



## Minutes

### Citizens League City of Saint Paul Community-First Public Safety Commission

Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Virtual meeting via Zoom video

**Committee Members present:** Co-Chair John Marshall, Co-Chair Acooa Ellis, Ms. Sue Abderholden, Ms. Chauntyll Allen, Mr. Ahmed Anshur, Mr. Cedrick Baker, Mr. Sami Banat, Mr. Jason Barnett, Rev. Dr. Ron Bell, Mr. Scott Burns, Ms. Chikamso Chijioke, Mrs. JoAnn Clark, Mr. Sam Clark, Ms. Sasha Cotton, Ms. Sierra Cumberland, Ms. Natalia Davis, Mr. Julio Fesser, Ms. Anna-Marie Foster, Ms. Simone Hardeman-Jones, Ms. Suwayda Hussein, Ms. Laura Jones, Ms. Clara Juneman, Ms. Farhio Khalif, Ms. Suwana Kirkland, Ms. Alicia Lucio, Ms. Wintana Melekin, Mr. Stephen Moore, Mr. Amin Omar, Mr. Frank Ortiz, Ms. Maureen Perryman, Ms. Amy Peterson, Dr. Suzanne Rivera, Mr. Mark Ross, Mr. Garaad Sahal, Mr. David Squier Jones, Judge Nikki Starr, Mr. Mario Stokes, Ms. LyLy Vang Yang, Mr. Teshite Wako, Mr. Jai Winston, Ms. Heather Worthington, Mr. Pheng Xiong, and Mr. Otis Zanders.

**Members not present:** Ms. Monica Bravo and Mr. Ameen Ford.

**Special guests:** Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter, Saint Paul City Councilmember Mitra Jalali, Ramsey County Commissioner Toni Carter, and Incoming Citizens League Board Chair Laura Monn Ginsburg.

**Staff & staff support present:** Ms. Kate Cimino, Ms. Amanda Koonjbeharry, Mr. Jacob Taintor, and Ms. Madeline McCue.

**Citizens League members:** None.

#### Proposed outcomes for this meeting

- State commission charge and proposed goals
- Introduce members, presenters, staff, and other participants
- Review Citizens League process and principles of engagement
- Discuss Commission timeline
- Time for questions
- Evaluate meeting

## Minutes

Co-chair Marshall called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

### Welcome and Introductions

Co-chair Marshall welcomed and thanked the commission members for their time, participation, and engagement. He explained how members could use Zoom features to better interact with the meetings and reminded members that Citizens League staff were available to provide support. He noted that future meetings will close at 9:10am and that members should notify Citizens League staff if they will be running late.

Co-chair Marshall explained that the Citizens League would be making audio-only recordings of the meetings for the sole purpose of creating anonymous meeting minutes and would be deleted once minutes were approved by the commission. Meetings will also be publicly live streamed for the purpose of transparency and public trust.

Co-chair Marshall reviewed the proposed outcomes for the meeting (*see above*) and the City of Saint Paul's goals for the commission. The objective of the commission, he noted, was to make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council regarding:

- i. Alternative first response options to priority 4 and priority 5 calls;
- ii. Community involvement in the City's community-first public safety framework; and,
- iii. Consideration of the creation of a city-staffed office to drive and integrate community-first public safety initiatives and strategies.

Co-chair Marshall said that subcommittees will be formed in order to meet the full scope of the commission's objectives.

Co-chair Marshall thanked the commission introduced Co-chair Ellis.

Co-chair Ellis greeted the commission and introduced herself as a Saint Paul resident and as the Senior Vice-President of Community Impact for the Greater Twin Cities United Way. She explained that all members will introduce themselves and encouraged members to acknowledge their own perspectives and connections to the issue of public safety.

Co-chair Ellis introduced Mayor Melvin Carter.

Mayor Carter thanked the commission. He discussed City of Saint Paul's Community-First Public Safety Framework and its objective of supporting the police's ability to respond to emergencies by unburdening them of the responsibility of situations that do not necessitate a police response. This commission's job would be to help identify the events to which a different kind of response—such as a social worker, a mental health professional, a crisis counselor, or a housing provider—might be more helpful and appropriate and could serve to “lighten the load” on police.

Mayor Carter recognized that communities in Saint Paul and around the world are grappling with dysfunctional public safety systems. He suggested that a failure to acknowledge the problems with policing has led to the erroneous conclusion that police themselves are the

problem, and that police should instead be seen as a community resource that exists in a system that needs improvement.

Mayor Carter encouraged members to learn from each other and to be open to new perspectives shared by their fellow commission members. He acknowledged the challenging nature of the commission's task and the constraint of the May deadline. He thanked the commission, the Citizens League, and the Robina Institute (who will be assisting with data presentation and analysis).

