

**VILLAGE OF RED HOOK WORKSHOP MEETING
VIA RING CENTRAL
February 18, 2021**

Present: Mayor Ed Blundell, Deputy Mayor Bent Kovalchik, Trustee Jennifer Norris, Trustee Charlie Laing, Trustee William Noonan and Village Clerk Lara Hart.

Mayor Blundell opened the February 18, 2021 Village Board Workshop Meeting via ring central at 7:05 pm with a quorum.

Mayor Blundell did a Roll Call for attendance.

Mayor Blundell – yes

Deputy Mayor Kovalchik – yes

Trustee Norris – yes

Trustee Noonan – yes

Trustee Laing – yes

Mayor Blundell stated the Village Board Workshop Meeting is held in compliance with Open Meetings Law per Executive Order 202.1 and 202.72.

Mayor Blundell said tonight's meeting is a continuation of the Public Hearing from February 8, 2021.

Mayor Blundell said we have a co-host tonight to help with people who wish to speak and went over rules for public hearings.

Mayor Blundell said since February 8, 2021 the Board has taken in public comment received via email and all comments will be taken into consideration and part of record and have been circulated to all Board members.

Mayor Blundell said we are in Workshop format being a little less formal.

Mayor Blundell said the during the Public Hearing Public/Comment session the Board will listen and take input from the public.

Co-host Christopher Donohue explained the "participant" button for raising hand to speak.

CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC HEARING:

#1. LAUREN CHERRY. Village resident.

Ms. Cherry sent an email to the Board dated February 18, 2021 at 10:46am. Ms. Cherry read her email aloud. Copy of comment on record with Village Clerk.

#2. BAILEY WILLIAMS. 20 Elizabeth Street, Red Hook

Ms. Williams quoting from the "Plan" that all of us have a duty to protect and prevent this during this special moment of time this year. This moment is an opportunity to show clearly, strongly and publicly Red Hook's dedication to a Community that is safe, welcoming, accessible of all who enter our little Village. It is crucial that we do not shy away from the important work that still lays before us and we

cannot do only what has been required of us but make a Plan that fully represents our goals, visions and commitments in pursuit of a fair and equitable society. She asks the Board tonight does this “Plan” show that vision and representative of our goal; she recognizes the time and effort of all involved in the creation of this Plan and it is with full respect in the value of those efforts that she asks:

1. Is this the very best that we can do.
2. Are we fully satisfied with the “Plan” as it stands now, or is there room for improvements, proactive additions and changes that require little to no extra money from the budget and only pens and paper and fingers to keep working. She sees good intention and positive steps but she also sees missed opportunities and in the section of Transparency and Accountability it does not state what reports will be made available to the general public and how that information can be accessed; body cameras are promised but without clear outlining of procedures surrounding the camera or captured footage; she asks that the “Plan” include clear it era of when the officers will activate use of camera, who have access to the video and how often the footage is reviewed.
3. In regard to the inclusion of the Role of the Dutchess County Human Rights has to the “Plan” it is imperative that the purpose and role of the Commission is not misrepresented. The Commission is not currently empowered as an investigative body. There is no existing formalized and clearly communicative process for civilian to make a complaint about the police and that is not acceptable. A lack of formal complaints in the system that is not set up to fluently allow them is not a grabbing point and could be an indication of a serious issue of acceptability and if this an oversight this is time to fix it- now.
4. Recommends that the role of a voluntary advisory board be expanded with the power to receive, investigate and address police complaints. In regards to setting up theses process she offers these 2 recommendations from human rights watch on developing independent accountability and oversight mechanisms.
 - a. Establish an independent community oversight body with full access to police records subpoena power, authority to investigate investigations and the power to discipline officers and command staff.
 - b. Collect data on these activities segregated by race, gender, city, sexual orientation and other relevant markers and make that public.

This as part of the “Plan” will make sure that Red Hook is the Community it claims to be an have opportunity for change and positive growth and trust. She asks the Board is this Plan our best effort and show our commitments, our values and our goals. The moment and time is here and will we make the most of it.

