

TOWN OF ARLINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

REPORT OF THE
CIVILIAN POLICE ADVISORY BOARD STUDY COMMITTEE



TO THE
APRIL 2022 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Letter from Civilian Police Advisory Board Study Committee Co-Chairs | 2 |
| Executive Summary | 4 |
| Study Committee Membership | 5 |
| Charge from 2020 Special Town Meeting | 6 |
| How the Study Committee Approached Its Work | 7 |
| Key Findings | 9 |
| Letter of Endorsement from APD Chief Julie Flaherty | 14 |
| Letter of Endorsement from DEI Director Jill Harvey | 15 |
| Acknowledgments | 17 |
| | |
| APPENDIX A: List of voting and non-voting members of the Study Committee | 18 |
| APPENDIX B: List of votes taken by the Study Committee | 19 |
| APPENDIX C: Current Complaint Process Regarding Police Interactions | 19 |
| APPENDIX D: DEI Director Memo on Complaints Process | 20 |
| APPENDIX E: Goals of Civilian Oversight Considered by the Study Committee | 26 |
| APPENDIX F: Models of Civilian Oversight Researched by the Study Committee | 27 |
| APPENDIX G: Background and Timeline of Events | 29 |

Letter from Co-Chairs of the Civilian Police Advisory Board Study Committee

Dear Town Meeting Members,

We are pleased to present to you this final report of the Civilian Police Advisory Board Study Committee (Study Committee).

This report sets forth the rationale for the Study Committee's strong recommendation that Town Meeting approve Warrant Article 8, which would establish a permanent Civilian Police Advisory Commission in Arlington. The purpose of this new Commission would be to create effective and meaningful opportunities to increase trust between town residents—particularly, though not exclusively, those who belong to historically marginalized groups—and town police.

The Study Committee's recommendation is the product of nine months of inquiry and research followed by two months of deliberation. Our research and study included conversations and meetings with town residents and employees, experts in law enforcement and civilian oversight of law enforcement, and generous counsel from Arlington DEI Director Jill Harvey, Arlington Police Chief Julie Flaherty, and Town Counsel, Doug Heim.

We are particularly proud that DEI Director Harvey and Chief Flaherty have each endorsed the Study Committee's recommendations, and you can read their letters of support on pages 13 and 14 of this report.

Additionally, the town's three DEI Commissions—the Human Rights Commission, the Disability Commission, and the LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission—were each scheduled to formally discuss and vote on the Study Committee's warrant article after we completed this final report. It is our understanding based on discussion with members of each DEI Commission that there is strong support on each DEI Commission that Town Meeting establish a permanent Civilian Police Advisory Commission.

The Study Committee met and conducted its research during a period of heightened national scrutiny on the issue of policing in America, particularly along racial lines. Nevertheless, the Study Committee's deliberations were generally free from the divisive and toxic rhetoric that often inserts itself into this ongoing, complex national debate. Our Study Committee accomplished this by focusing our discussions on the strengths already present in the Arlington community and its police department, particularly under the leadership of Chief Flaherty. We also examined current barriers to effective communication and increased trust among residents and police, and then asked whether and how there might be ways to improve the systems in place that govern interactions between residents and police.

We hope that you will give careful and serious consideration to the Study Committee's recommendation that Town Meeting establish a permanent Civilian Police Advisory Commission in Arlington.

We respectfully request that you vote to support this recommendation.

Sincerely,

Laura Gitelson and Susan Ryan-Vollmar
Co-Chairs, Civilian Police Advisory Board Study Committee

Executive Summary

On November 15, 2021, the Study Committee unanimously voted to recommend to Town Meeting that one or more alternative mechanisms for residents to file complaints and/or commendations regarding police interactions be created. When it met again on December 7, 2021 the Study Committee voted 11-1 to recommend to Town Meeting that the optimal mechanism to increase trust between residents—particularly, though not exclusively, those who belong to historically marginalized groups—and town police is a permanent Civilian Police Advisory Commission.

This recommendation is based on nine months of research followed by two months of deliberation. Over 12 months, beginning on March 18, 2021, the Study Committee met 17 times. Between October 27 and November 17, 2021, the Study Committee held 14 listening sessions with residents and town employees to solicit feedback on interactions (positive, negative, and/or neutral) with Arlington police and for suggestions to improve relations between residents and police. Throughout the month of November 2021, the Study Committee collected feedback from residents via an online Google form. The Study Committee Co-Chairs and Clerk met with members of Police Chief Julie Flaherty’s command staff, as well as the presidents of both police unions.

Mission of proposed Civilian Police Advisory Committee

“[T]o serve as qualified advisors to the general public, the Arlington Police Department, and other Town staff with respect to policing in Arlington from a civilian perspective. The Commission shall serve as a technical resource for persons wishing to file specific complaints against or commendations of Arlington Police Department personnel, a forum for both positive and negative feedback about police conduct and policy in Arlington, and collaboratively engage the Arlington Police Department in its development or revision of police policies.”

The Study Committee also consulted with outside experts. On August 3, 2021, the Study Committee heard from Brian Corr, executive secretary for Cambridge’s Police Review and Advisory Board and the immediate past president of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement. Mr. Corr regularly consults with municipalities around the country on how to build and increase trust between residents and law enforcement.