Co-chair Ellis thanked Mayor Carter and introduced Councilmember Mitra Jalali.

Councilmember Jalali introduced herself as a representative for Ward 4 on the Saint Paul City Council and as the commission's liaison to the city council. She spoke about how her experiences as a teacher at a school attended by underserved and overburdened students shaped her understanding of personal rights and the role of police. She shared an anecdote about an experience at a protest following the death of George Floyd and imparted on the commission that they had the power to change the structural conditions that led to this tragedy.

Co-chair Ellis thanked Councilmember Jalali and introduced Ramsey County Commissioner Toni Carter.

Commissioner Carter thanked Co-chair Ellis and introduced herself as a representative of Ramsey County. She expressed her excitement about the opportunity to help transform the justice system and to involve the community in the process. She explained that she witnessed the ways in which disinvestment has resulted in deep problems as a member of the school board and encouraged the commission to use both their own creativity and the expertise of others to guide their journey toward solving these problems.

Co-chair Ellis thanked Councilmember Carter and introduced Incoming Citizens League Board Chair Laura Monn Ginsburg.

Board Chair Ginsburg conveyed her thanks. She noted the Citizens League's long history of convening groups to discuss important social and political issues and expressed her excitement about this work. She commented on the necessary and delicate balance between urgency and depth in this process.

Co-chair Ellis thanked Board Chair Ginsburg and asked the members to introduce themselves. She first introduced herself as a black mother to, wife of, and daughter of black men, and as someone who thinks about how law enforcement impacts many social challenges and solutions. She also had a loved one who was killed by police while experiencing a mental health crisis.

Co-chair Marshall introduced himself as a resident of Saint Paul and a father of young children. He was a City employee and is now an employee of Xcel Energy, which is deeply involved in the Saint Paul community.

Co-Chair Ellis prompted members to introduce themselves:

- **Ahmed Anshur:** a community leader at an Islamic Center, an immigrant, a father, and a

- resident of East Side Saint Paul;
- **Alicia Lucio:** a board member of the Westside Community Organization, a youth advocate, and a resident of West Saint Paul;
  - **Amin Omar:** an immigrant and organizer in the Somali community, a father, and a resident of East Side Saint Paul;
  - **Amy Peterson:** an emergency manager at Regions Hospital and a family member of law enforcement officers;
  - **Anna-Marie Foster:** a student who leads a school racial justice event and a resident of East Side Saint Paul;
  - **Cedrick Baker:** the chief of staff at Saint Paul Public Schools, a black man, and a new father;
  - **Chikamso Chijioke:** a student, a member of the Saint Paul Youth Commission, an immigrant, and a resident of Saint Paul;
  - **Clara Juneman:** a student, a member of the Saint Paul Youth Commission, and a German immigrant who recently moved to Saint Paul;
  - **David Squier Jones:** a policing scholar for education interests, an expert on the role of police in a democratic society, a former police officer, and a resident of Saint Paul;
  - **Chauntyll Allen:** a founder Black Lives Matter Twin Cities, a member of the Saint Paul School Board, a black mother, and a resident of Rondo;
  - **Farhio Khalif:** the president of the Saint Paul NAACP, the executive director of Voice of East African Women, and a mother;
  - **Frank Ortiz:** a Saint Paul police officer and the president of the Minnesota Chapter of the National Latino Police Officer Association;
  - **Garaad Sahal:** a Saint Paul police officer, a father, and a resident of Saint Paul;
  - **Heather Worthington:** a 23-year veteran of local government, a family member of a law enforcement officer, and a resident of Saint Paul;
  - **Jai Winston:** a black man and an employee of a Saint Paul foundation that invests in projects that promote a healthy democracy;
  - **Jason Barnett:** an employee of a startup that works on smart technologies in public safety; an artist, an entrepreneur, and a resident of Saint Paul;
  - **JoAnn Clark:** the former PTA president of Harding High School and Battle Creek Middle School, a member of the District 1 Council, a volunteer at the Saint Paul Public School Progressive Baptist Church College Fair, and a mother;
  - **Judge Nikki Starr:** a district judge in Ramsey county in criminal courts and in treatment & problem-solving courts, a former public defender, a mother, and a Como resident;
  - **Julio Fesser:** an employee of Securian Financial, which has a Safety Communication Center that works on the efficiently dispatching law enforcement;
  - **Laura Jones:** a criminal justice reform researcher and advocate for shrinking institutions of incarceration, a member of Root & Restore Saint Paul, and a resident of the Midway neighborhood;
  - **LyLy Vang Yang:** the cultural strategy manager at Take Action Minnesota and a renter in Highland Park;
  - **Mario Stokes:** an employee of Saint Paul Parks & Rec, a community ambassador in Midway, an executive board member of AFSCME Local 1842, and a resident of Saint Paul;
  - **Mark Ross:** a police officer, the president elect of the Saint Paul Police Federation, and a graduate of the Saint Paul public schools;
  - **Maureen Perryman:** an emergency dispatcher, a mother, and a resident of the Rondo neighborhood;
  - **Natalia Davis:** the artistic director for the Irreducible Grade Foundation, a black mother, the wife of a Saint Paul fireman, and a resident of Saint Paul;
  - **Otis Zanders:** the CEO of Ujamaa PLACE and a community activist;
  - **Pheng Xiong:** a Saint Paul police officer, the president of the Minnesota Asian Police

