

A “to-do” list from Prof Ochs

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing, Ochs, Holona, Police August 9, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts responding to the George Floyd killing* 

We have introduced you to Lehigh University professor Holona Ochs, whose team has done a study of Lehigh Valley Police Departments (124 interviews) entitled “Democratic Policing: Bias Reduction and Police-Public Interactions.” (See [Ochs, Holona](#) under Topics on the right-hand side-bar.)

Completion and publication of the report on the study were delayed when school activities were interrupted by the pandemic, but we hope to have the report later in the fall.

The Reynolds/Crampsie Smith resolution that is the basis for the August 11 Public Safety Committee meeting was amended at the July 7 City Council meeting specifically to include this research on local policing: ““The Administration should work with and incorporate recommendations by research experts including Lehigh University’s Core Grant team who recently conducted a large research project on policing in the Lehigh Valley.”

Happy serendipity! Gadfly’s mouth waters at the thought of this report. How fortunate to have this window on *local* policing at the precise time the whole country is examining the way it does Public Safety.

In preparation for that July 7 meeting at which the Reynolds/Crampsie Smith resolution passed, Ochs circulated the following list of action items.

Gadfly has been doing a crash course with you in preparation for the August 11 meeting. We’ll get more out of that meeting if we’ve done some thinking beforehand.

Therefore, take a look now at the Ochs' list, and then we'll take each point one at a time to see what we can see, to think what we can think.

- Police must acknowledge and apologize for the historical patterns of abuse that have roots in the origins of the profession and continue to impact the patterns and practices of the police.
- The entire community should have the opportunity to address our own racial biases (this includes the police).
- Police should avoid situations that increase the likelihood of lethal force and should work alongside mental health professionals in de-escalating conflict.
- Transparency and accountability must be structured into the system.
- The council and community bear some responsibility as well. Quality of life measures and similar policies that target low income communities of color are fundamentally racist. The city should re-evaluate policies that target others in our community and make them vulnerable.
- Officer pay should reflect the level of expertise and difficulty of the task and importance of the purpose. Existing incentive structures should be re-examined.
- Recruitment and retention standards need to be evaluated and revised to prevent the infiltration of those with extremist/hateful/violent views.
- Scholars have noted that the doctrine of qualified immunity is not supported by the empirical evidence.
- We, as a community, need to imagine leadership differently.