

FIFTY POINTS, PART II: GOALS AS YET UNMET

(Listed numerically by Point number):

1. Review SSPD culture and consider engaging an external consultant and/or guided mediation to address current issues of contention between the community and the Department.

The leadership of SSPD has undergone a sea change since the previous City Council's acceptance of the 50 Points: former Assistant Chief Catone retired in early 2022; former Assistant Chief Jillson retired in 2023; Lieutenants Emanatian and Briscoe retired in 2022; and Chief Crooks is scheduled to retire June 30, 2023. The current and future Command Staff of SSPD, with the sole exception of Lieutenant Mitchell, consists of a new generation of leaders: Tyler McIntosh, who will succeed Shane Crooks as Chief, was promoted to Lieutenant in 2022; Lieutenant Warfield was promoted in 2022; Lieutenant McGovern was promoted in 2023. With the change in leadership comes a change in culture, with a greater emphasis on community engagement; with de-escalation of volatile situations a priority; and with a far greater sensitivity to the challenges our City faces due to a rise in homelessness and a lack of adequate services for the chronically mentally ill.

As to the question of guided mediation, it must be noted that this was attempted by the previous City Council shortly after its acceptance of the 50 Points. \$30,000.00 was appropriated for private mediation, but the Council's offer was rejected.

2. Create a comprehensive Community Centered Justice Initiative (CCJI) strategic plan.

This goal remains unmet. Achieving this goal would require, as an initial matter, reaching consensus on a definition of "Community Centered Justice." It would also require identifying potential stakeholders (e.g., residents, business and property owners, religious leaders, school officials). It would require the creation of a mechanism whereby these stakeholders can meet and decide on what a CCJI plan for Saratoga Springs should look like.

3. Develop a plan to train and implement procedural and restorative justice principles.

While this goal is currently unmet, it is anticipated that the Restorative Justice Task Force will be addressing this point.

4. Incorporate Community Centered Justice Initiative (CCJI) in department assessment and individual performance evaluation.

In December 2021, the previous City Council authorized former Mayor Kelly to sign a long-term Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the Police Benevolent Association (PBA). The CBA binds the City through the end of 2025. That CBA, while it contains specific terms regarding performance evaluations and other review processes, is silent on CCJI. Any modification in the

method of evaluating the performance of the members of SSPD would therefore require a mutual agreement to amend the terms of the existing CBA.

13. Implement processes for officers in leadership roles [to] be trained on restorative justice practices. Those officers can then impart the ideologies and mind-set needed to the rest of the department.

This goal is unmet. What “restorative justice practices” can be practiced by police officers is unspecified. Moreover, what “ideologies” and “mind-set” need to be imparted are not defined.

34. Evaluate and develop a collaborative pilot program – where social workers work with, not for law enforcement agencies – in crisis response systems, social workers can share in coordinating deflection and diversion programs.

This goal is unmet. Such a program, which would involve the hiring, training, equipping and managing of a team of social workers employed by the City for “crisis response systems,” would require the expenditure of significant sums of money (likely ranging into the multiple millions of dollars) and would straddle multiple City departments. The Civil Service Commission would need to create a job description for “crisis response social worker;” the Human Resources Department would need to engage in an outreach program to find, interview and select qualified applicants; office space, vehicles, support staff, IT and record-keeping resources would need to be provided; and policies and procedures would need to be written and implemented before such a program could even begin.

Yet the fundamental question that must first be answered is whether sending social workers as part of a “crisis response system” would be a benefit to the City or to the people it serves. Take as an example the recent attack on Paul Pelosi, husband of Nancy Pelosi, the former Speaker of the House of Representatives. Mr. Pelosi was attacked in his home by a dangerously mentally ill individual armed with a hammer. Mr. Pelosi is alive today thanks to the immediate intervention of the police officers who were dispatched to his home in response to his 911 call. Had “crisis response social workers” been sent there instead, there would be little doubt that Mr. Pelosi would have been killed while the social workers watched.

35. Invest municipal funds to cover the costs of innovative biopsychosocial services that mitigate police involvement and encounters and allow for greater involvement of behavioral health and crisis intervention professionals as first responders.

This is basically a restatement, in different language, of Point 34.

36. Evaluate and develop a community-based pre-arrest diversion pilot program – such as the CAHOOTS program – that reduces unnecessary and potentially dangerous police encounters with unhoused and seriously mentally ill individuals.

As with Point 34 and Point 35, this is a recommendation for the creation of a stand-alone program of first responders to calls involving “unhoused and seriously mentally ill individuals.” Aside from the enormous financial cost of creating, staffing, equipping and administering such a program, the ultimate question of whether it would provide any benefit should first be addressed. The original CAHOOTS program was created in Eugene, Oregon in 1969. Eugene is a city with six times the population of Saratoga Springs. Nonetheless, its CAHOOTS program, originally designed as a stand-alone program, is now administered by the city’s police department. The CAHOOTS program workers in Eugene are not social workers. They are poorly paid (\$18.00 per hour) city employees who drive out in teams of two to non-emergency calls and provide referrals and transportation to city services.

At present, SSPD patrol officers are equipped with information on social services available to City residents. In exceptional circumstances, they will provide transportation to individuals in need. What benefit, if any, a stand-alone program would provide for our small city could hardly justify the enormous expenditure of resources required to create a CAHOOTS-style program.

37. Invest in local programs that address the food security and housing security needs of people living in precarity.

This goal is actively being pursued at this time and remains a work in progress, with much remaining to be done.

41. Evaluate and implement an education pilot program that teaches SSPD officers the fraught history of policing in America and in Saratoga Springs, with an emphasis on the impact policing has had on diverse communities.

This Point will be a priority for the incoming Chief and the Command Staff, to be implemented within days of the swearing-in of Chief McIntosh.

44. Creating an on-going method to review and use data: creation of key metrics dashboard.

This Point, along with others related to IT and data collection, will be discussed with the Commissioner of Finance, who is in charge of IT as well as City budgeting.

45. Transparency: Create a Forum for Public Collaboration that includes youth.

This Point will be a priority for the incoming Chief and the Command Staff, to be implemented within days of the swearing-in of Chief McIntosh.

46. Department Resources: Seek additional resources, when available, to staff a database manager within the Department.

This Point has been actively discussed with the Commissioner of Finance, who is in charge of IT. At present, SSPD resources are strained in the area of data collection, retention and management.

48. Create a stand-alone “Data Analytics and Transparency” Policy. Reference this policy in other SSPD policies.

Implementation of this Point will parallel that of Points 44 and 46.