- Officer Association, a Thai immigrant, and a graduate of the Saint Paul Public Schools;
- **Rev. Dr. Ron Bell:** the senior pastor of the Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church, a racialized trauma consultant, and a black father;
- **Sami Banat:** a freshman at Macalester, a community organizer, a board director at Break Through Twin Cities, a son of a refugee, and a resident of Saint Paul;
- **Sam Clark:** a former City Attorney of Saint Paul, a partner at Green Espel Law Firm, the son of a Ramsey County Judge, and the vice chair of the Ujamaa PLACE Board;
- **Sasha Cotton:** the director of the Minneapolis Office for Violence Prevention, a member of the African American Leadership Council, a black mother and grandmother, and a Saint Paul resident;
- **Scott Burns:** a software entrepreneur specializing in digital communications for governments, the owner of Osborn370, and a Saint Paul resident;
- **Sierra Cumberland:** the chair of the Saint Paul Police Civilian Internal Affairs Review Commission (PCIARC) and an employee of the International Institute of Minnesota who specializes in human-trafficking;
- **Simone Hardeman-Jones:** the executive director of the Green Light Fund Twin Cities, the mother of a black son, and a Minneapolis native;
- **Stephen Moore:** a resident of Ward 7;
- **Sue Abderholden:** the executive director of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Minnesota;
- **Suwana Kirkland:** a commander in the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office, the president of the Minnesota chapter of the National Black Police Association and the national vice chair for the National Black Police Association, and a mother and grandmother;
- **Suwayda Hussein:** a student, a member of the Saint Paul Youth Commission, and a daughter of Somali immigrants;
- **Suzanne Rivera:** the president of Macalester College, a trained social worker, a daughter of a refugee, and a Latina mother;
- **Teshite Wako:** the recently retired Chief Financial Officer of the Neighborhood Development Center, a member of Regions Hospital board, a participant in the Saint Paul Police's Safe Summer Nights program, the former president the Oromo Community of Minnesota, and a father; and,
- **Wintana Melekin:** an Eritrean immigrant and an East Side Saint Paul resident.

Co-chair Ellis invited the members of the Citizens League staff to introduce themselves:

- **Kate Cimino:** the executive director of the Citizens League, a daughter of public-school teachers and a parent of a Minneapolis public school student. Her area of expertise is in bringing together groups of people together to address complex problems that require lots of perspectives.
- **Amanda Koonjeharry:** the director of public policy at the Citizens League and the daughter of immigrants from Guyana. Her work has been rooted in racial and gender injustice, addressing mental illness, domestic violence, and human trafficking.
- **Jacob Taintor:** a marketing and communications specialist at the Citizens League, a parent, and a resident of Longfellow.
- **Madeline McCue:** a project assistant at the Citizens, a granddaughter of immigrants, and a student of public health and international health security.

Co-chair Ellis noted that the commission was joined by a number of city and county representatives who would support and guide the commission.

Co-chair Ellis dismissed the commission at 10:35 am for a ten-minute break.

At 10:46 am, Co-chair Ellis resumed the meeting and invited Ms. Cimino to discuss the mechanics of the Citizens League process.

### **Citizens League Process and Principles of Engagement**

Ms. Cimino introduced herself as Executive Director of the Citizens League, thanked the commission, and expressed her excitement about the commission's work. She introduced the Citizens League as a unique Minnesota institution that has been bringing concerned community members together to help define and solve policy issues for almost 70 years.

Ms. Cimino explained how the Citizens League uses a structured process to arrive at complex, participant-driven solutions. In Phase 1, members will learn together from research and experiences presented to the commission, and the Citizens League will help the commission involve content that members deem pertinent. In Phase 2, the commission will discuss what was learned and will begin to establish some consensus. In Phase 3, the commission will collaborate to create a set of recommendations to be delivered to the Mayor in May. Ms. Cimino encouraged the commission members to provide feedback to support the process of balancing the inclusion of all voices and sufficient speed to meet the mayor's deadline.

