

STATE COLLEGE BOROUGH

interoffice

MEMORANDUM

ADMINISTRATION

to: Borough Council
from: Thomas J. Fountaine, II
subject: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
date: 6/15/2020

Public Access to Policy Manual – Since 2009, the State College Police Department made available as requested the portions of the police policy manual that are subject to public release; however, beginning June 15, 2020, the Borough has made this available online through the Borough’s website.

The PA Right To Know Law Section 708 b provides for many exemptions or exceptions to information that is publicly available, including the exemption of portions of police policy that, if released publicly, could reasonably jeopardize the personal security of an individual officer and our agency’s homeland security, law enforcement or other public safety, preparedness or public protection activity.

In this manual, there are portions that have been redacted for the reasons stated above. The redaction was done by covering over the portion of the policy that has been deemed to not be publicly available.

Use of Force Statistics – The State College Police Department completes an annual Taser Use of Force Report that is placed online. This report provides various information including the number of times the taser was used, the age, gender, and race of the person it was used on, and other information. The police department is in the process of developing a reporting system to place online data regarding other use of force options in addition to what is currently provided for the taser. It is expected this reporting system will be developed and information beginning to be placed online by July 31, 2020.

FBI National Use-of-Force Data Collection Program – The State College Police Department has applied to be a contributor to the registered FBI National Use-of-Force Data Collection Program. The police department is still awaiting approval of their application from the FBI. This data collection program accepts use of force data by a law enforcement officer as a response to resistance that results in the death or serious bodily injury of a person, or when a law enforcement officer, in the absence of death or serious bodily injury, discharges a firearm at or in the direction of a person.

Update on the Status of Recommendations in the Task Force on Policing and Communities of Color – Periodically the Task Force co-conveners have met with leadership of the Task Force to discuss the status of the recommendations. Since the task force has completed their work, State College and Penn State have been working on many of the recommendations while some others have not yet been vetted and implemented. Borough staff is developing a dashboard for the website that indicates the general status of each recommendation along with providing more detailed activities related to each recommendation. It is expected this information to be available online by June 30, 2020.

Campaign Zero “8CantWait” – over the past 10 days, this campaign was brought to the Borough’s attention. The police department reviewed the eight (8) policies associated with this campaign and determined they already have policy consistent with the “8CantWait” policies. Included is a joint news release issued by the State College Police and Penn State Police.

Task Force on Mental Health Crisis Services

Centre County and the Borough jointly established the Task Force on Mental Health Crisis Services to help explore, develop, and implement changes to the mental health system in place within the county. The Task Force, which consists of 31 community members, is tasked with examining the continuum of mental health crisis services, including:

- Mobile Crisis Services
- Delegate Crisis Services
- Involuntary Commitment Warrant Procedures
- Police Officers’ role in responding to Mental Health calls and 302 Warrant Procedures
- Emergency Department Procedures
- Post-Emergency Department Services

The work of the Mental Health Task Force has been delayed by the death of the initial Task Force Chair in November 2019 and by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force has now resumed work and a report with recommendations is expected in fall 2020. The work plan is included with this memo.

State College Police Department Independent Policy Review

The Borough has also contracted with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to conduct a systematic evaluation of the operation of the SCPD. The consultants, who are nearing the completion of their work, are conducting a comprehensive and independent assessment of the police department’s critical policies, practices, and procedures and will provide actionable recommendations for improvement.

The work of the IACP consultants was delayed by COVID-19; however, a final report with recommendations from the IACP is expected by the end of July or sooner.

Race, Equity, and Leadership (REAL)

The Borough has contracted with the National League of Cities' Race Equity and Leadership (REAL) for an 18-month engagement to assist the Borough in the following areas:

- Train elected officials and municipal staff on how to analyze policies through the lens of racial equity.
- Connect the community to local voices throughout the region who specialize in racial equity and healing.
- Develop a local racial equity plan of action.
- Facilitate the necessary solutions that address the unique local challenges.

The REAL Team was in State College on January 27, 2020 to begin this work. During their visit, they also met with and attended the Community and Campus in Unity (CCU) meeting. The follow-up meetings scheduled for March and April were postponed due to COVID-19. Borough staff and REAL project team are currently working to revise the project schedule. It is expected the REAL work, beginning with training, will resume July 2020.