On September 20, 2021, the Study Committee heard from Pittsfield Police Chief Michael Wynn, who serves on the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission as one of Gov. Charlie Baker’s three appointees to the Commission.

The Study Committee drew six key findings from this research, which formed the basis for its recommendation that Town Meeting vote to establish a Civilian Police Advisory Commission.

Key Findings

1. The Arlington Police Department is professional, proactive, and conducts its business in accordance with the principles of 21st-century policing.
2. Some residents who are BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and/or living with a disability and who experience negative interactions with Arlington police are deeply reluctant to report those experiences to police.
3. The current official process for reporting complaints and/or commendations about resident interactions with police does not meet the needs of all residents.
4. Feedback collected during the listening sessions with residents was overwhelmingly positive toward Arlington police but came with urgings that we can and should strive to do more so that trust between residents and police is enhanced and continuously improved.
5. Feedback given to the Study Committee Co-Chairs following the listening session held for town employees indicates that some town employees, particularly those who also reside in Arlington, do not feel comfortable offering constructive criticism of Arlington police particularly in a public manner.
6. Permanent civilian advisory boards created with local needs in mind can be a powerful tool for building and sustaining trust between residents and police.

Study Committee Membership

The 2020 Special Town Meeting established the parameters for membership of the Study Committee. It is to include seventeen (17) members: four non-voting, ex-officio members, and thirteen (13) voting members.

Members ex-officio represent the Select Board; the Arlington Chief of Police; the Town Counsel; and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The voting members include three (3) Town Meeting members appointed by the Town Moderator; one (1) graduate of the Citizens Police

Academy; one (1) Arlington High School student recommended by the AHS Principal; and one (1) representative from each of the following groups:

- Envision Arlington Standing Committee
- Arlington Human Rights Commission
- LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission
- The Disability Commission
- The Board of Youth Services
- Envision Arlington Diversity Task Group
- Council on Aging
- Menotomy Manor Tenants Association

Town Meeting further directed that those appointing authorities should “designate representatives who reflect racial, ethnic and other forms of diversity to be found in Arlington, including at least one representative with legal defense experience regarding police arrests or detainment, especially with regard to disadvantaged populations.”

A list of all voting and non-voting members of the Study Group and the organizations they represent can be found at Appendix A on page 18 of this Report.

Charge from 2020 Special Town Meeting

Town Meeting's charge for the Study Committee is as follows:

- A. The Study Committee shall study the creation of alternative mechanisms for civilians to file complaints regarding police interactions, considering the various models including a police civilian review board independent from the police department with the authority and resources to receive and investigate complaints. Said committee shall also review police services, examine the experience of comparable communities, and consider the impact of the pending legislation.
- B. The Study Committee shall report its findings and any recommendations to the 2022 Annual Meeting, any earlier Annual or Special Town Meeting, and/or other appropriate administrative, management or elected or appointed officials.

How the Study Committee Approached Its Work

At its first meeting, the Study Committee elected from among its members Co-Chairs (Susan Ryan-Vollmar and Laura Gitelson) and a Secretary (Sanjay Newton). The Co-Chairs set the agenda for the Study Committee's meetings, and the agenda was distributed to members in a time/place/manner consistent with Open Meeting Laws. Meetings were open to the public.

In keeping with the Study Committee's responsibility to research the issue of civilian oversight of police functions, its meetings focused on determining what information the Study Committee needed to inform its thinking, who shall be responsible for obtaining the information, and when and how the information shall be presented back to the full Study Committee. Throughout the course of its work, every member of the Study Committee contributed to this work by researching topics, speaking with subject-matter experts, gathering data, and interviewing town employees, residents, and outside experts who had information relevant to the Study Committee's Charge from Town Meeting.

The Study Committee organized its work around a number of questions and issues arising from its Charge from Town Meeting.

1. What are the **various models** for a police civilian review board?
2. What successful **alternative mechanisms** exist in other cities and towns which allow for **civilians to file complaints regarding police interactions**? How should we assess them?
3. Does any newly enacted or pending Massachusetts **State Legislation** regarding policing affect our Charge? If so, how?
4. What **authority and resources** would a community board/entity need in order to **receive and investigate** (effectively) **complaints** regarding police interactions?
5. What role should community input play in our Study and at what point(s) in the timeline should community voices be incorporated?
6. What **police services** shall the Committee review and how shall we approach this work?
7. How shall we **examine the experiences of comparable communities** and what would be an appropriate peer group?
8. What other sources of information are available to inform our study? (Non-profit organizations, professional groups, academic studies, for example)
9. How might any collective bargaining agreement covering the Town, and particularly the APD, affect our study, analysis and recommendation(s)?
10. What is the history and best practices of civilian **oversight** of law enforcement?
11. What are APD policies and procedures related to investigating **complaints** from residents?
12. How does the Arlington Human Rights Commission handle **complaints** from residents related to negative interactions with Arlington police?

13. How does the town's DEI Director handle **complaints** from residents related to negative interactions with Arlington police?
14. Are there potentially ways in which any **authority** given to a town Commission could impact current employment practices?

Please note: Words that are **bolded** appear in the Charge.

The Study Committee consulted with outside experts and town experts to inform its thinking about how to best fulfill its Charge.

