

Racial Equity in Policing Commission Minutes

Salt Lake City Utah

Listening Session Minutes

Thursday, January 28, 2021

6:00 pm

The Racial Equity in Policing Commission met in an electronic meeting pursuant to the Salt Lake City Emergency Proclamation and determination of the Core Commissioners. This meeting was broadcast live on SLCTV Channel 17. Minutes are provided in conjunction with the [video/audio file](#).

Commission Members in Virtual Attendance: Commissioner Ka'ili, Commissioner Shifflett, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Oomen, Commissioner Ahmad, Commissioner Prospero, Commissioner Banuri, Commissioner Kum, Commissioner Salazar-Hall, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Eldridge, Commissioner Anjewierden, Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Sagato-Mauga, Commissioner Romero-Paredes, Commissioner Tadesse, Commissioner Powell

Commission Members Absent: Commissioner Mberwa, Commissioner Solovi, Commissioner Suarez, Commissioner Kuenihira

City Council Members in Virtual Attendance: Chris Wharton, Amy Fowler, Dan Dugan (*Note: as there was no quorum and attendance of Council members was not in official capacity for action, there are no minutes on behalf of the City Council.*)

Facilitators (Langdon Group) in Virtual Attendance: Dante James, Larry Schooler, Siobhan Locke, Josh King

City Staff in Virtual Attendance: Katie Lewis, City Attorney; Mark Kittrell, Deputy City Attorney; Chief Mike Brown, Police; David Litvack, Mayor's Senior Advisor; Kaletta Lynch, Mayor's Special Projects Coordinator; Allison Rowland, Council Policy Analyst; Kira Luke; City Council Policy Analyst; and Cindy Lou Trishman, City Recorder

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Facilitator Larry Schooler. Mr. Schooler introduced the purpose of the meeting to hear from the community on the topic of Racial Equity and to hear perspective, experiences, and suggestions you are interested in sharing. Mr. Schooler provided the meeting contact information in Spanish and English languages.

A poll shared via text, by phone, and online with those calling into the meeting was presented on the screen and included the following questions:

1. What part of Salt Lake City do you live or work in?
Sugarhouse (25%); Downtown/Central City (25%); Glendale/Poplar Grove (0%); Rosepark/NW Quadrant (15%); Liberty Wells (10%); Avenues/University/East Bench (10%); I don't live in Salt Lake City (10%)
2. What is your race or ethnicity?
American Indian or Alaska native (0%); Black or African American (14%); African (3%); Hispanic, Latino, Chicano (7%); Middle Eastern (0%); Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (14%); Southeast Asian (3%); White (55%); Other Race, Ethnicity (3%)
3. In general, what have your experiences been like with Police in Salt Lake City?
Great (25%); Okay (36%); Bad (14%); Haven't had any (25%)
4. SLCPD officers should have better training in which area?
Cultural competency/implicit bias (40%); Crisis intervention (47%); Community interaction (7%); Firearms (0%); Other (7%)
5. What might SLCPD do to better recruit officers from all backgrounds?
Stronger outreach (34%); Better pay and benefits (7%); More welcoming culture (41%); Other (17%)

Please [click here to view](#) the final poll results (same as listed above).

Mr. Schooler completed the poll information, announced the attendance of Commission Members in attendance and introduced the Mayor, Police Chief and announced the attendance of City Council members present.

Mr. Schooler invited Chief Brown, Mayor Mendenhall, City Council Chair Fowler, and Commission Members to share thoughts of what they are hoping to learn from the Listening Session.

Chief Brown responded his goal was to listen and understand rather than listen and reply, so his efforts can be directed to what the community would like to see from the SLC Police Department.

Mayor Mendenhall responded with her personal learning experience and the necessity of vulnerability to adjust the status quo, to listen, and move forward with change. Mayor Mendenhall also noted the work of the Commission as very important to the City and the public engagement is critical to its efforts.

City Council Chair Fowler shared gratitude for the opportunity to be a part of the listening session and introduced the role of the Council in the development of policy. City Council Chair Fowler stated interest on behalf of the Council to develop good, effective policy to meets the needs of the community.

Commission Members Shifflett, Kum, and McDonald responded to the invitation from Mr. Schooler and expressed hope to understand what the public expects from the Commission, to listen to the experiences of those impacted by the events which have brought the City to this space, and to empower individuals to speak about personal experiences as those shared moments are what moves the work of equity forward.

(22:02) Mr. Schooler introduced the comment period.

Public Comments:

Michael Fisher, resident of downtown Salt Lake City, shared discouragement of officers not taking his reports seriously, in particularly of an experience reporting a missing girl (Elizabeth Santiago) on the streets of Salt Lake City. His suggestion was for the Police Department to respond immediately and take leads seriously.

Beverly Hawkins shared how impressed she has been in observing the work of the Commission, but noted there has not been much discussion about the role of police unions, expressed concern the balance of power has tipped too far to the benefit of union members, desired the leadership of the police department to view the opportunity of the work to build the best police department in the nation.

Virginia Kinloch resident of Salt Lake City, shared desire to see more reform when hiring, to inform individuals interested in serving as police officers of the lifestyle built upon serving the people, concerned with disconnected information between the crisis line and activity of the police, and encouraged collaboration.

