



Minutes

Board of Commissioners Special Meeting

7 p.m. Aug. 29, 2022

Board Meeting Room, Town Hall Annex, 105 E. Corbin St.

Present: Mayor Jenn Weaver and commissioners Mark Bell, Kathleen Ferguson, Matt Hughes, and Evelyn Lloyd

Absent: Commissioner Robb English

Staff: Police Chief Duane Hampton, Town Attorney Bob Hornik, Town Clerk and Human Resources Technician Sarah Kimrey, Town Manager Eric Peterson and Communications Specialist Cheryl Sadgrove

1. Opening of the meeting

Mayor Jenn Weaver opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

2. Agenda changes and approval

There was none.

3. In-depth discussion and topics

Discussion on recommendations from the Mayor's Task Force on Re-imagining Public Safety regarding establishing a standing advisory board

Police Chief Duane Hampton acknowledged that the task force had recommended creating a standing advisory board and that he recommended that such a board not be created because the recommendation lacked specifics on what such a board might do. He did not think that there would be enough work for the advisory board to hold the interest of the members serving on it.

The police chief recommended development of a sustained series of semi-annual or annual community safety conversations or listening sessions. These sessions could include police sharing data as well as hearing safety concerns from the community.

The mayor recognized that there were three members of the task force present: Judit Alvarado, Chloe Johnson and Allison Zirkel. When asked what problems or gaps they thought a standing advisory board would address, they said that some community members are not comfortable directly talking to the police and others want more positive police interactions in their neighborhoods. Having an appropriate mental health response to a person having a mental health crisis was also mentioned.

Commissioner Kathleen Ferguson said her involvement in her neighborhood Community Watch helped her understand how the Hillsborough Police Department operates. She encouraged leveraging Community Watch groups for engagement to provide the greatest involvement of a broader representation of residents throughout the town.

When asked what the board is doing to address why there are more police calls to some areas than others, Weaver said the board does not have initiatives developed around where there is more police response. Hampton said he is aware of attention surrounding over policing, but the police respond to where they have received calls.

Commissioner Mark Bell suggested asking the public for questions to be addressed at the community engagement meeting.

Commissioner Matt Hughes said he was interested in an advocacy board with a service component. He wanted the task force to continue to meet to help define what an advocacy board would do.

Ferguson expressed support for annual or semi-annual community engagement meetings. She encouraged leveraging Community Watch groups. She also noted that the Board of Commissioners is responsible for oversight of the Police Department.

The mayor clarified that the task force has finished meeting. She wondered if a robust community meeting could focus on some of the task force's unfinished topics. She added that she would want the town to be prepared should there be a police-related incident in Hillsborough in terms of how to help the community to think about it and talk about it. She expressed concern that the town does not have the capacity required to successfully start and maintain another standing advisory board.

Town Manager Eric Peterson said that it is better to move incrementally and learn from mistakes along the way rather than take a big swing. He encouraged bringing in other departments to engage with the public in addition to the Hillsborough Police Department.

A motion was made to direct staff to return with a summary and a proposed schedule of semi-annual meetings

Motion made by Ferguson, seconded by Commissioner Bell.
Voting Yea: Bell, Ferguson, Hughes and Evelyn Lloyd

3. Adjournment

Weaver adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Kimrey
Town Clerk
Staff support to the Board of Commissioners