

The Procedural Justice Committee held a virtual meeting on December. 8, 2020.

Co-Chair Yvonne Flowers went over the recommendations the committee has been compiling to send to the Police Department and City Administration regarding Gov. Andrew Cuomo's Executive Order 203 concerning police reforms. She also said the some of the committee members held a virtual meeting on Dec. 1 with local youth and received feedback from them.

Procedural Justice Committee members discussed creating more diversity in the police ranks, adding mental health services, increasing community policing, considering the merits of having a school resource officer in the schools, expanding the use of body cameras, having civilian oversight of policing issues and contemplating the demilitarization of the police department, among other topics.

Regarding diversity, committee members expressed support for the county's decision to give new officers time to reach the 60 college-credits requirement in addition to completing crisis intervention training within two years. Committee members have expressed that the city Police Department needs more people of color in the ranks and also more bilingual officers. The committee recommends that during the recruitment efforts, the Police Department work closely with organizations that have a close connection to diverse populations. Also, as part of the career law enforcement course held for youths every year, a mentorship component should be considered to help encourage more local youths to consider becoming police officers in the city.

The committee has discussed the City of Poughkeepsie Department's partnership with Mental Health America, under which a behavioral health professional is embedded in the department to provide case management services to those in need. The committee encourages the expansion of this partnership. A behavioral health professional trained to handle youth mental health situations should also be considered part of the team, committee members have said.

The committee has also expressed its support for community policing, keeping officers patrolling the same area in order to form a stronger bond with the citizens living and working there. And is the committee is largely in

favor of retaining the School Resource Officer program, believing it builds relationships and can help stem violence in and around the schools.

The committee also discussed the demilitarization of the police department, and specifically the question of whether city police should make use of an armored vehicle in holiday parades and other events. Some community members have said they believe the truck should not be used in this manner. Committee members largely agreed with that assessment, but recognize the truck can be used in ways that are a benefit to the city, including providing cover for citizens and officers in the event of an active shooting and serving as a rescue vehicle in the event of flooding. The city Police Department has subsequently decided not to use the armored vehicle in holiday parades and other events.