcement custody or an attempt to establish custody, including, but not limited to, deaths caused by any use of force.

7. Are you going to take the voices of the most seriously marginalized and defund the police, or will you fall on the wrong side of history as we inevitably take things into our own hands?

We are going to ensure that the voices of all, especially the most marginalized among our citizenry are represented on the commission/coalition that will review the police force, police commission and other functions of our municipality to ensure everyone is treated equitably and that any form of racism is eradicated in our municipal government and the agencies it oversees.

8. Will you be doing your job and answering to the demands of the people or are we going to have to do it ourselves?

We will all do it together. We will create a process and members of our community will be invited to fully participate.

9. Request to hold a different kind of forum in which there would be an opportunity for people to be able to ask questions, and make comments and share stories on behalf of people who cannot make it or do not feel comfortable speaking on these issues

Many different forums in different formats will be held throughout the process.

10. Please provide the community with the full New Paltz police department budget with lines broken out and have one town hall just about that

Full and easier budget transparency and meeting just on the budget is a great idea. We will provide this as soon as possible.

11. Tell us how much state aid goes to the police department, if any county aid and shared services, and also cover future dream expenses, let's really have a real conversation about money so that we can then have a conversation about defunding.

State and county aid numbers will be shared during that process as well.

12. Tell us what you need to give us the true transparency and real accountability that we the people deserve and what you need from us to work towards defunding New Paltz police department and reinvesting in resources that our community so clearly needs

We need full community representation and participation to do this together.

13. Please tell us how you'll actually address the transphobic hate speech that was shared by officers Sisco the other day

The Town Board has recommended discipline up to and including termination, and the matter is currently in arbitration.

14. What does the police commission currently do? Who attends these meetings? Is the entire town board there? Do they go to all the meetings?

The police commission oversees the New Paltz Police Department. We hire/appoint a Police Chief and Lieutenant to carry out the day to day responsibilities of leading that agency. We are responsible for hiring, firing, and administering discipline in some cases. We also, in our role as Town Board, negotiate and approve the budget for the police department. We meet once each month at a meeting open to the public. The entire Town Board (the Supervisor and 4 council members) are all members of the police commission with equal voting power among us. We are invited and expected to attend as many meetings as possible.

15. What will be the timeline and the structure of the plan for fulfilling the mandate that the governor has given to sit down-- for the community, the municipal government and the police who are also stakeholders in this, to decide when we are going to be making these changes? How are we going to come up with them? What will the means be, who will be doing that, and when we will get results? Will there be a referendum afterwards, or what form of acceptance will there be for those results?

We are still working on this. We are gathering community input toward the formation of the Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative and this community-centered group will determine the course of action.

16. I'd like to understand what kind of budget or what kind of revenue comes from all these traffic stops.

Traffic stops are not about revenue. They are about public safety. For example each year the Town board gets numerous requests to lower the speed limit on roads for bike/ped safety issues and the response to our requests is that the three tools we need to use before we lower the limit are engineering, education and enforcement.