



Minutes
Committee on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
Wednesday, October 28, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88029306396>; ID: 880 2930 6396; Dial In: (301) 715-8592

Held virtually in an effort to protect the health and safety of the public & to mitigate the spread of COVID 19

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Spitzley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT via audio/video

Council Member Spitzley, Chair remotely from Lansing, Michigan

Council Member Dunbar, Vice-Chair remotely from Lansing, Michigan

Council Member Spadafore, Member remotely from Lansing, Michigan

OTHERS PRESENT via audio/video

Sherrie Boak, Council Staff

Jim Smiertka, City Attorney

Council Member Betz

Lisa Hagen, OCA- left the meeting early

Kyle (no last name given)

Alexander Woods

Caller from Open Spot Theatre

Angela Waters Austin

Melina Brann

Tobias (no last name given)

Erica Lynn

Michael Lynn

Sarah Williams

Sadie (no last name given)

Lynn Lammers

Garrett (no last name given)

Ash (no last name given)

Fonda Brewer

MINUTES

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 23, 2020 AS PRESENTED. ROLL CALL VOTE, MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

DISCUSSION

RESOLUTION – Invest in the People of Lansing

Council Member Spitzley noted the work from the last meeting, and suggested going over the changes from that meeting in Draft 2. Regarding page 1 of the resolution, the consensus of the Committee was in agreement on the changes.

Mr. Smiertka went through the changes.

The Committee discussed 1.a. line 8 beginning with “the exact allocation of funds made available through a police budget reduction of 50% over a five-year period.” Council Member Spitzley noted it was not addressed at the last meeting in the review of the document because Council Member Dunbar was not present, but at this time she would suggest removing that language all together because it appears to be premature without having established the sub-committee the rest of the resolution speaks to, or hearing their goals and recommendations. Council Member Spitzley passed the gavel to Council Member Dunbar (Vice Chairperson) and made a motion to remove that line.

Council Member Dunbar began a discussion in a reduction of the police force. She also noted that the sub-committee will have not authority on where to cut the budget, just recommend a goal or percentage to this Committee. Council Member Dunbar did not support taking out anything that speaks to the percentage in a reduction. Council Member Spitzley concurred with her that the sub-committee might not know where to cut the budget, but the resolution speaks to the sub-committee charge in setting the goals and recommendations to Council on how. Council Member Spadafore added to the conversation that the Committee cannot ask citizens “how to make decision” but the Committee will need to “tell them to advise the Committee on what is going to be the best way to utilize the resources of the City”. At that point, he noted then City Council will determine the dollars and cents. Council Member Spadafore concluded his statement by agreeing that they need to hear from the sub-committee on all the priorities, then Council can determine the budget. Council Member Spitzley noted for the Committee and the public that the sub-committee will have a Council Member(s) on it as well and they will be able to provide details on the budget and the budget process to the citizens on the sub-committee. Again, she noted the sub-committee makes the recommendation, and Council has the task to implement. She briefly spoke on what Austin, Texas is doing with mental health first responders. It appears, she noted that they are increasing their budget, but they are diverting the funds to the mental health services. Council Member Dunbar reiterated what she has heard from people on a call for action, noting she was not sure if it needed to be 50%, but she supported something in the language of this resolution.

Council Member Betz stated to the Committee that when he wrote this draft resolution his intention was for a goal and a target. He intended for the Committee to put the framework, and the sub-committee would find if the 50% of the cost is feasible.

Council Member Spadafore did not support the number in the resolution, but considered reducing a percentage of the budget in the allocation to the police department. This would overall reprioritize how the funds are spent; reducing the percentage of the budget allocated to policing.

Mr. Smiertka suggested replacing the sentence in the discussion with:

Make a recommendation on the reallocation and redirection of the categories and items of expenditures within the appropriated funds of the LPD budget to support recommended changes and updates to policies.

Council Member Spitzley acknowledged her support of the statement, but had a concern with a “blanket” number. Mr. Smiertka explained that after the sub-committee recommendations the Committee could review the budget to address those recommendations. Council Member Dunbar stated her concern with not having percentage, and potentially there could be layoffs.

