



Public Safety & Health Committee - Board of Representatives

Jeffrey Stella, Chair

Eric Morson, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Monday, June 29, 2020

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Meeting was held remotely.

The Public Safety & Health Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Stella, Vice Chair Morson and Committee Member Reps. Giordano, McMullen, Morson, Palomba and Sherwood. Excused were Reps. Matherne and Pratt. Absent was Rep. Lutz. Also present were President Quinones and Reps. Cottrell, Curtis, DePina, Michelson, Summerville and Zelinsky, Ted Jankowski, Director of Public Safety, Health and Welfare; Assistant Chief Tom Wuennemann, Stamford Police Department; Dr. Jennifer Calder, Director of Health; Kathy Payea, Public Safety Analyst; and Laura Burwick, Special Assistant to the Mayor.

Chair Stella called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. PS30.058	RESOLUTION; In support of Concrete Actions to Begin Dismantling Systemic Racism in City of Stamford Institutions. 06/03/20 – Submitted by President Quinones, Reps. Summerville, Pratt, Stella, Curtis, Jacobson, Cottrell, de la Cruz, Matherne, Morson, DePina and Patterson	Approved, as amended 5-1-0

President Quinones read the following statement into the record in support of this resolution:

In response to the national and local outcry for actions to be taken to combat systemic racism, I feel it is important for our board to take action to demonstrate to the community that the city's legislative body is committed to the work of dismantling systemic racism, and begin to take concrete steps towards that go beyond symbolic gestures and furthermore, elevate the conversation to show that in order to achieve this it must be an effort bigger than any one institution.

Rather than dictate a particular policy change or action without community input, I feel it's imperative that we ensure ALL institutions within our city are internalizing their own efforts around this issue and engaging with their respective constituents to ensure the voice of disenfranchised members of our community are contributing to the proposed solutions.

Ensuring that decision makers hear unfiltered, authentic voices of the community is one of the most important factors to establishing real solutions.

What this resolution is attempting to do is inform our Board of Education, our Stamford Police Department and all of our human service agencies that we are encouraging them to engage or in some cases continue to engage in the type of community discussions that will produce actionable items and, if and when necessary, return to us with proposed solutions that we can act on, whether that be through additional appropriations or policy changes.

What I don't want to see happen, at this discovery phase that so many institutions are engaged in, is for them to feel hindered by funding challenges. Given the results of the budget we just passed, some of our institutions will certainly be lacking the resources necessary to achieve whatever solutions they discover and this resolution should serve as an invitation to them to return to us with any reasonable requests that will move us towards dismantling systemic racism that may exist within their entities.

I hope that the committee will consider supporting this resolution and that our institutions like our Board of Education, our Stamford Police Department and all Stamford-based human service agencies will welcome this and receive it not as indictment of the work they're already engaged in, but rather as a sign of support from the Board of Representatives for discovering and implementing positive and meaningful change to dismantle systemic racism.

Director Jankowski noted that all of the Public Safety departments are on board with the resolution and are working with community partners and implementing changes.

Committee members discussed the proposed resolution. Items discussed included the following:

- Should the resolutions apply to all government institutions
- Training of Board members will be made available through the Board office
- Should the resolution include a definition of "racism" and "systemic racism"
- Systemic racism consists of institutional policies which are inherently racist due to their creation or implementation
- The Stamford school busing program encourages diversity in schools based upon socio-economic status
- The system benefits white people without their doing anything
- School curricula mostly focus on white history
- The idea is to work against this system
- Racism can have health effects, such as hypertension due to exposure to stress
- Should the word "bigotry" be added
- The resolution is the commitment of the Board of Representatives to help the Board of Education and the Police Department implement programs; City institutions are being asked to reflect and then come back to the Board of Representatives, which will support reasonable requests

A motion to replace the term "racism" throughout the resolution with "bigotry" was made and seconded. Committee members discussed the proposed motion and whether it weakened the resolution by removing the term "racism" or was more inclusive.

A motion to amend the prior motion to leave the term “racism” and add “and bigotry” was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 4-2-0 (Reps. Stella, Morson, Giordano and Sherwood in favor; Reps. McMullen and Palomba opposed).

A motion to amend the resolution to add the term “and bigotry” after “racism” was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 6-0-0 (Reps. Stella, Morson, Giordano, McMullen, Palomba and Sherwood in favor).

A motion to amend the resolution to add the phrase “if it exists” after “systemic racism” was made and seconded.

Committee members continued to discuss the resolution.

- Dr. Lucero noted that there is systemic racism in hiring practices, as people are more comfortable with people like themselves
- This is not an indictment of all policies of institutions; if a policy was obviously racist, it would have been eliminated; the resolution is asking the institutions to have communications with the community
- Adding “if it exists” undercuts the effort
- The resolution should contain a clear call to action to every City agency to find systemic racism

The motion to amend the resolution failed by a vote of 2-3-1 (Reps. McMullen and Palomba in favor; Reps. Stella, Morson and Giordano opposed; and Rep. Sherwood abstaining).

A motion to approve the resolution, as amended, was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 5-1-0 (Reps. Stella, Morson, Giordano, Palomba and Sherwood in favor; Rep. McMullen opposed).

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| 2. PS30.054 | REVIEW; Current and Future Plans for Distribution of N95 masks on the West Side.
05/06/20 – Submitted by Reps. Stella, Pratt, DePina, Wallace, Adams, Coleman, de la Cruz, Curtis and Sherwood | Report Made |
| 3. PS30.055 | REVIEW; Current COVID-19 Testing Sites and Decisions re Testing Locations, including Locations on the West Side.
05/06/20 – Submitted by Reps. Stella, Pratt, DePina, Wallace, Adams, Coleman, de la Cruz, Curtis and Sherwood | Report Made |
| 4. PS30.056 | REVIEW; Racial Demographic Breakdown of Infection Rates and Deaths from Covid-19 Virus in Stamford.
05/06/20 – Submitted by Reps. Stella, Pratt, DePina, Wallace, Adams, Coleman, de la Cruz, Curtis, Sherwood, Figueroa, Zelinsky and Morson | Report Made |

The Committee discussed Items 2 through 4 together.

Director Jankowski noted that Item 2 is incorrect, because the City has not been

distributing N95 masks, which require fit testing. Over 150,000 surgical masks have been distributed. Distribution focused on areas with the greatest prevalence of COVID-19 cases and similarly, pop-up testing was based upon data.

Ms. Payea reviewed the attached [PowerPoint presentation](#) with the committee.

Chair Stella adjourned the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeffrey Stella, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#)