Outside experts:

- Pittsfield Police Chief Michael Wynn. Pittsfield is one of four municipalities in Massachusetts with a Civilian Oversight Board and Chief Wynn is one of Governor Charlie Baker's three appointees to the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission, known as the POST Commission, which was created as part of the state's new public safety law.
- Brian Corr, executive secretary for Cambridge's Police Review and Advisory Board and the immediate past president of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement. Mr. Corr consults with municipalities around the country on how to build trust between residents and law enforcement.

Town experts:

- Police Chief Julie Flaherty
- Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Jill Harvey
- Town Counsel Doug Heim
- Deputy Town Manager Sandy Pooler
- Director of Human Resources Caryn Malloy

Soliciting feedback from town residents and employees

- Between October 27 and November 17, 2021, the Study Committee held 14 listening sessions with residents and town employees to solicit feedback on interactions (positive, negative, and/or neutral) with Arlington police as well as feedback from residents on the Study Committee's work. Four of these sessions were open to all residents. One session was held for town employees. The remaining sessions were held for students and parents, residents of public housing, and residents who are BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, living in public housing, living with disabilities, members of faith communities, veterans, and/or immigrants/refugees.
- Throughout the month of November 2021, the Study Committee collected feedback from residents via an online Google form that included an option for providing feedback confidentially.

Soliciting feedback from Arlington law enforcement

- The Study Committee Co-Chairs and Clerk met with members of Chief Flaherty's command staff, Captain Sean Kiernan and Captain Richard Flynn, as well as the president of the Ranking Officers Association, Lt. Greg Flavin, and the president of the Patrol Officers Association, Officer Neil Simard.

Key Findings

1. The Arlington Police Department (APD) is professional and proactive.

APD is one of just 103 of the more than 450 law enforcement agencies in Massachusetts that is accredited by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission. Successful accreditation is a significant achievement and considered to be a measure of best practices in policing.

APD routinely partners with community-based organizations to provide safety education to residents and hear community members' concerns. APD's long-running Citizens Police Academy fosters deep community engagement between officers and residents.

Additionally, APD has launched and/or joined a number of campaigns and initiatives to increase public safety and build community trust. In 2021, APD signed on to the NYU School of Law Policing Project [30X30 Campaign](#), which is a pledge to have women account for 30 percent of the APD's sworn staff by the year 2030. In 2020, just weeks after the murder of George Floyd by a police officer, the "8 Can't Wait" campaign launched. The campaign urges police departments to adopt eight policy proposals that have been shown to reduce use of force during police interactions with civilians. APD had already adopted seven of the eight policies and within days had [adopted the eighth](#), making it the only law enforcement agency in the state to have adopted all eight.

In 2018, APD was one of just 14 law enforcement agencies nationwide selected by the [Council of State Governments Justice Center to be a Law Enforcement Mental Health Learning Site](#). In that capacity, APD provides resources, guidance and materials for other police agencies across the country that are developing or growing a Police-Mental Health Collaboration approach,

APD Is a National Leader in 21st Century Policing

APD is one of just 103 of the more than 450 law enforcement agencies in MA accredited by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission. In 2021, APD signed on to the NYU School of Law Policing Project 30X30 Campaign, pledging to have women account for 30 percent of APD's sworn staff by 2030. In 2020, APD became the first police department in MA to adopt all of the "8 Can't Wait" policies shown to reduce the use of force during police interactions with civilians. In 2018, APD was one of just 14 law enforcement agencies nationwide selected by the Council of State Governments Justice Center to be a Law Enforcement Mental Health Learning Site.

such as a crisis intervention team or co-response team, to more effectively respond to people with mental health concerns.

In 2015, APD launched the Opiate Outreach Initiative which aims to provide a public health response to people who are at-risk for and/or have already survived an overdose. In 2010, APD launched its Jail Diversion Program to provide alternatives to arrest, booking, and jail detention for people who come into contact with police and have behavioral health needs.

All the work noted above reflects a commitment by the Town and Arlington’s law enforcement leadership to provide continual training on complex issues encountered by Arlington police officers.

2. Some residents who are BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and/or living with a disability and who experience negative interactions with Arlington police are deeply reluctant to report those experiences to police.

From three different sources (Arlington's [DEI Director Jill Harvey](#), the representative on the Study Committee from the the Arlington Human Rights Commission, and through stories shared by residents in our listening sessions) the Study Committee learned that residents who are reluctant to report negative interactions with law enforcement to the police are almost always those who belong to historically marginalized groups.

The following story, shared with the Study Committee, is illustrative: A resident who is a lesbian told us of how when her wife was dying, her wife’s medical condition would sometimes cause her to fall to the floor from a standing or seated position. The resident was unable to lift her wife back up on her own so she would call 911 for assistance. Sometimes police were sent in response, sometimes the fire department was sent, and sometimes both departments were sent. One time when an individual police officer responded, he initially refused to help the wife get back up. He instead badgered the woman asking her why she was refusing to get up and demanding that she get up on her own. The resident who made the 911 call was powerless to intervene on her wife’s behalf. She had to humor the officer until he finally agreed to help the wife get back up and get her safely situated on the couch. The resident never considered filing a complaint because she knew she was going to have to keep calling 911 for help with her wife

Residents Who Experience Negative Interactions With APD Typically Belong To Marginalized Groups

“The resident [an older lesbian] never considered filing a complaint because she knew she was going to have to keep calling 911 for help with her wife and she did not want to risk retaliation from the officer in question or from other officers. Going forward, when she called 911, she told the dispatcher that she was not experiencing an emergency and that she wanted the fire department to respond to the call even if that meant she would need to wait longer for help to arrive.”

and she did not want to risk retaliation from the officer in question or from other officers. Going forward, when she called 911, she told the dispatcher that she was not experiencing an emergency and that she wanted the fire department to respond to the call even if that meant she would need to wait longer for help to arrive.