Council Member Betz stated again his request for a percentage in the resolution, where there is a majority of Council comfortable with the number and making sure the resolution is operational. Council Member Spitzley stated she would prefer to work together to find those recommendations that work for everyone. The Council has to be proactive in working with

administration and implement the goals and recommendations. Council Member Betz again asked that the resolution state “50%”. Council Member Spadafore asked Council Member Dunbar what she meant in her earlier statement of layoffs and how she thought they would reach 50% without layoffs. Council Member Dunbar replied that if they reduce it by 10% of the operational budget, and there are officers that retire every year. She noted she understood Council would have a hard time with layoffs, so she suggested they look at how to reduce officers, possibly if they retire, not to rehire those positions. Council Member Spadafore stated he was not comfortable with that and did not want to see layoffs. He continued that he would like to see the “wish list” from the sub-committee. There could be the option of reducing the percentage of the budget to actual policing, but more funds to the other resources. He concurred with earlier statements that he was not comfortable with setting a pre-determined set of dollars. Council Member Spitzley supported everything else in the resolution, but not the actual percentage proposed in the original draft.

Council Member Spadafore proposed the following language instead of the language provided by Mr. Smiertka:

Significantly reduce the percentage of the City of Lansing Budget allocated to policing

The language would replace “the exact allocation of funds made available through a police budget reduction of 50% over a five-year period.” in 2. a on page 2, and “a 50% reduction in the police budget over a 5-year period” in 3.b. on page 2.

Council Member Dunbar asked to hear from the public before any action was taken.

Council Member Spitzley withdrew her motion.

Public Comments/Listening Session at 7:01p.m.

Limited to 3 minutes; sign up to speak at public comment will end 15 minutes after the first speaker starts.

Kyle spoke in support of 50% reduction.

Alexander Woods spoke in support of up to a 50% reduction.

“Open Spot Theatre” spoke in support of stopping allocating funds to the LPD and taking those funds to a community run organization. The request was also to remove any LPD from the schools.

Ms. Waters Austin spoke in support of reducing funds and putting funds into the community.

Ms. Brann spoke in support of listing a percentage as a parameter.

Council Member Spitzley briefly reminded the public that the Committee was trying to create a policy and a benefit for Lansing. The Committee is focusing on language and trying to address what everyone wants and what will work. The discussion is not political and about any re-elections.

Tobias spoke in support of having exact figures in the resolution and a reduction for the LPD.

Ms. Lynn asked the Committee to consider a number that will be comfortable for all the Committee members and set a parameter for the sub-committee.

Ms. Williams acknowledged the committee, and ask them to consider on how to reimagine.

Sadie spoke in support of a reduction in the police budget, and supported statements by Ms. Waters Austin.

Ms. Lammers spoke on the systems she believes were broken and asked the Council to eliminate all militarized equipment. Ms. Lammers concluded with her support of laying off police.

Garrett supported exact percentages and numbers in the resolution for reduction in the budget, and asked for goals to be set.

Ash spoke in support of fewer officers and a reduction in the LPD budget.

Mr. Lynn asked them to consider not filling positions when LPD officers retire, and also asked the Council to listen to people who are oppressed.

Ms. Brewer asked the Committee to consider their decisions as a person that is black or brown, to be uncomfortable and be bold to answer what they are doing to the community.

Council Member Spitzley acknowledged the emails and phone calls that were received before the meeting, and Council Member Dunbar noted emails that came in during the meeting. Ms. Boak stated the emails would be part of the minutes.

DISCUSSION continued

Council Member Dunbar asked if the Committee would consider changing the language from 50% to reducing a percentage of the LPD budget with the goal in the first year to be under 30%. She then proposed attaching an actual number to it since Council believes the LPD budget is 32% of the overall budget, and therefore they can reduce it from there. Council Member Spadafore noted for the conversation that the percentage proposed needs to be something a majority of Council could support.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORE TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENTS AS DISCUSSED FOR PAGE 2 1.a. 3.b.

Council Member Dunbar stated she is looking for an exact number when the subcommittee sends recommendations come back. Council Member Spadafore acknowledged he would be committed to taking recommendations seriously. Council Member Spitzley stated she does not support hard and fast goals that she does not think Council can meet. To her 50% did not sound like it could realistically happen without effecting programs that are helping or incorporating layoffs.

ROLL CALL VOTE, MOTION ON THE AMENDMENTS PASSED 3-0.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORE TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AS AMENDED. ROLL CALL VOTE, MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Council Member Spitzley briefly spoke on the incidents in the LPD holding cell in April, that was recently brought to light in the media, and sent her sympathies to the family.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Submitted by, Sherrie Boak

Recording Secretary, Lansing City Council