#3. JILL LUNDQUIST. Barrytown Resident/Tivoli Resident

Ms. Lundquist said Rhinebeck is working on this project and offered to join with Red Hook and this request was turned down by Red Hook. Feels this was an opportunity loss and suggests this request be reconsidered. She understands that Ulster County has quite a good, not perfect, but a good proposed plan and suggests looking at that to see if there is anything useful that we may want to implement in Red Hook as well.

#4. SARAH IMBODIEN. Tivoli/ Town of Red Hook

Appreciates the opportunity to communicate as a Town of Red Hook resident. She knows the Board cares a lot about Red Hook and this take time and energy and thanked for engaging in it because she thinks when doing these Mandates from the State it is easy to see it is a box checking exercise and doesn't feel meaningful toward local contacts and thanked for engaging in the way you have and that you have tried to engage the public, and during this pandemic that has been very challenging. Two things that stood out when reading the report:

1. What Stakeholders did the Village engage under this review and recommends you add that to the report.
2. Add to report a plan for future stakeholder engagement

In general it feels a little defensive to her and understands how that can be when invested a lot of time and our police officers are committed to Red Hook and a sense of close ranks but would really invite to see this as an opportunity to be curious about how the Community feels about its placing and what needs are being met and not met, and don't now see that in this report. It is impossible to have all the best ideas in this tiny period and Red Hook Police has to serve for this Community for generations, so there is a way in the report to point to the way moving forward that you will continue to think about this and not think of Police Reform as a tiny onetime thing and you are committed to going forward and thinking actively and continue educating yourself and the public about interaction with the public and that we are all in this together and feel if we can communicate this the Community will be behind us.

#5. DR. KAHAN SABLO

Thanked all for opportunity to speak this evening and appreciates all of the work done to get us to this point and said he had some things to mention:

1. Still an obligation to consult with members of the Community about their experience and an essential part of transparency and don't know if that has fully occurred;
2. Sent dialog from a Bard forum (140-150 responses)
3. Not be complacent if there are complaints and there are very legitimate reasons why people do not make complaints to police officers and it may not have anything to do with a specific officer but complaints are real and Red Hook is part of a National dialog and we have to be sensitive.
4. Hope this is a beginning and not an end and that there are continued meetings because there is more work to be done.
5. Would like to remain engaged in this work.

#6. SAVANAH WILLIAMS. 47 W. Market Street, Red Hook.

Echo Dr. Sablo's comments about communication being open and when complaints are not necessarily officially filed that they are treated with respect and wants moving forward to be able to create an environment where people who share their experiences are listened to and treated with empathy and respect. Ms. Williams said a couple of weeks ago when she shared her experience it was not received very well and she knows it was very hard for her to speak up and she is a person of privilege being white and a woman, and wants going forward, like with the Bard survey and when results are read and studied she wants all of the comments to be taken with empathy and respect.

7:33pm. Mayor Blundell thanked all who gave their time.

#7. ERIN CANNON – 20 Starbarrack Road, Town of Red Hook and parent of 2 Red Hook children.

Wanted to go on the record that much of this is about the process and evolution of the kinds of the conversations that we can start to have as a Community and that this could be a model of a practice of a way we can continue to be as a Community across sectors from education, to non-profits to colleges to businesses that really examine and connect around difficult issues in our Community and that this is an opportunity that is unique to the Village of Red Hook as this Municipality falls under the mandate and that we could use this as an example on how to engage a Community. Take this is a learning experience and education is the industry of Red Hook, and as a Bard College Admin. has had many difficult conversations over the years and she knows what it can feel like, and that this would be a missed opportunity if we don't take full advantage on how we might take this into a practice rather than just a moment. Encourages all to continue this practice and take in account that things are evolving and there are different expectations and be need to be responsive to that.

Mayor Blundell advised that the Board has too continued with their Agenda and that the public hearing was opened with a 10 day window. Mayor Blundell asked the Board for any comment but advised that the Board will continue the public hearing.

