



# Sebastopol City Council Policing Review Process

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# Introduction & Background

## ▶ Jerry Threet

- ▶ Founding Director of IOLERO, Civilian Oversight of County Sheriff (2016-2019)
  - ▶ Reviewed internal investigations, policies, training, systems, providing critical feedback loop
- ▶ Taught community policing for Academy in Windsor - invite of Jeff Weaver
- ▶ SF Deputy City Attorney (2005-2016) – worked closely with SFPD and diverse community members in Tenderloin District of SF
- ▶ Contract Attorney w/ N. Cal. District U.S. Attorney Robert Mueller (1997-1999)
- ▶ Criminal & Civil Trial Attorney, U.S. DOJ (1987-1991)
- ▶ Briefing Attorney w/ Presiding Judge, Texas Court Criminal Appeals (1988)
- ▶ Legislative experience in Texas State Senate and SF Board of Supervisors
- ▶ Community organizing & advocacy experience and training in various contexts

# Overview

- ▶ **REQUEST**: *help frame the issues before the council, including possible options, in order to facilitate a productive discussion*
- ▶ **KEY QUESTION**: Are the **values** of the Sebastopol community reflected in the **policies, practices, procedures, & training** of its Police Department?
- ▶ What are the **values of the Sebastopol community** with regard to policing in our town? How do we find out?

# Overview

- ▶ What do the current policies, practices, procedures, & training of the Sebastopol Police Department **look like**?  
How do we find out?
- ▶ Should the Police Department be transformed to better reflect Sebastopol community values? If so, how?
- ▶ What processes can be used to **gather information** in these areas?

# Preliminary considerations

- ▶ This is just a **first attempt** to frame these issues and should not be considered in any way as final
- ▶ The information in this presentation will need to be **refined** by input from both council & community
- ▶ **Collaboration** with the public & SPD is the key to success
- ▶ **Equity**: should voices historically excluded be given special consideration in this process?
- ▶ This is a **unique moment** where there may be the will to creatively reimagine the status quo.

# Sebastopol Community Values

- ▶ **KEY QUESTION: What are our communities' values with regard to policing?**
- ▶ What sources of documented community values currently exist in City government?
  - ▶ Proclamations, declarations, etc.
  - ▶ Statements by local community groups
- ▶ Are there other sources for such values?
  - ▶ President's Report on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing, e.g.

# Sebastopol Community Values

- ▶ What processes for documenting our community values for policing should be used here?
  - ▶ Community listening sessions
  - ▶ Community roundtables
  - ▶ Targeted focus groups
  - ▶ Language, cultural & other accessibility issues
- ▶ Should there be an institutional process for periodic input from the public on these issues?

# Sebastopol Police Department

- ▶ **KEY QUESTION**: What does SPD really look like, upon examination?

- ▶ Not general public perception, but informed view with information
- ▶ How do we find out?

- ▶ **Public perceptions**

- ▶ Customer Service Surveys
- ▶ Polling instruments
- ▶ Focus groups, roundtables



# Sebastopol Police Department

- ▶ **Independent, Professional Objective PD Review**
- ▶ Provide objective look at current status of police department
- ▶ Review existing policies, practices, procedures, and training
- ▶ Compare existing to “best practices” and to community desires/values
- ▶ **Consult:** community, rank & file officers (past & present), officer union, agency management (past & present), sister agencies, City officials, non-profit service partners, plaintiffs’ attorneys
- ▶ Compile & review SPD data
- ▶ **Public report**

# Sebastopol Police Department

## Review Scoping Issues

- ▶ Confidential v. public information
  - ▶ POBR restricts public access to personal details of most investigation
  - ▶ Conclusions regarding functioning of accountability system can be public
- ▶ Department Policies & Training – which ones?
  - Use of Force
  - Bias in policing
  - Whistleblowers
  - Conflicts of interest
  - Immigrants
  - Homelessness
  - Youth

# Sebastopol Police Department

## Review Scoping Issues

- ▶ Relationships between management and rank & file
- ▶ Procedural Justice: internal & external
- ▶ Transparency: Data collection and reporting issues
  - ▶ Use of Force
  - ▶ Stops
  - ▶ Early warning system
- ▶ Transparency: BWC video releases; SB 1421 records; etc.

# Sebastopol Police Department

## Review Scoping Issues

- ▶ Accountability systems: fairness, completeness, timeliness
  - ▶ UOF investigations
  - ▶ Investigations re dishonesty
  - ▶ Conflict of interest issues
- ▶ Community policing/ community relationship building
  - ▶ Community meetings
  - ▶ Community volunteering
  - ▶ Including community in agency processes – hiring, training, promotions, policies

# Community Policing in Sebastopol

## **Civilian Oversight Function?**

- ▶ Ongoing civilian review of functioning and progress
- ▶ Transparency to public through reporting
- ▶ Independent, objective review of department
- ▶ Process for community input into policing
- ▶ Institutionalized, positive, dynamic feedback loop
- ▶ Considered best practice by many experts
- ▶ Increasingly common across the country

# Community Policing in Sebastopol

## **CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT MODELS**

- ▶ Independent Investigation (SF Office Police Accountability);
- ▶ Community Review Boards (Berkeley; Richmond);
- ▶ Professional Auditor (San Jose; *Sonoma County*);
- ▶ Disciplinary Commission (Oakland)
- ▶ HYBRID (BART Independent Auditor + Citizen Board)

# Community Policing in Sebastopol

## **CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE OVERSIGHT**

- ▶ Independence
- ▶ Adequate budget and staff
- ▶ Unfettered access to information
- ▶ Unfettered access to staff

# Community Policing in Sebastopol

## **CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE OVERSIGHT**

- ▶ Adequate legal authority
- ▶ Ability to review & suggest changes to policy
- ▶ Effective community engagement
- ▶ Robust transparency



# Community Policing in Sebastopol

## **LIMITATIONS OF CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT**

- ▶ Agency Leader Choice More important
  - ▶ Sets the tone for the organization
- ▶ Agency culture more important
  - ▶ Culture eats policy, training – flows from vets to new officers

# Community Policing in Sebastopol

## **LIMITATIONS OF CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT**

- ▶ Agency community engagement more important
  - ▶ Without community support, oversight withers
- ▶ Oversight is still necessary & a best practice, providing a crucial tool for public feedback and transparency

# Sebastopol Policing in the Future?

## **REIMAGINING POLICING?**

- ▶ More focused mission?
- ▶ Shifting resources to other service delivery models?
- ▶ Civilian leadership of law enforcement?
- ▶ “Department of Peace”? (“Peace Officers”)
- ▶ Civilian Leadership of Agency?
- ▶ Restorative Justice training and programs?
- ▶ Community partnerships?

# PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

- ▶ Town halls
- ▶ Focus groups
- ▶ Roundtables
- ▶ Listening sessions

# PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

- ▶ Survey instruments
- ▶ Suggestion boxes online
- ▶ Compiling and organizing input
- ▶ Translation
- ▶ Equity



THANK YOU

▶ QUESTIONS?

▶ DISCUSSION?