3. The official process for sharing complaints and/or commendations about resident interactions with police does not meet the needs of all residents.

Currently, the options for filing a complaint about a police interaction are to: call the APD, visit the APD in person, or send a letter ([official forms are available for download](#)).

At this time, there is no option available to residents and others to file a complaint confidentially. In the absence of this option, an *ad hoc* process has developed through the years by which residents, who do not feel comfortable bringing their complaints directly to the police, have sought assistance instead from

Complaints Process Doesn't Meet Needs Of All Residents

There is no option available for filing confidential complaints, so residents have created an ad hoc process involving the Arlington Human Rights Commission and DEI Director.

the Arlington Human Rights Commission which tries to assist these individuals with their concerns within the limits of the Commission's authority. Since 2020, when the town hired a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, residents have occasionally brought their complaints directly to that office.

4. Feedback collected during the listening sessions with residents was overwhelmingly positive toward Arlington police with the stipulation that trust needs to be improved between residents and police.

Nearly everyone who provided feedback during the sessions for residents mentioned a desire for improved communication and trust between residents and police. A number of residents observed that to improve

resident and police interactions, the Town should create a permanent Civilian Police Advisory Commission. These sentiments were also reflected in the written feedback to the Study Committee provided via the Google form that was made available to the public. Here are representative comments that the Study Committee received:

Feedback About APD To Study Committee Was Overwhelmingly Positive, But Many Residents Cited Need For Increased Trust

Nearly everyone who provided feedback during the sessions for residents mentioned a desire for improved communication and trust between residents and police, with many residents requesting that the town create Civilian Police Advisory Commission.

- "I would like our town's families and students to feel that members of the Police are allies, not adversaries."

- “Establish a process [for filing complaints about interactions with police] that is fair, equitable, and outside the influence of favoritism or retaliation.”
- “One of my top priorities of a Police Civilian Review Board would be ensuring that folk who typically are fearful of police or who don’t believe that the police have their best interested [*sic*] in mind will start to feel differently because of the existence of a Police Civilian Review Board.”
- “I hope that any solution builds a partnering model rather than an adversarial one—one can have independence without an adversarial mindset.”
- “I think most cops in Arlington are good hearted people. I would like to see more diversity on the force, though.”

5. Feedback given to the Study Committee Co-Chairs following the listening session held for town employees indicates that some town employees, especially those who also reside in Arlington, do not feel comfortable offering constructive criticism of Arlington police in public.

The listening session held for town employees was well attended, with approximately 50 employees logging onto the Zoom, including members of the police department. The most vocal voices in the town employee group repeated the refrain that they did not want to see Arlington pursue “a local solution to a national problem.”

After the meeting, the Study Committee Co-Chairs heard from a town employee who attended the meeting and did not speak, as they originally intended to, because they felt too intimidated to do so in front of police.

This employee reported that they had discussed the matter with other town employees afterward who also shared their disappointment of not feeling comfortable in the forum to speak freely. A second town employee, who did speak during the meeting, identified a need for more humility by town police in their non-emergency interactions with residents.

Some Town Employees Who Live In Arlington Are Not Comfortable Offering Constructive Criticism Of Police In Public Settings

After the meeting, the Study Committee Co-Chairs heard from a town employee who attended the meeting and did not speak, as they originally intended to, because they felt too intimidated to do so in front of police. This employee reported that they had discussed the matter with other town employees afterward who also shared their disappointment of not feeling comfortable in the forum to speak freely.

This town employee also followed up their oral remarks with correspondence to the Study Committee Co-Chairs. In the note, the employee said that while they sympathized with police department employees who might be uncomfortable with public scrutiny, it was the town employee’s belief that police should welcome public scrutiny given that police have the authority to wear a badge, carry a gun, and employ both to take away a resident’s liberty. This

employee also added that “[M]any Town employees who were on the call and did **not** speak at the time told me afterward and via Zoom chat that they 100% shared my sentiments.”

6. Permanent civilian advisory boards created with local needs in mind can be a powerful tool for building and sustaining trust between residents and police.

During their presentations to the Study Committee, Pittsfield Police Chief Michael Wynn and Brian Corr, the executive secretary for Cambridge’s Police Review and Advisory Board and the immediate past president of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement, each separately emphasized the ways in which Civilian Police Advisory Boards can be a powerful tool in building trust between residents and police.

Chief Wynn recounted his efforts over many years to get Pittsfield’s political leaders to back the creation of a civilian advisory board. The political will to create such a group did not coalesce until 2018 when a Pittsfield resident experiencing a mental health crisis was fatally shot by Pittsfield police.