Mayor Blundell made a motion to close the Public Hearing.

Trustee Laing asked for the timeline for formal adoption of the "Plan". Mayor Blundell said the date to be submitted to NYS is April 1, 2021 and as it falls on our calendar we will end public comment tonight with next formal Village Board meeting being March 8th and the State has a "Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan Certification Form" which he envisions being prepared and to pass a Resolution adopting the Certification Form and the "Plan" that we have been working on. Mayor Blundell said they do not envision this as April 1 being over – most of the work will begin in our world and this is not an endgame but a beginning game.

Trustee Laing asked as far as public comment goes, if we close the public hearing, people can still submit, and what happens as far as seeing the Bard survey. Mayor Blundell said we need to finalize our "Plan", which means we end comment tonight and pull what we have and what we have heard but no formal public comment will continue. Trustee Laing said he understands, but there are other responses that could be helpful and thinks continued response to that survey would be very useful to the review committee or this entity that we need to help bridge that gap between the residents and the police department and Village Board. Mayor Blundell said Dr. Sablo said there were 196 responses so far and we want to see it but this Board has had their own community forums and we have had input from other sources and that will not be the only source we are guided by and in the end the Village Board monitors and manages the Police Department and we will be writing the "Plan".

#8. JIM ROGERS. 5 Fisk Street, Red Hook.

Mr. Rogers said he attended a few meetings and it's the lack of dialog piece that interests him and wonders what areas Board members think of all of this. He said he felt he has no clue whether various Board members feel we need this kind of reform discussed, we don't need it, if they disagree; is people are factually accurate, and if questions raised are valid and in the public hearing part it is only listening and has a curiosity as to after the dialog and if we want to keep working together if this is actually happening. Perhaps there is a way to actually dialog back and forth during these sessions with the public so the work actually (lost audio @7:48pm)

Mayor Blundell lost connection. Secretary Hart wrote on page meeting page technical difficulty – stand by). Mayor Blundell back in connection @7:52pm.

Mayor Blundell said with regard to Mr. Rogers the main component of the public comment is listening and the whole collaborative plan has been with the stakeholders and different groups.

#9. DAVID MARKUSEN.

Enjoyed this process and appreciates all the effort put in this and like the responses that he saw on the Bard survey and wondering if just in the interest in getting as much information from the public as possible, if we could put forth a survey like this for the entire community of Red Hook, and this would be a good way of really getting some insight in this stuff we do not hear about and what people want to hear.

Mayor Blundell made a motion to close public hearing for the Police Reform Project at 7:55pm.

Motion seconded by Deputy Mayor Kovalchik.

ROLL CALL:

Blundell – yes

Kovalchik –yes

Laing – yes

Norris – yes

Noonan – yes

All in favor. Motion approved.

Mayor Blundell said there would be no executive session.

Mayor Blundell asked the Board for comment. No comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Melkorka Kjarval asked about the recent story news about the Audit and the website and if there was a plan for that. Mayor Blundell said this was an IT (internet technology) issue and there were serious problems with the Auditor with serious significant issues with their employee and that it has taken them now three years to generate their report and the good news is what they criticized was the way we handled IT internally and that we used outside contractors and we have since changed who we use, upgraded, which had tripled the cost, and that employees had access to the website and the Mayor felt employees can have access to the web and we operate efficiently because we have the world wide web and we made changes years ago and this is not new news. Mayor Blundell said the Village responded. Melkorka Kjarval asked where this response could be found. Mayor Blundell said it is located at the Comptroller's website.

Mayor Blundell said at the next meeting the Board will discuss the budget and we are right around the tax cap and that they did put more money in for police training.

Mayor Blundell advised sewer bids will be opened on February 26th at 2pm. Details on work involved and bids were discussed.

**Deputy Mayor Kovalchik made a motion to adjourn the Workshop meeting at 8:10pm. Motion
Seconded by Mayor Blundell. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.**

Submitted by,
Lara Hart, Clerk