

# Metro Public Safety Advisory Committee

## General Committee Meeting #10

### MINUTES

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

#### I. Call To Order

##### A. **Zoom Meeting Protocols**

Facilitator Richard France called the meeting to order. Facilitator Thomson Dryjanski announced Spanish and American Sign Language interpreter services would be available throughout the meeting. Dryjanski noted that public comments will be taken by raising your hand in the Zoom platform or calling in via phone. Additionally, he reminded committee members that all chat messages must be made using the “all participants and panelists” function so they are visible to all attendees.

##### B. **Agenda**

France reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

##### C. **Roll Call**

**Present:** Ashley Ajayi, Andrea Urmanita, Carrie Madden, Charles Hammerstein, Chauncey Smith, Clarence Davis, Constance Strickland, Darryl Goodus, Esteban Garcia, Florence Annang, Glenda Murrell, James Wen, Jessica Kellogg, Jose Raigoza, Maricela De Rivera, Mohammad Tajsar, Ron Rodney, Ma’ayan Dembo

**Absent:** Raul Gomez, Dr. Sabrina Howard, Fabian Gallardo, Scarlett de Leon

##### D. **Approval of 08/18 meeting minutes**

A vote was taken to approve the meeting minutes for the August 18, 2021, meeting.

Minutes were approved unanimously

#### II. General Public Comment

Public comment was taken from meeting participants. The following comments were shared:

- A. Commenter Alfonso Directo Jr is a member of ACT-LA and commented on both the mission and values statements and the panel queued for today. They reiterated their comment from the last committee meeting that the public safety mission/values statements should reflect the board motion that created PSAC, which includes shifting resources away from policing. Commentator also noted that the panel discussion should be moderated to allow enough time for questions and discussion from committee members.

#### III. Discussion

##### A. **Proposal to Reshuffle Agenda Items**

- a. France proposed reordering today’s agenda. Member de Rivera stated support for the reordering. There were no objections from the committee.
- b. Committee member Ajayi asked what the goal for today’s mission and values discussion is.

- i. France outlined the meeting’s goal of identifying the themes and concepts of the mission and values discussion, which the facilitators will use to draft statements for final approval from the committee.

## **B. Continuation of Drafting Mission and Values Statement**

The facilitation team shared a cleaned-up version of the Jamboard from the last General Committee meeting for members to participate in this discussion. They also shared a Google form with the public which allowed them to respond to the same prompts as committee members. They indicated that the Google form will remain open until September 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **a. Framing**

- i. France reviewed the definitions of mission and values being used in discussion.
  - 1. Mission: A mission is your organization’s big picture goal. Ultimately, it should explain what you hope to accomplish as an entity.
  - 2. Values: A values statement explains what principles, ideals, and/or priorities that guide your work.

### **b. Responding to “What do you like about Metro’s System Safety & Law Enforcement (SSLE) vision and mission statement?”**

- i. Member de Rivera thanked members from the public who participated. She echoed the statement from the public commentor earlier in the meeting that SSLE’s mission and vision statements are too traditional and don’t capture the mission of PSAC.
  - 1. Members Smith, Ajayi, and Tajsar shared their agreement with this point.

### **c. Responding to “What is missing from [Metro] SSLE’s vision and mission?”**

- i. Member Smith inquired if the goal was to create a mission and values statement for public safety on Metro or for the security systems that are a part of Metro.
  - 1. France clarified that the Board’s motions indicates that the committee is tasked with drafting a mission and values statement for broader public safety on Metro.
- ii. Member de Rivera shared that specifically calling out the “users” of Metro’s systems leaves out community members that may be impacted by Metro’s systems but would not qualify as users.
  - 1. Member Wen added that women, individuals in the LGBTQ+ community, and users with trauma are also excluded.
  - 2. Member Smith also added low-income riders.
- iii. Member Garcia shared that they don’t feel there is a need to explicitly center and name vulnerable communities in long-term mission and values statements.
  - 1. Member Madden agreed and felt that everyone should be centered.
- iv. Member Strickland shared that these statements are an opportunity for PSAC to have a communal mission and that the language should reflect that.

### **d. Responding to “Do these statements include words, phrases, or concepts that you like? If so, please write down what resonates with you.” Members reviewed and reacted to mission and values statements from other transit agencies’ public security divisions.**

- i. Member de Rivera commented that they would like to see more statements that mention community and environmental stewardship.

1. Member Rodney would also like to see different communities and cultures being represented.
- ii. Member Davis shared that the language used might be generalizing too much. They would prefer to use direct language to address specific groups and people.
  1. Member Rivera seconded that, pointing out a lack of a spirit of community in the assembled statements.
- iii. Member Ajayi echoed that this is an opportunity for mission and values to be a foundational articulation of what Metro as an agency can do.

**e. Responding to “What do you think Metro’s public safety mission and values statement should emphasize?”**

- i. Member Davis emphasized the importance of prioritizing local hiring and operations.
- ii. Member Wen commented that “striving” maybe not being the most appropriate word to include in the draft statements.
- f. France laid out the next steps for mission and values. These include preparing a set of draft statements and including community member comments on the Jamboard for next week.

**C. Panel Discussion with Metro Contract Law Enforcement and Security**

Metro Security Chief Judy Gerhardt began the discussion by introducing the five panelists: Captain Shawn Kehoe (LASD), Chief Gerald A. Woodyard (LAPD), Commander Michael Pennino (LBPD), VP Clarence Roshell (RMI), and Director Jose Ortiz (Metro Transit Security).