A Commission was created relatively quickly after the shooting, and Wynn reported that the Commission has become an important way for him to collaborate with members of the public on matters of police policy. He also reported that he learns valuable information about public concerns.

Civilian Advisory Boards Are Powerful Tools For Building Trust

Civilian boards can elevate the voices and concerns of people who live in neighborhoods and/or belong to groups that have been simultaneously under-protected and over-policed by law enforcement provided they are structured with local needs in mind.

Mr. Corr shared similar sentiments during his presentation to the Study Committee and shared how such civilian boards can become an important voice for people who live in neighborhoods and/or belong to groups that have been simultaneously under-protected and over-policed by law enforcement such as people who are BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and/or living with a disability. Mr. Corr noted that this dynamic played out in urban, suburban, and rural communities as well as municipalities of all sizes. Mr. Corr also emphasized the importance of understanding current needs among residents and prioritizing them in any proposed solution.

ARLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

JULIANN FLAHERTY
Chief of Police



Town of Arlington
MASSACHUSETTS 02474

POLICE HEADQUARTERS
112 Mystic Street
781-316-3900

February 15, 2022

Dear Town Meeting Members,

I am writing this letter in support of the recommendations made by the Civilian Police Advisory Study Committee. The committee has worked tirelessly over the past year to study and develop the best model for a civilian advisory board that will foster a more trusting relationship between community members and the Arlington Police Department. I would like to thank each committee member for their dedication, passion and thoughtfulness and I would also like to thank all community members who participated in the committee meetings and discussions.

At APD, we pride ourselves on providing our community members with professional, respectful and equitable services. We are committed to continuous progress, building partnerships and working with our community members to enhance the safety, security and well-being of all community members. The recommendations made by the committee will assist us in furthering our mission.

I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to work on this committee as a non-voting member and I look forward to working with a civilian advisory board that will be formed based on the recommendations of the study committee.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juliann Flaherty".

Juliann Flaherty
Chief of Police



Town of Arlington
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Division
Department of Health and Human Services

27 Maple Street
Arlington, MA 02476

Tel: (781) 316-3250
Fax: (781) 316-3175

To: 2022 Town Meeting
From: Jillian Harvey, PCABS Study Committee Member, DEI Division Director
Date: 14 February, 2022
Re: Civilian Police Advisory Board Study Committee Letter of Support

I am writing to you to express my gratitude and support for the work that the Civilian Police Advisory Board Study Committee has conducted over the last 12 months. I am impressed by the passion, tenacity and thoughtfulness that the Study Committee has exemplified in every step it has taken to fulfill the charge it was given from Town Meeting.

The Study Committee was strategic in its process of approaching its charge—which included in depth conversation about the interpretation of exactly what the Study Committee should and should not be focused on. Time and effort went into collecting information to properly inform the group's thinking, individuals volunteered to research specific topic areas and bring their findings back to the full group, and outside experts in the field of civilian oversight of law enforcement were invited to present to the Study Committee on relevant topics.

The Study Committee gained insight from Pittsfield Police Chief Michael Wynn, who established and works with a civilian review board in Pittsfield, but also is an appointee to the POST Commission. The Study Committee also heard from Brian Corr, the Executive Secretary of the Police Review and Advisory Board for the City of Cambridge and a leadership member of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement who consults with municipalities across the country on ways to build stronger relationships between civilians and law enforcement. I also had the opportunity to share with the Study Committee my experiences working with the police department and handling complaints from community members. I am appreciative that after careful consideration, discussion and deliberation, the Study Committee voted to adopt the recommendations I offered to improve the current complaint/commendation process for our community members and police department.

The Study Committee also sought input from residents and employees of Arlington, and this outreach was vital to the process the group established. I applaud the efforts the Study Committee took to reach historically underrepresented groups within the Arlington community including residents who are BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, veterans, living with disabilities, living in public housing, and students and parents. Numerous focus groups were held, open public meetings focused on soliciting feedback were held, a survey was available to community members as well, and members of the group made themselves available to talk with anyone who was interested in sharing additional information in one-on-one settings. I am confident that community concerns and suggestions have been incorporated into the recommendations that the Study Committee will present to Town Meeting.

As the Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, I support the recommendations the Study Committee will put forth to Town Meeting, and I believe that the Study Committee has prioritized

the town of Arlington's diverse needs in crafting the warrant article and their recommendations. Please contact me if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jillian Harvey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jillian Harvey

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Division Director
jharvey@town.arlington.ma.us

Acknowledgments

The work required to make an informed recommendation to Town Meeting was not insignificant and the time given to do so was short—the Study Committee had just 12 months to complete its Charge. Each member of the Study Committee participated fully in the work of studying the complex issues of civilian oversight of law enforcement, and applying this knowledge to the needs of Arlington.

Police Chief Julie Flaherty was an indispensable partner to the Study Committee. She explained police procedure, made seemingly unintelligible police jargon easy to understand, and ensured that the Study Committee received all of the documents it requested relating to arrest, citation, use of force, and officer complaints and commendations data. She was incredibly generous with her time, knowledge, wisdom, and insight. Her thoughtful participation in our meetings with guest experts in policing and civilian oversight of law enforcement brought the conversation to places we would not have gotten to otherwise, yielding valuable information that has been incorporated into the Study Committee’s final recommendations.

Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Jill Harvey made the Study Committee’s work possible. First, it is hard to imagine how we could have convened the numerous small group conversations held with residents on the sensitive topic of resident-police engagement without the foundational work completed by Director Harvey over the past few years in holding community conversations on issues of race, policing, and other highly charged topics. The information shared by Director Harvey about her work with residents who have experienced difficult interactions with Arlington police was invaluable to the Study Committee’s understanding of the strengths of the current complaints process as well as areas where that process could be improved.

APD Police Chief, DEI Director, and Town Counsel Critical To Study Committee’s Success

Numerous town staff contributed valuable information and support to the Study Committee. The work of town staff was consistent in its excellence and the Study Committee is incredibly grateful for the talent and expertise of Arlington’s public servants.

The Study Committee would have never gotten started without the support of Town Counsel Doug Heim. His early presentation on how the state’s new criminal justice law (commonly referred to as the JEAL Act) might overlap with civilian oversight functions was illuminating and likely saved the Study Committee weeks of work. His valued counsel ranged from suggestions of how to organize our work to how to navigate the Town Meeting warrant process. His edits and suggestions to the proposed bylaws to create a Civilian Police Advisory Board vastly improved the document.

The Study Committee also benefited from the expertise of Deputy Town Manager Sandy Pooler and Director of Human Resources Caryn Malloy who provided important information on the collective bargaining process and how it might intersect with the duties of a Civilian Police Advisory Commission. All town staff who worked with the Study Committee provided support that was consistent in its excellence and we are grateful for the talent and expertise of Arlington's public servants.

Appendix A: List of Voting and Non-Voting Members of the Study Committee

Ex-officio members (non-voting members):

- A member of the Select Board or their designee for the purposes of administering the organizational meeting only: Ashley Maher
- The Town Counsel or designee: Doug Heim
- The Chief of Police or designee: Julie Flaherty
- The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Director or designee: Jillian Harvey

Voting members:

- One (1) member of the Envision Arlington Standing Committee: Michael Brownstein
- One (1) member of the Arlington Human Rights Commission: Kathy Rogers
- One (1) member of the LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission: Susan Ryan-Vollmar
- One (1) member of the Disability Commission: Kerrie Fallon
- One (1) member of the Board of Youth Services: Karen Bishop
- One (1) designee of the Envision Arlington Diversity Task Group: Carlos Morales
- One (1) member of the Council on Aging: Anne Brown
- One (1) member of the Menotomy Manor Tenants Association: at the time the committee was formed there was no active Menotomy Manor Tenants Association, so this position remains vacant.
- One (1) Arlington High School student as recommended by the AHS Principal: Mona Mohtadi (and Elliot Elkin as an alternate)
- One (1) graduate of the Citizens Police Academy to be appointed by the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Director or designee: Bob Radochia
- Three (3) Town Meeting Members appointed by the Town Moderator: Laura Gitelson (who fulfilled the requirement from Town Meeting that at least one member of the Study Committee have "legal defense experience regarding police arrests or detainment, especially with regard to disadvantaged populations"), Clarissa Rowe and Sanjay Newton

Appendix B: List of Votes Taken by the Study Committee

Excluding votes to approve minutes and adjourn meetings, the Study Committee took three substantive votes toward completion of its Charge to Town Meeting. They are listed below:

1. August 24, 2021: The Study Committee unanimously voted to accept and publish its Interim Report to Town Meeting. That report is available at <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/58004/637697234216270000>
2. November 15, 2021: The Study Committee unanimously voted to recommend to Town Meeting that one or more alternative mechanisms for residents to file complaints and/or commendations regarding police interactions be created.
3. December 7, 2021: The Study Committee voted 11-1 to recommend to Town Meeting that the optimal mechanism to increase trust between residents—particularly, though not exclusively, those who belong to historically marginalized groups—and town police is a permanent Civilian Police Advisory Commission.

Appendix C: Current Complaint Process Regarding Police Interactions

Related to the charge from Town Meeting to “study the creation of alternative mechanisms for civilians to file complaints regarding police interactions,” the Study Committee reviewed how residents can make such complaints.

Residents who opt to file a complaint directly with the police department have several options for doing so, as Police Chief Flaherty explained during the Study Committee’s April 8, 2021 meeting when she presented on “APD accountability policies.” Residents may:

- Come directly to the police department at 112 Mystic Street and tell the officer at the front desk that they wish to file a complaint. The officer at the desk will ensure that the civilian has everything they need to make the complaints.
- Call the department at 781-316-3907.
- Mail their complaint to the Arlington police station.

All of these methods of filing complaints are clearly explained on the Arlington police department website. The [home page of the Arlington police website](#) has a left-hand navigation bar with links to information for the public. The sixth item down is called “Officer Commendations/Complaints.” Clicking on that link leads to a [page with information](#) on how to

commend exceptional performance by officers and/or file a complaint. Forms for commendations and complaints can be downloaded in multiple languages.

Residents with questions about processes and procedures or recommendations for improvement are directed to be in touch with the professional standards unit; contact information for that unit is provided on the web page.

Currently, there is no process in place for residents to file a complaint anonymously.

