



Community Outreach and Research Meeting: Summary Report of Findings

September 25, 2020

Purpose: To obtain vital information which will be integrated in the formation of the new Taylorsville Police Department. The data gathered was received through the combined interests and experience of those attended. The discussion format and analysis centered on the potential Strengths, Weakness, Opportunity and Challenge (SWOC).

Community Member Attendees: Art Ledesma, Larry Littleford, Hassan Mardanlou, Ernie Florez, Skyler Martinez, Derek Hansen, Courtney Woffinden, Senituli Allstar Loamanu, Linda Hardman, Russ Wall, Dan Armstrong, Ken Garcia, Brad Manuel, David Watkins, Jennifer Hamilton, Cheryl Cottle, Dama Barbour, Keith Sorensen, Donna Sorensen Jackson, Kris Heineman, Donny Gasu, Tony Henderson, Lynn Handy, Marc McElreath

Summary of Findings:

Strengths

- Local officers. Tie to area. Long-term officers who are familiar with the area and community.
- Engagement in community events, equates to a stronger the police force.
- Administration, chief and council on the same page.
- Mutual aid agreements (with other departments) to enhance services.
- Our city will have just as much to contribute by way of resource and staffing – as no one city can afford to do everything.
- Direct connections on the hiring processes.
- Involvement with training which is specific to the needs within the city – essential (continuing education and certifications) with point person for advocacy on training needs.
- Create a distinct culture of officers that included diversity.
- Budgeting stays within community.
- Officers know the city and vested in city. No transfers.
- More direct accountability to city.
- City can access federal grants directly.
- More community support, rather than shared within multiple municipalities.
- Control of policy and risk levels.

Weaknesses

- Loss of a Citizens Academy?
- Additional needs related to bringing human resources in-house.
- Maintaining records in-house.
- Potential lack of support from local officials – continuity of support as elected officials change.
- Loss of tip-line
- Storage of equipment
- Officer attrition - must continually attract officers to fill ranks
- Budget concerns (competing priorities among all city departments and economic downturns).
- Court battles – actions or inaction of officers.

- Current image that officers (at-large nationally) are up against.
- Perpetual public/community buy-in (responsibility of city to let public know of benefits)
- Potential need to raise taxes?
- Ongoing training needs for public officials – understanding the specific needs of a police department.
- How to care and handle the homeless population (additional pressure on police)
- Identifying and obtaining contracts for special services – K-9, SWAT, etc. (how to replace).
- Timeline for training new officers in only a span of two months is concerning.
- Federal grants are due before July – who will write and pursue?
- There is a need to think “outside the box” and identify other potential ways to do things.
- Ensure a realistic timeline in order to have everything in place by July 1, 2021.
- Providing multiple ways of sharing our messages so the public knows what is happening (transparency).
- Obtain Memorandums of Understanding (MOU’s) ahead of time between partnering agencies.
- Finalizing the city budget well in advance, timing?
- Advancement opportunities among officers is more limited.
- Office space limited – and the need to identify additional space.
- Purchasing of equipment and supplies is a high-demand market (e.g. ammunition).

Opportunities

- To figure out what our community needs and the way our police department can work within the community.
- Flexibility to serve community as needed.
- Identify what Taylorsville wants in relationship to current climate, including race relations and use of force – hot button issues in the news.
- Identify culture issues and training (e.g. de-escalation).
- Rethink the way business is conducted.
- Opportunity to establish new communication vehicles – a place where citizens can be heard and better understand the officers’ point of view. A new tradition for two-way communication and education.
- Apply for federal funds to implement these ideas.
- Police involvement with youth programs at a community level.
- Form relationship with other police departments.
- Identify and embrace a new internal culture.
- Research virtual reality training – recurrent training and assessment. Are we better prepared, and can we reduce liability and accidents?
- Community Service Officers (e.g. West Jordan model as a resource).
- Be in the spotlight for the good work that is accomplished.
- Provide for regular town-hall meetings to engage the general public.
- Engage retired citizens who are licensed and could volunteer with training needs (e.g. mental health areas (in-turn, they too could feel valued).
- Identify and embrace latest technology.
- Partnerships with U of U Health, etc. (graduate students and programs with experience in public policy).
- Utilize the Public Safety Committee more frequently.
- Provide for community policing and image enhancement.

- Enhance services which may currently be lacking (e.g. part-time therapist for victims & advocacy, contracted through VOCA grant).
- New Citizens Academy program.
- New Neighborhood Watch program.
- Create volunteer programs within the police department – to assist with courts, crisis line (e.g. students going through social services program).
- Set high standards for the police department.
- Competitive salaries in order to attract more experienced and diverse officers throughout the state.
- Potential lower insurance costs and lower risk for city.

Challenges

- Response capabilities to the community with a smaller force.
- Ensure all has been identified respective to community expectations.
- Attracting personnel.
- Police Department headquarters – cramped currently.
- Criminal element – keeping up with technology and training.
- Rules of engagement is a perpetual “moving target” with judgments made after the fact.
- Hiring restrictions.
- Budget and support to cover all necessary equipment, etc. (long-term view)
- Communication – directing community to city’s website and social media platforms (e.g. search engines).
- Care and interactions with the media (e.g. sensationalized news).
- Adequate personnel and salaries to recruit qualified officers.
- Perpetual transparency.
- The city once had a municipal police department – a need to learn from past mistakes.
- Public buy-in and public perception, especially if mistakes are made.
- Unexpected costs (e.g. pandemic, earthquake, windstorms, riots, etc.).
- Legislative support – and changes within state (e.g. rules, code).
- Retention of qualified staff.
- Maintaining specialty assignments and services (e.g. SWAT, K-9).
- Interaction with Diversity Committee (identified as both an opportunity and challenge).
- Ensure realistic expectations – matching needs vs. wants within the department.

Around the Room: Final Thoughts

- Citizen Review Boards? What is their role?
- Ensure the city welcomes and embraces new officers.
- Officer Review Board. There are many questions and potential problems.
- Grant writer. Part of a city employee’s job?
- Provide for a chaplain – someone who is responsive to the department, the officers and citizens.
- The public is feeling left out – provide continued information outreach.
- Ensure coverage for large events like Taylorsville Dayzz.
- Logo on police cars that reflects law enforcement.