

Bristol Town Administrator

From: Nason, Bruce <Bruce.Nason@vermont.gov>
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2020 7:19 PM
To: Mike Dash; Bristol Town Administrator; ianalbinson+sb@gmail.com
Cc: Carolyn Dash
Subject: Re: Community Dialogue and Black Lives Matter

Mike and Carolyn,

Thank you for contacting us.

We encourage and welcome community input to assist us with our community policing practices.

Earlier today, I posted to our Bristol Police Facebook page, requesting suggestions on how we may meet to discuss policing, while complying with the Governor's recommendation regarding gatherings.

I believe we will be successful with in person meaningful communication.

I will be certain to include you as we develop the process.

I look forward to our community discussions.

Respectfully,
Bruce

Bruce Nason, Chief of Police
Bristol Police Department
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From: Mike Dash <themikedash@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2020 4:56 PM
To: Capels, Valerie <townadmin@bristolvt.org>; Nason, Bruce <Bruce.Nason@vermont.gov>; ianalbinson+sb@gmail.com <ianalbinson+sb@gmail.com>
Cc: Carolyn Dash <thecarolyndash@gmail.com>
Subject: Community Dialogue and Black Lives Matter

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Chief Nason and the Selectboard,

In light of nationwide protests (that now include Bristol itself), it appears to us that it is an opportune time to address our police practices and community engagement. To this end, we've attached a letter to this email as a first step

towards fostering dialogue and positive change. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions or if we can provide any assistance as we all collectively work towards eliminating these systemic issues.

Mike and Carolyn Dash

To Police Chief Nason and the Bristol Selectboard,

In light of ongoing nationwide protests and escalating tensions between civilians and the police, it is imperative that we collectively address the issues facing our nation and work towards restoring *everyone's* faith in our civic organizations. Disparate racial treatment and the use of excessive force, while not necessarily characteristic of all police departments, nevertheless appear to be systemic issues facing law enforcement throughout our nation. Vermont is no exception. Vermont has the highest rate of adult male African American incarceration in the nation^{1,2}, with African Americans imprisoned at a rate ten times that of Caucasians. This extremely high rate of incarceration has led to 1 in 14 adult male African Americans imprisoned in Vermont. This is systemic inequality, this is racial injustice, and this must be addressed by police forces and their communities. While we do not have information regarding demographics of arrests by the Bristol Police department, it appears as though our police force is not immune to at least some of these systemic issues (see, for example, the current lawsuit alleging the use of excessive force by the Bristol Police Department³).

Despite these very real issues facing our community and our nation, we are optimistic that tangible steps can be taken to address these systemic injustices. Bristol is a small enough community that real dialogue between the police department and its residents can readily occur. While larger municipalities have recently seen a dramatic escalation of tensions between civilians and police officers, we can instead use this moment to work together to restore and promote healthy relationships between community members and law enforcement. To this end, we request that the Bristol Police Department create a training and implementation plan to specifically address 1) inherent racial biases, 2) approaches to eliminating potential inequitable treatment due to race or ethnicity, 3) reduction in the use of force, and 4) steps to ensure accountability for officers' actions. We further request that these plans be shared with the Bristol community to 1) help build trust in our public institutions and 2) create opportunity for direct dialogue.

It is certainly possible that some of these trainings may already be in place; if so, we applaud the initial steps the Bristol PD has already taken to address these issues. It is clear, however, that civilians and police officers alike still have a lot of work ahead of them to combat these pressing societal ailments. We are confident that by addressing these issues together, Bristol will be a better community and one that is doing its part to address deep-seated systemic inequalities that have disadvantaged, disillusioned, and at times destroyed so many.

We are willing to help however we can, so please don't hesitate to start this dialogue with us if that seems like a productive step.

Sincerely,
Mike and Carolyn Dash
84 Fred Johnson Rd.
themikedash@gmail.com

1) <https://www.vpr.org/post/why-are-there-so-many-african-americans-incarcerated-vermont#stream/0>

2) <https://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-Color-of-Justice-Racial-and-Ethnic-Disparity-in-State-Prisons.pdf>

3) <https://vtdigger.org/2019/03/26/lawsuit-alleges-excessive-force-bristol-officer/>