

From: [David Cary](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Democracy and Case Studies
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 3:55:21 PM

Sebastopol City Council,

In preparation for your Tuesday, June 23 special meeting for “Establishing a Process for Reviewing City Policies and Practices”, I offer two recommendations related to democracy and case studies. These recommendations are in keeping with the published agenda which:

- targets both some very broad goals and some more specific goals related to policing, and
- seeks to identify both possible solutions for further evaluation as well as processes for conducting those evaluations.

I encourage you to search for solutions to root causes. Don't settle only for short-term solutions that merely paper over superficial symptoms. Most roads to root causes will lead back to the city council and its relationship with Sebastopol voters. No solutions to the problems on the meeting's agenda can be fully effective, sustainable, or complete, without also converting Sebastopol to a democracy, as exemplified by the phrase “government by the people”.

A conversion of city government to a democracy will include at least three changes:

- Making Sebastopol government more open and transparent.
- Electing the city council with free and fair elections that ensure a truer representation of voters.
- Implementing campaign finance reform.

For example, currently the council is elected using an election method, plurality block voting, that is designed to suppress, even eliminate minority representation on the council. In Sebastopol's more overtly racist past, it was popular for that very reason. It is a clear example of systemic racism that continues in Sebastopol today. Its use continues to undercut the legitimacy and credibility of the city council. It leaves a stain on every decision you make, regardless of how good your

intentions are.

That has to change. I recommend that you to add converting to a democracy to your list of solutions to evaluate. Converting to a democracy is essential to ensuring that city policies and practices best represent community values.

In terms of process related to policing issues, I encourage you to create a dialog about police policies and resulting practices. To make some of the issues more tangible, I recommend reviewing as case studies several of the widely publicized incidents from other jurisdictions. As case studies, we can then review what went well and what went wrong in those incidents, what contributed to those incidents, and in what ways Sebastopol is different or should become different to avoid such incidents in the first place and to change their outcomes and better respond to them after the fact if and when they do occur in Sebastopol.

That dialog can be started and most of it conducted outside of the formalities of a city council meeting. It could be hosted by or feature the city manager, the police chief, and other members of the police department. Of course that dialog should also include participation from Sebastopol residents.

Using such incidents as case studies can help educate and can help build a shared understanding with which to evaluate various solutions.

Thank you for your consideration of these ideas.

– David Cary
Sebastopol resident and voter

From: [Renata Brillinger](#)
To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Subject: Comments on Item #1 for June 23 meeting
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 7:39:18 AM

City Councilmembers,

Thank you for convening this important community conversation. I look forward to hearing presentations by Jerry Threet and Acting Chief DeVore. Making information like this available is a good first step, but obviously only the first step.

There are limits caused by both the pandemic and the rigid structure of city council meetings to having the type of discussion and problem solving needed to sufficiently address the question of whether and how to reform and restructure our policing services. I believe it would be helpful to establish a citizen committee to more deeply and thoroughly investigate Sebastopol's policing practices, policies, budget and record and make recommendations to address issues stemming from systemic racism. This committee should be carefully structured with designated seats for people of color, youth, local business and community organizations. It should report to the city council and have access to information from the city, but I do not think elected officials or city staff should serve on it. A paid facilitator should be retained to run the meetings, and the committee should be charged with delivering a report within 3 months, including recommendations. Topics for discussion could include:

- Police department budget and staffing, including staff size, salaries, pensions, overhead
- Training on DEI, de-escalation, community policing techniques
- Recruitment and hiring policies to achieve diversity that is representative of our community
- Policies, procedures and historical record regarding complaints about conduct
- Opportunities for sharing resources with other small cities to improve anti-racism resources (e.g., equity officer, trainings, recruitment)
- Comparison of all of the above with other cities of comparable size and demographics, including exploring models for alternatives to traditional policing

Thank you for your consideration of this input.

- Renata Brillinger, [REDACTED] Sebastopol

From: [Jojo Sanders](#)
To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Subject: Public comment for Special Meeting
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 1:16:25 PM

Dear Ms. Gourley,

I would like to submit the following as a public comment for today's city council meeting.

Thank you!

Best,
Jojo Sanders

To whom it may concern,

I am a resident of Sebastopol and a recent college graduate.

I want to begin by saying that police reform— nation-wide and locally— is not enough. We must dismantle the very system of policing, which has supported white power and supremacy for hundreds of years. Early forms of police were slave patrols, which served to prevent riots of enslaved people and capture runaways, and worked to directly maintain the racist policies of slavery.

I am calling for the City Council to decrease the funding and responsibilities of the Sebastopol Police EVERY YEAR.

The funding for police must be allocated to social services that will uplift and support the community, PARTICULARLY Black residents and people of color.

This being said, I believe some of the suggestions on today's agenda are a step in the right direction.

I support local nonprofits responding to mental health calls, substance abuse and addiction calls, homelessness calls and calls about domestic violence. Decriminalizing mental health, substance abuse and homelessness is key. Responders to these calls should be unarmed and NOT affiliated with the police.

I support a review of Sebastopol Police practices, training, crime statistics, expenditures and compliance with existing policies for full transparency for the public. I also urge the City Council to take the lead to decrease both the responsibilities and funding of the Sebastopol Police because, again, policy reform and review is NOT the answer to ending police violence.

I support community roundtable conversations and workshops. I also urge the City Council to equally consider any emails, letters and phone calls from residents to

include as many community members in the conversation as possible.

I want to reiterate my point that review and reform will not end police brutality against Black Americans and people of color. The City Council must work to actively dismantle the Sebastopol Police Department if they intend to support Black residents of Sebastopol and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Thank you for your time!

From: [Paris S](#)
To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Subject: Comment to Agenda Item #1 Special Meeting 06.23.20
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 9:01:54 AM

Dear Council Members,

I am a proud new property owner in Sebastopol. When I learned that the budget for the police department is \$4.3 Million and 45% of the overall budget for a city with only ~7800 residents I was curious to learn more. I noticed the agenda mentioned a future “assessment of police expenditures”, and I would like to request the publication of an itemized police department budget. It would be helpful to know how much of the budget is allocated to things like weapons, victims resources, vehicles, training and education of officers, pensions, and settlements. This would be a great topic for town halls, and the transparency will assist taxpayers in making recommendations for how the budget can be balanced to best serve the needs of the community.

My vision for Sebastopol is an actively antiracist community that intentionally addresses and dismantles inequities, and creates policies and practices to support the health, education, culture, safety, and happiness of all residents. I look forward to working with you to make this vision a reality.

Thank you,
Paris Strachan, Esq.

--

