



Association of Black Citizens of Lexington

Sean D. Osborne
President
Jonathan Suber
Vice President
Louis Colon
Secretary

July 26, 2020

Lexington Select Board
Town Office Building
2nd Floor
1625 Massachusetts Avenue
Lexington, MA 02420

Re: Police Reform in the Town of Lexington, MA

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Board of Association of Black Citizens of Lexington (ABCL), I am writing to thank those members of the Lexington Select Board, the Lexington Town Manager, and the Lexington Police Chief who attended the ABCL's June 25, 2020 Zoom meeting to listen to our members' concerns and who then followed up by providing a written response dated July 10, 2020 to ABCL's members' questions regarding racial equity and justice as it relates to policing in Lexington. After reviewing your written responses to ABCL's questions and careful review of best practices that have been effectively implemented in other communities throughout the U.S., ABCL hereby formally requests that the Town Manager, subject to the approval of the Select Board, in accordance with Section 2(e) of Chapter 753 of the Chapter of Special Acts of 1968, appoint, fully fund and staff an independent **Office of Civilian Complaints (OCC)** with resources and authority to investigate all civilian complaints of Lexington police misconduct and make discipline and policy recommendations to the Select Board and Town Manager. Additionally, ABCL respectfully requests that, in accordance with Section 2(b) of Chapter 753 of the Chapter of Special Acts of 1968, the Select Board appoint a **Civilian Police Committee** to oversee the OCC, Lexington Town Manager and the Lexington Police Department with the authority to set department policy, annual training requirements, terminate the Police Chief and impose discipline on officers. The Civilian Police Committee would replace the Police Manual Policy Committee and have expanded duties more fully described below.

The **Civilian Police Committee** would:

- Determine and set annual outcomes measures for the police department to ensure that the Lexington Police Department culture, policies, practices and procedures are and remain bias free and promote racial equality and justice.
- Oversee the selection and administration of annual law enforcement training; ensure that the number of hours of training for anti-bias training, developmentally appropriate and age-appropriate de-escalation and disengagement tactics training,

- effective crisis intervention, behavioral health training, and other types of training are increased to the same number of hours of training on topics such as use of force.
- Oversee the process for determining the annual budget and requirements for obtaining, training and implementing police body cameras and in-vehicle dashboard cameras; and the related personnel requirements and procedures for storing, cataloguing and responding to FOIA requests related to police camera footage.
 - Decide policy and training for the police department.
 - Evaluate performance and conduct disciplinary actions up to and including termination of police officers and the Police Chief, if needed.
 - Hold public disciplinary hearings.
 - Interview and select the candidates for Police Chief, to be hired by the Town Manager.
 - Receive full-time, competitive salaries for all members.
 - Receive regular training on policing and civil rights.
 - Not have current or former Lexington police officers, nor their family members, as members.
 - Have its members selected from candidates offered by community organizations.

The **Office of Civilian Complaints** would:

- Receive, investigate and resolve all civilian complaints against police within 120 days.
- Establish multiple in-person and online ways to submit, view and discuss complaints.
- Be immediately notified and required to send an investigator to the scene of an officer-involved shooting or in-custody death.
- Access crime scenes, subpoena witnesses and files with penalties for non-compliance.
- Make disciplinary and policy recommendations to the Police Chief.
- Compel the Police Chief to explain why he/she has not followed a recommendation.
- Have the Police Commission decide cases where the Police Chief does not follow recommendations.
- Issue public quarterly reports analyzing complaints, demographics of complainants, status and findings of investigations and actions taken as a result.
- Be housed in a separate location from the police department.
- Be funded at an amount no less than 5% of the total police department budget.
- Have at least 2 investigators at all times.
- Have its Director selected from candidates offered by diverse community organizations.
- Not have current, former or family of police officers on staff, including the Director.

ABCL is making these proposals with the aim to give the residents of Lexington a greater level of oversight over the Town Manager, the Police Chief and the individual police officers, and the broader policies and practices of the Lexington Police Department to ensure a more equitable, racially just and unbiased system of policing in the Town of Lexington.

ABCL is looking forward to continuing to work with the Select Board, Town Manager, Police Chief, and other members of the Lexington community to expediently implement real reform and change within our community at large and specifically within the Lexington Police Department.

Please email me at admin@abcl.org with any questions related to these recommendations.

Sincerely,

Robin A. Walker

Robin A. Walker
Co-Chair, ABCL Police Reform Task Force