Appendix D: DEI Director Memo on Complaints Process

(Memo from DEI Director Jill Harvey begins on following page)



**Town of Arlington
Civilian Police Advisory Board
Study Committee**

TO: All Committee Members
FROM: Jillian Harvey, Member, DEI Division Director
DATE: 9 October , 2021

I was originally scheduled to discuss my experiences supporting town residents through the process of filing complaints about their interactions with police during the Wednesday, October 13, 2021 meeting of the Civilian Police Advisory Board Study Committee. Unfortunately, I will need to leave the Wednesday meeting early in order to attend the Select Board meeting in time for its discussion of the town's reprecincting process. So I have prepared this memo for your review in advance of your meeting and hope to answer any questions you may have in the short time we have together on Wednesday.

To date, I have assisted two town residents, both Black, in bringing their complaints about experiences they had with Arlington police to the attention of Police Chief Julie Flaherty. Based on these experiences, each of which consumed many hours of work time over several weeks, I have formed opinions about the seriousness with which the Arlington Police Department takes complaints from residents, the areas in which Arlington's processes are particularly strong, and the areas in which Arlington's processes could be improved for the benefit of both residents and police. As these ideas relate directly to the committee's charge to "consider alternative ways for residents to file complaints about police interactions," I will share them with you in this memo.

But first I would like to briefly outline both incidents for you.

My first experience with a resident who had a complaint about their interactions with Arlington police occurred within my first month as Arlington's Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Not only was the job new to me, but the position was also a first for Arlington, which had never before employed anyone whose sole responsibility would be handling matters of diversity, equity and inclusion regarding race, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and religion in town business and town life. So when I received this complaint, I had no prior knowledge or understanding of how such complaints are handled, or what my role should be in the process. As I worked with this resident, I truly played the role of a neutral third party.

The resident was advised by a neighbor to contact the Arlington Human Rights Commission (AHRC) about their experience with an Arlington police officer who had responded to a 911 call made by the resident because of a neighbor. The resident did

not want to complain directly to police because they had a fear of police officers based on prior experiences they had had with police in other jurisdictions.

My office number is publicly listed for residents who wish to call AHRC, the Disability Commission, and the LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission. So when this resident called AHRC, I am the person who picked up. This initial phone call lasted well over an hour. During our call, the resident shared what had happened, their belief that the responding officer had treated them disrespectfully because of their race, their prior experiences with police and why they did not trust police, and their concerns about how the dispute with the neighbor would play out given they felt the police was siding with the neighbor.

After speaking with the resident, I was in touch with Chief Flaherty to talk about what to do next, because I did not know what options were available for the resident to file a complaint or what options were available for resolving the complaint.

Chief Flaherty offered to meet with the resident. I set that meeting up and also attended, at the resident's request. This meeting was originally scheduled for 30 minutes but lasted two hours. During that time, Chief Flaherty explained options for filing a complaint, but mostly listened to the resident, who ultimately expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to not just share their concerns directly with the Chief of Police, but to also have them taken seriously by the town's Chief of Police.

After that first, in-person meeting, during which the Chief and I did our best to make the resident feel comfortable, the resident seemed more open about putting some trust in the process. I believe this occurred due to the initial efforts that had been made to help the resident feel safe in talking with Chief Flaherty given the resident's existing fear of police.

The next step in this process was to assign a commissioner from AHRC to this case, as that is the protocol AHRC follows when a resident reports an incident of bias, regardless of whether the report is made about a business, another resident, or the police.

Concurrently with AHRC's involvement, Chief Flaherty provided the resident with information about how to file a formal complaint of bias against the officer whom the resident believed had treated them with racial bias. I assisted the resident with completing and submitting the form. The police department's Office of Professional Standards then moved forward with an extremely thorough investigation that resulted in a final report of over 50 pages.

During the investigation, I coordinated with the AHRC commissioner on the case to accommodate the needs and preferences of the resident and to support the resident through the process. For example, Captain Flynn at times had difficulty reaching the resident. Given the rapport I'd established with the resident, I was able to help coordinate calls and meetings required for the Office of Professional Standards to do its investigation. At the resident's request, I joined these calls and meetings to support the resident, who wanted someone they were familiar with to be present.

When the investigation was completed, I was in touch with the resident to let them know, as the police again had difficulty reaching the resident. Throughout this process, I was able to support the resident. But I was also able to share some of my observations with Chief Flaherty and Captain Flynn. Based on the knowledge and qualifications I bring to my position as Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which necessarily includes some of my own lived experiences as a woman of color, I was able to help them more easily see the situation from the resident's perspective. Official interactions between a white, male older police officer and a younger Black person can easily become fraught, especially if the officer does not fully appreciate how body language, tone of voice, and choice of language are being perceived. With other white people, especially men, such body language, vocal intonation, and language would likely be received as routine behavior. But with younger Black people, the very same behavior may be interpreted as aggressive and threatening.

Ultimately, the resident was satisfied with the investigation. Since its close, the resident has actually called the APD on other matters as they now trust that they will be treated with respect given how seriously Chief Flaherty and the Office of Professional Standards took the original complaint.

