

# Rochester police chief: “I understand that there are certain calls that law enforcement shouldn’t handle alone, and we are looking at ways to reimagine policing surrounding mental health”

The Bethlehem Gadfly Jacob Blake September 7, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts responding to the Jacob Blake shooting* 

ref: **“According to the police Union, officers following their training in the Rochester case”**

No sooner did Gadfly post on the Rochester case involving Daniel Prude yesterday than we see the police department apologize for its actions and initiate, on its own, a reform that we might call “defunding,” a reform that they had already been thinking about. Gadfly notes such action with interest as he gathers as much information as he can about police reform as he prepares for discussions we hope to have locally. (Note the interesting strategy to attempt to control violence at protests.)

*selections from Doha Madani and Dennis Romero, “Rochester officials announce police reforms after death of Daniel Prude.” NBC News, September 6, 2020.*

The city of Rochester, New York, is moving crisis intervention out of the police department amid outrage and protests over the death of Daniel Prude, a Black man with mental health issues who died after officers placed a spit hood over his head and restrained him.

Mayor Lovely Warren announced that the crisis intervention department and its budget would be moved to the city’s Department of Youth and Recreation Services during a news conference Sunday. Protests following the release of video of the incident involving Prude in March have continued for days.

“We had a human being in a need of help, in need of compassion. In that moment, we had an opportunity to protect him, to keep him warm, to bring him to safety, to begin the process of healing him and lifting him

up,” Warren said. “We have to own the fact that in the moment we did not do that.”

Police Chief La’Ron Singletary told reporters that he recognized the need for reform in his department and that he was working with experts and clinicians to get outpatient services for those who struggle with mental health and are in repeated contact with police.

“I understand that there are certain calls that law enforcement shouldn’t handle alone, and we are looking at ways to reimagine policing surrounding mental health and have been for the last several months,” Singletary said.

### **Look at this interesting idea**

Authorities have established a plan to bus in “elders” from around the city to stand between protesters and police for Sunday night’s demonstrations. The idea came from the Rev. Myra Brown of Spiritus Christi Church.

Brown said Sunday that it is unclear when the protests will end and that it is imperative to ensure the safety of young people who are marching.

“We elders have volunteered to put our bodies on the line to make sure that that happens,” Brown said. “Because this community needs to unrestrictedly be able to walk these streets, be able to make the demands that they want to make and to be able to go home without pepper spray or pepper balls in their eyes.”