

Minutes – CED Stakeholder Meeting
April 21, 2017

Location

Police Headquarters, 1245 Third Street, Room 1025, San Francisco, CA

Attendees

Erin Katayama	Bar Association of SF
Eric Vanderpool	community member
Martin Halloran	POA
Jennifer Friedenbach	Coalition on Homelessness (CoH)
Alan Schlosser	ACLU
Kevin Benedicto	Morgan Lewis/Blue Ribbon Panel
Angelica Almeida	DPH
Samara Marion	DPA
Dennis Chew	community member
Carl Fabbri	SFPD
Paul Henderson	Mayor's Office
Yulanda William	SFPD/OFJ
Sonia Melara	Police Commission
Rania Adwan	Police Commission
Michael Connolly	SFPD
Sneh Rao	HRC

Item #1 Introductions:

Commissioner Melara opens the meeting introducing herself and explaining the mandate of the group in the context of the DOJ's COPS assessment report and recommendation.

Item #2 Discussion on agency position/perspectives regarding ECWs:

Comm. Melara begins by stating that she has mixed opinions about Tasers but is looking for productive and informative working group sessions. She asks for stakeholders around the table to share their agencies perspectives as a starting point for the work ahead.

Stakeholders express their perceived concerns with the process, suggesting that working towards a draft policy assumes agreement with the fundamental argument in support of ECWs.

The Commissioner discussed at length that this was not the case, that stakeholders have the opportunity to weigh in on a draft and any and final decision belongs to the Police Commission. She stated that expert testimony would encompass a large part of the group's discussion as well as research submitted by anyone in the group but for the sake of pragmatism and to deliver something to the Commission that they can respond to. The Commission President has directed for a draft policy. Stakeholders should weigh in and are welcome to attend the Commission meeting, when it happens, to declare whether they are for or against the policy but to not take part altogether is a missed opportunity to represent various community perspectives and help address the challenges their constituents might have.

Erin K (Bar) stated that her agency is a resounding 'no' on Tasers © and unlikely to change their mind no matter what they heard.

Sneh R (HRC) said he was concerned that this would increase instances when officers resorted to force but is open to hear arguments and participate.

Alan S. (ACLU) said SFPD should get systems in place before this discussion. This was not a good time given de-escalation training emphasizes time and distance, and Tasers © require close range and adoption would be detrimental.

Kevin B (Blue Ribbon) acknowledged that he/the Blue Ribbon panel does not have enough information to make a decision but believed it was premature to introduce Tasers © .

The DPH expressed no perspective

The DPA believed this discussion was premature

Dr. Chew (community member) said he was in favor, especially if it means saving a life and this was support the police would like

Paul H (Mayor's office) said the Mayor's office was in support of dialogue and would require more information. He encouraged exploration in any method of intervention that avoided fatal injury.

Commissioner Melara stated that her objective and that of the Commission is the well-being of community members as well as the police officers.

Martin H (POA) believed this would be a less lethal option that, coupled with crisis intervention training and with the proper medical attention, would help keep SF safe

Jennifer F (CoH) believes that the homeless population has the most interaction with police and tend to be in the worst condition with impaired health. She believes a lot of research has been done and that the medical community, especially cardiologists (citing Dr. Tseng) point to an increase of in-custody death and use of firearms. She believes the Tasers © contradict the work of the crisis intervention team and would change police response.

Commissioner Melara discussed level setting and Rules of Engagement

- Goals & Objectives
- Work plan Development
- Timeline

Commissioner Melara restated the goals of the working group: to work on policy sensitive to the needs of all involved and leverage those stakeholders to input safeguards that protect their constituents. She restated that the group needs to develop a policy and leave it up to the full commission

Reaction to this and sentiments from the introduction derail the rest of the meeting.

ACLU question: would the working group hear from experts that think Tasers © are not advisable?
Commissioner's answer: yes, we want to ensure all voices are heard, all data is reviewed

CoH question: This process is pigeon-holing and not fair. We should be allowed to make a recommendation to the commission and not just submit a policy.

Commissioner's answer: there is no value in talking for months on end. This discussion is not new to San Francisco but it's here again because the DOJ recommended it. We can develop a policy that covers things important to you and your constituents and leave it to the Commission to decide. And they might decide that Tasers © are a bad idea. The stakeholder group is not the governing body, but it is the body that will search for experts, consider data and information and draft a policy that matches what we need.

Commissioner Melara went on to say that she hopes to bring a document to the Commission that they can react to

ACLU question: could it be a policy to delay?

Commissioner's answer: you can certainly state your opinion at the Police Commission meeting that you recommend a delay.

Samara M (DPA) states that she had a different notion of the work group. She thought that the common goals was to reduce officer involved shootings (OIS) and use of force incidents, and thought the group would be looking at the problem more broadly.

She calls for more information and states that we can't say we have a solution without understanding the problem. She considers this a new weapon and doesn't have enough information. As a working group she thought we'd have a robust discussion.

Commissioner Melara ends the meeting stating that she will confirm with the Police Commission President of the direction and mandate of the working group and hopes stakeholders will remain part of the group.

Agenda items not addressed

1. Proposals for speakers and subject matter experts
2. Other items

There were no members of the public.