Amy Hawkins Chair of the Ballpark Community Council, commented on the “mass exodus” of officers leaving the force, inquired about the efforts pursued to understand the departure reasoning beyond the exit interview, suggested hiring a third party.

Diane shared appreciation for the police department on the three calls she had to make on her son, the patience and kindness of Police was appreciated.

Commissioner Salazar-Hall proposed a visit offline with the caller to better understand what the police officers did well and identify specific officers.

Lou (they, them) Executive Board Member of the Disability Rights Action Committee, shared three interactions with Police Officers of concerning behavior (insensitivity, threats, and disrespect), expressed appreciation for the female

Internal Affairs supervisor who was willing to listen and shared interest in addressing curriculum changes necessary to address equity, and they expressed concern of intimidation tactics as part of police culture.

Andrew Riggle of the Disability Law Center shared statistics of mental health incidents and appreciation of the focus on training and de-escalation policies, suggested more equitable language access and review of alternative communication options, including American Sign Language, use of pictures for those with intellectual disabilities, Braille and overall providing options besides English and verbal responses.

Ma Black asked Chief Brown and Mayor Mendenhall to provide a response of the steps or precautions the City is taking to secure safety of communities of color and particularly in relation to doxing by white supremacists. Mr. Schooler responded that the question would be addressed offline due to the mission of the meeting to receive comments.

Angela Kendah expressed appreciation to the Police and the City leadership, suggested more accountability in the Police force as it can appear there is more protection than accountability, offered the protocol similar to professional licensing process made public as an option to promote accountability.

Matthew received the call and expressed appreciation for the efforts of reaching out to the community, shared his desire to form collaboration opportunities for refugees to engage in POST and Police Academy training to enhance policing representation be similar to the diverse communities of Salt Lake.

Throughout the meeting comments Mr. Schooler read social media and text message comments provided in the comment summary [linked here](#).

Rosio (they, them) shared two points 1) personal choice as an immigrant to not obtain a drivers license due to fear of police and 2) effort to engage in the Citizens Academy resulted in increased terror due to the inability of the officers conducting the academy to manage inappropriate comments and the display of videos of people of color being shot in a jovial manner, suggested more follow-up by police, particularly as a neighbor to a recent shooting of a child in their neighborhood and the promise of victim services without follow up.

City Council Chair Fowler requested more information about the victim services mentioned to ensure the neighbors who witnessed the incident.

Milo asked three questions 1) what have the police done to reduce occurrences similar to that of Darrien Hunt? 2) what purpose does increased diversity in the police force have if the police force exists as an oppressive entity, and 3) what have the police considered changing to eliminate criminal charges directed at the unsheltered community?

Taratunga suggested there is not enough training prior to inclusion on the police force.

Katherine Sullivan from the Ballpark area shared a personal experience of her daughter's murder, expressed concern about the careless investigation and tainted evidence resulting in a plea bargain, suggested re-training for officers regularly and to follow up with cases after prosecution is completed.

José Borjón of the Mexican Consulate Office shared a comment regarding the expectations from the Commission to establish recommendations that are feasible, requested assistance to assure the Hispanic business owners (particularly those on the west side of the City) who have called for Police assistance and not received responses, and suggested the Police department policy be updated to be in line with the State legislation relating to hate crimes.

Maggie shared experiences in the Downtown area at her place of business with unsheltered members of the community and needing to call the Police wherein they did not respond; suggested increased, annual training efforts including non-lethal force training.

Rebecca Jensen shared the personal value she received by attending the Citizens Academy to increase her understanding of the Police culture and expressed desire for the City to provide opportunities for the officers to live in the area where they serve.

Reza shared a personal experience relating to an automotive accident and the potential display of a power move instead of discretion of an officer to issue a ticket instead of a warning.

Tosh directed a question to Mayor Mendenhall and Chief Brown regarding the use of Police force to accompany the health department to camp abatements, which occur despite CDC guidelines due to COVID-19 and requested the Police identify themselves upon arrival.

David suggested development and public transparency of the terms equity and not equality in Community Policing; noting the goal of the two terms may be the same but the approach is different.

Michael expressed concern of the Police and Mayor removing possessions from unsheltered people and the divergent thought impact between police and the citizens relating to this process, suggested the use of more police discretion to decide in their day-to-day jobs what crimes require pursuit, and the need for SLCPD to acknowledge the need for substantial reform.

Mr. Schooler shared with the public the goal of the evening was to listen, and therefore responses from Chief Brown, Mayor Mendenhall or others have not been replied to in the meeting but will be addressed at a later time. The final commenter asked how frequently the Police Department conducts diversity training, sharing a cultural perspective from the Pacific Islander community relating to eye contact and age.

Commissioner Davis expressed appreciation for the members of the community which contributed. Commissioner Salazar-Hall added that a Frequently Asked Questions document will be created to respond to the questions and expressed appreciation for the comments.

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm

Minutes were approved by consensus at the April 7, 2021 Regular Commission Meeting

Cindy Lou Trishman
City Recorder

This document is not intended to serve as a full transcript as additional discussion may have been held; please refer to the audio or video for entire content pursuant to Utah Code §52-4-203(2)(b).

This document along with the digital recording constitute the official minutes of the Racial Equity in Policing Commission Listening Session held January 28, 2021.