Ms. Cimino highlighted a few key points from the Citizens League Operating Guidelines. *This document is included in the meeting materials.*

Ms. Cimino informed the members that while commission meetings were being livestreamed for the sake of transparency, the only recording made would be audio-only and would be for the sole purpose of creating accurate meeting minutes, Minutes will be anonymous and will be reviewed by the commission before publication. Ms. Cimino asked that both members and any media refrain from broadcasting the specific happenings of the commission meetings.

Ms. Cimino introduced a set of Guiding Principles for the commission to discuss and consider for this project. *This document is included in the meeting materials.* Commission members then moved into breakout groups to discuss the guiding principles and consider anything they might add.

At 11:11 am, commission members were divided into breakout rooms.

While members were in small groups, Ms. Cimino greeted the representatives from the City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County and invited them to introduce themselves:

- Val Jensen: the Director of the Department of Human Rights & Equal Economic Opportunity for the City of Saint Paul;
- Mike Martin: an undersheriff at Ramsey County Sheriff's Office who oversees regional services and trains police officers around the country in different methods of policing;
- Nance Lee Mosquerda: the benefits manager for the City of Saint Paul;
- Cassi Johnson: a deputy director in the Office of Technology and Communications;
- Matt Toupal: the operations chief for the Saint Paul Police Department;
- Anne Barry: the Ramsey County social services director;
- Nancy Pass: the Director of the Ramsey County Emergency Communications Center;
- Bridget Hajny: a representative of the Saint Paul Fire Department;

- Kee Vang: a representative of Ramsey County Public Health; and,
- Daniel Yang, a representative of the Mayor's Office.

At 11:23 am, Ms. Cimino reconvened the commission. Members suggested additions to the list of Guiding Principles, including:

- Being cognizant of the need to set aside both named and implicit power roles so that all members' voices might have equal weight;
- Acknowledging that being gracious requires emotional energy, and that consensus is not necessarily unanimous;
- Understanding that disagreement would be inevitable and would not necessarily be resolved;
- Caring for the language used as definitions are not ubiquitous; and,
- Acknowledging that harm reduction has value, even without solving a problem outrightly.

Ms. Cimino indicated that the Citizens League team would bring forward an updated draft of the principles to the next meeting, incorporating members' suggestions, and the group would then approve the final version.

Ms. Cimino invited Ms. Koonjbeharry to review the proposed timeline for the commission.

### **Review Proposed Timeline and Meeting Logistics**

Ms. Koonjbeharry reminded members to accept the calendar invite for the next meeting on January 6 and requested that they inform the Citizens League in advance if they would be sending a designee in their place. She noted that members would be receiving a survey in which they could share their priorities and suggestions, and that they would be receiving a separate form to submit their evaluations of this meeting.

Ms. Koonjbeharry shared the following contact information:

- The Citizens League's [landing page](#) for this project;
- The commission's [public comment form](#);
- This project's email address ([saintpaulpublicsafety@citizensleague.org](mailto:saintpaulpublicsafety@citizensleague.org)); and,
- This project's dedicated voicemail line (651) 252-4415, which will be translated into Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

She also reminded commission members to submit short bios and a headshot for the forthcoming "Get to Know the Commission" booklet that would be shared amongst commission members.

### **Questions**

Co-chair Marshall opened the discussion for questions.

A commission member asked a few questions regarding the data to which the commission would have access, how call priorities were defined, and how the commission might explore higher priority calls. Ms. Koonjbeharry answered that that data would be provided by the Robina

Institute at the next meeting and Co-chair Ellis added that the commission would focus on priority 4 and priority 5 calls. Ms. Pass, the Director of the Ramsey County Emergency Communications Center, explained what types of data to which the Robina institute had access. Mr. Yang, from the mayor's office, confirmed that data regarding the relative prevalence of low priority calls would be addressed at the next meeting.

A member asked about the project budget and Mr. Yang clarified that the listed budget was for the commission and its work, led by the Citizens League; not for the implementation of the commission's recommendations.

## **Close**

Co-chairs Marshall thanked the commission for their time, commitment, and passion, and said that he felt the meeting fulfilled the stated goals. Co-Chair Ellis assured that the commission will continue to wrestle with the tension of getting as much out of these meetings as possible while remaining on the agenda, and she invited commission members to provide feedback to help them strike that balance. She thanked the commission for their participation, time, and transparency.

Co-chair Marshall wished everyone a safe end-of-year and concluded the meeting at 11:58 a.m.