

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

The Council's Pledge to reform Police Use-of-Force Department policies.

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Police Department

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**INFORMATION
ONLY**

As a result of the final report and recommendations from the Office of Independent Review (OIR) Group concerning police use of force policies, the City has been implementing reforms as directed by the final step of the Council's Pledge. Staff will share the progress on responding to the recommendations since the last quarterly update to Council on June 21.

No Council action is needed.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

On June 11, 2020, Mayor Lynne Robinson, with the support of Council, pledged to review police use of force policies to identify any potential reforms. In September 2020, the City hired OIR Group to review the Bellevue Police Department's policies surrounding use-of-force. After community engagement with stakeholders and the community at large, OIR Group completed its analysis of the police use-of-force policies. On April 12, the OIR Group presented its final report and recommendations to Council. On June 21, Deputy City Manager Nathan McCommon presented an overview of the City's plan for implementing the recommendations through 2022. At that meeting, it was reported that 7 of the 47 recommendations were completed. The Police Department committed to returning to Council quarterly with reports on the status and progress of implementing the recommendations.

Since the June 21, meeting, the Police Department has completed implementing an additional 13 OIR Group recommendations, totaling 20 of the recommendations completed to date. The bulk of the recommendations implemented this last quarter are due to the overlap of the recent police reform legislation that went into effect on July 25. The legislation created new mandates for law enforcement and in turn the Police Department updated its policy manual to reflect the legislative changes related to use of force and police tactics. For example, the new state legislation established limitations on when physical and deadly force may be used and the duty to intervene and report on the use of excessive force. The legislature also established a requirement that all law enforcement act with reasonable care, to include using de-escalation tactics and alternatives to deadly force. In addition, the legislature prohibited the procurement or use of certain equipment and tactics, to include neck restraints, tear-gas, no-knock warrants and vehicle pursuits. The new legislation overlaps with several sections of the OIR Group recommendations related to the use of force, de-escalation, proportionality, standards for police tactics, the duty of law enforcement to intervene/report, and the sanctity/preservation of life.

For the next quarter, the Police Department has prioritized the OIR Group recommendations with corresponding state legislation that goes into effect on January 1, 2022. The Department continues to work on developing a body-worn camera program that would assist in fulfilling the state mandate that all custodial interrogations of juveniles and felony suspects be electronically recorded. The goal is to have the body-worn camera program, that is in line with OIR Group recommendation #37, completed by the first quarter of 2022. Another legislative mandate is to report use-of-force data to the state starting in 2022. The Department continues to work on revising its policies and procedures for use-of-force reporting to incorporate both the state requirements and the OIR Group recommendations for documenting and reviewing use-of-force.

The Department also continues to progress through the recommendations that do not have a corresponding legislative mandate. For example, the Department is in the process of finalizing its policies around Taser deployments and crowd control that relate to the OIR Group recommendations for use of and conditions around specific force options.

The Department hopes to report back to Council on the completion of these recommendations at the next quarter progress report.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

The Pledge prompted reforms to use of force policies of the Police Department. Implementation of reforms has begun and will take through mid-2022 to fully adjust for compliance with new laws, conduct corresponding training, and establish equipment/staffing needs.

Fiscal Impact

All potential new fiscal impacts have yet to be determined. Most recommendations that present a cost are already budgetarily achievable within the adopted budget. Some mandated legislative changes may prompt the procurement of equipment or other costs that are achievable through the assistance of grant funding specifically set for implementation of legislative mandates.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

A. Office of Independent Review Group – Report and Final Recommendations

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A