France opened the panel by asking all panelists two framing questions.

**a. Panelist responses to “What do you see as your entity’s role in providing a safe experience for Metro riders?”**

- i. Captain Kehoe expressed that the Sheriff’s department provides unique expertise that public transit requires. Deputies learn the routes, platform protocol, and other Metro-specific needs. Kehoe and LASD supports reimagining public safety through the addition of non-law enforcement resources.
- ii. Chief Woodyard shared an anecdote of an endangered Metro rider to highlight his individual stance on why rider and worker safety is important to him.
- iii. Commander Pennino stated that their department emphasizes community policing and is focused on addressing quality of life issues.
  1. Their mission is to provide public safety through partnerships with outside organizations. To accomplish this in an equitable way, the department relies on building relationships with community.
- iv. Director Ortiz highlighted Metro Transit Security’s role in to enhancing customer experience and providing a safe place for commuters and officers.

**b. Panelist responses to “How might your organization's role change in a system that includes more resources for things like transit ambassadors, social service providers, and community-centered alternatives to law enforcement?”**

- i. Chief Woodyard stated it takes time to build community relationships and be able to have uncomfortable but honest conversations. He embraces working with community-based organizations and anyone else who wants to make the community safer.
- ii. Commander Pennino agrees that a collaborative effort is needed. He acknowledges that the department is not an expert on all topics and welcomes

the community collaboration to meet their mission. They currently include programs to engage homeless individuals and a mental evaluation team for de-escalation as part of these efforts.

- iii. Director Ortiz welcomes change, such as bringing on staff with specialized skills.
- iv. VP Roshell shared that his organization is the first line of response and wears multiple hats in their day-to-day work that allows them to engage with a variety of groups and individuals.

**c. Q&A with PSAC members:**

- i. Member Davis stated appreciation for the panelists' experience. He asked if a militarized approach to policing is an approach that has run its course at this point in time.
  - 1. Chief Woodyard shared that most experiences with community members do not require use of force because members comply with officers' directives.
    - a. He also indicated there is a system in place to audit all uses of force.
    - b. He shared that he instructs all his officers to treat people with dignity and respect.
  - 2. Member Davis followed up by sharing his personal experiences with use of force by police officers, where the incidents went unreported.
    - a. Chief Woodyard responded that all officers are now mandated to wear body camera and community members have rights to request a supervisor generate a complaint.
    - b. He also shared a personal anecdote of his own experience with LAPD as a young black man during a traffic stop.
  - 3. Member Davis expressed his distrust with younger police officers who do not have the experience and empathy that members of the panel are expressing. He asked about how the community might protect themselves from the inexperience of younger officers.
    - a. Chief Woodyard invited Davis to collaborate one-on-one with him to continue the discussion.
    - b. Captain Kehoe added that he proud of his deputies and invited Member Davis to the trainings the department conducts.
      - i. He also shared his department will be adding body cameras in October.
- ii. Member Raigoza asked what systems are currently in place to screen officers to meet the high level of service that Metro requires.
  - 1. Captain Kehoe shared that all the officers are currently assigned to the Transit Services Bureau are required to be transit-trained and there is a secondary vetting process for external personnel requesting overtime.
  - 2. Commander Pennino added that in Long Beach all officers are trained the same transit-specific scenarios, are not on probation, and wear body cameras.
- iii. Member Strickland shared that in her experience having access to officers hasn't been an effective connection to the community. Regarding systems change, she wonders how innovative an individual can be after 20+ years in the field (referring to the extended tenure of the panelists). She also questioned how we can hold lower-ranking officers accountable and create responsive dispatch procedures for residents to feel safe.

1. Chief Woodyard shared that civil unrest last year opened an opportunity to have conversations with young people who bring unique and fresh ideas and reiterated his openness to new ideas and innovative individuals.
- iv. Member Annang shared her experiences with security on transit. She noted that police have an internal culture to keep themselves safe. She inquired what departments are doing to reconcile the disconnect between inexperienced officers – who may not be a part of the community they serve – and the communities they serve.
  1. Commander Pennino shared his experience at a public engagement event that influenced his stance on engagement and communication with community members.
- v. Member Rivera asked how we can address systemic issues within police departments, while acknowledging that there are individual officers that are doing a good job. The member also asked how to address resource deficiencies in other departments.
  1. Commander Pennino responded that although the culture will not change overnight, collaboration with communities is needed to do something about it.
  2. Captain Kehoe shared his own commitment to partnership with community members.
  3. Chief Woodyard also shared his openness to difficult conversations.
- vi. Member Ajayi thanked the panelists and shared that she would like to continue the conversation on how we can remove the harm promoting aspects of policing moving forward.
  1. Chief Woodyard expressed that it will take many in-person working sessions to address the multilayered aspects of the member's question.

#### IV. General Public Comment

Public comment was taken from meeting participants. The following comments were shared:

- A. Commentor shared anger and concerns that the ad hoc committee meetings were not open to the public and that the committee report-outs during meetings had continually been delayed due to time constraints.
  - a. *To address this concern, meeting summaries from the ad hoc committee meetings will be added to the General Committee agenda packets.*

#### V. Adjournment

- A. Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm

#### VI. Next Steps

**The committee will reconvene on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.**