The second time I supported a resident with a complaint about an Arlington police officer took place during June of 2020. At this time, the entire country was grappling with police violence in wake of George Floyd's murder and town residents were turning out nightly in Arlington Center and along Mass Ave for Black Lives Matter vigils. Many residents displayed Black Lives Matter signs on their lawns, in their windows, and on their doors. A Black Lives Matter sign was hung in front of Town Hall, on the fence in front of Arlington High School, and in many other public places in town. At the same time, Black Lives Matter signs were being torn down and AHRC was receiving numerous complaints of stolen signs.

In this tense racial climate, I listened to a voicemail from a resident who had had an experience with an officer and wanted to talk with someone to process the incident and help them decide whether or not to file a complaint. I called the resident back and learned the following:

The resident, who is Black, had been out walking their dog and passed some construction in the neighborhood with an officer detail. The resident walked by the officer's car (the officer's personal car, not their police vehicle) and could clearly hear the radio station that the officer had been listening to. (The officer was not in the car at that time; they were getting ready for the detail but the car radio was on and the driver's side door was open.)

The car radio was tuned into a talk radio show. The resident could clearly hear the content, which related to Black Lives Matter vigils, calls to defund police, and George Floyd. The resident described the discussion coming from the radio as racist. The resident was deeply concerned that an Arlington police officer was 1) choosing to listen

to such racially offensive content, 2) doing so while working, and 3) apparently unconcerned that anyone around them might overhear the show.

After this phone call, I went online to find the radio show in question and listened to the exact segment myself. The content was racist and representative of right-wing media that spreads misinformation and lies about BIPOC people, LGBTQIA+ people, and COVID-19. I immediately understood why anyone who does not subscribe to right-wing media would have been upset and troubled to come across a police officer listening to such content.

In my discussion with the resident, they wanted to talk through their options. They understood that it is impossible to dictate what a police officer can and cannot listen to in their personal vehicle. But they wanted to know if there were any standards regarding an officer's conduct in public? They also wondered if it was culturally acceptable, within the APD, to openly consume racist right-wing media? Did officers understand how this kind of behavior eroded trust? If they understood, would they care? Would a complaint achieve anything? Was a conversation even possible?

Once again, I was in touch with Chief Flaherty and set up a meeting with the resident, Chief Flaherty, and an AHRC commissioner. Each of us listened to the radio segment before we met, and we went into the meeting knowing in advance that Chief Flaherty had asked the officer in question if they would be willing to speak with the resident, which they declined. So when we met, we discussed the resident's concerns, we discussed how other residents of Arlington might have reacted if they had come across an Arlington police officer openly listening to a radio show with racist content, and we discussed how this incident could impact the police department's reputation if it became more widely known.

In our discussion, the resident's primary goal was for the Chief to communicate to the officer the impact of their actions. The resident wanted the officer to understand that while they may not have intended to offend anyone, by openly broadcasting a racist right-wing talk show while they were working, they had, in fact, offended a resident to such an extent that it made the resident question whether the department could be trusted at all on matters of race.

We ultimately decided to record a discussion between the resident and Chief Flaherty. In this discussion, Chief Flaherty was a stand in for the officer and the resident shared what they experienced when they were out walking their dog and overheard the radio show with the racist content. The recording started with a segment of the radio clip and then a discussion between Chief Flaherty and the resident.

The officer in question subsequently watched the video and had a follow up conversation with Chief Flaherty. The Chief reported back to the resident, and I also followed up. The resident said they wanted to file a complaint just so that it would be on the officer's personnel record, but ultimately decided not to do so. The resident did recommend—and gave permission—for the video to be used in training scenarios.

Ultimately, the resident said that recording the video and hearing from Chief Flaherty about how it was used assured the resident that their complaint had been taken seriously. The resident expressed appreciation that we were open to doing the video to meet their request that the harm caused by the officer—even though it was unintentional—was communicated back to them.

From both of these experiences, I came away impressed by Chief Flaherty's resolve to deliver restorative justice and her willingness to do whatever it took to do so. I shared non-identifying details of the first case with some of my colleagues who work in other cities and towns. All were impressed—a few to the point of disbelief—of the thoroughness of the investigation conducted by the Professional Standards Unit. I also shared non-identifying details of the second case with colleagues and they had a similar reaction to Chief Flaherty's participation in the video and her follow up with the officer and the resident.

But both experiences showed there is room for improvement in the complaints process and I hope that this committee will seriously consider and recommend alternative ways for residents to file complaints about police interactions. I have four recommendations based on my experiences:

- Create a mechanism for filing complaints anonymously
 - Some residents fear police and fear retaliation by police. They have come by this fear honestly, through their own life experiences or those of their loved ones.
- Create a mechanism for triaging incidents
 - An initial conversation with someone in the police department, an AHRC commissioner, or someone from the town's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion would help the resident understand their options
- Assess what outcomes the complainant would like and work with them
 - People want their complaints to be taken seriously. It is important to ensure that residents with complaints have the opportunity to express what they ultimately want from the situation. As with the second incident described above, filing an official complaint about the officer's conduct was far less important to the resident than being assured that the officer would be made aware of how their actions had impacted the resident and negatively harmed the department's reputation (as the resident shared the story with family and friends and so on).
- Assign someone who is not an employee of the police department to support residents who become involved in Professional Standards Investigations.
 - The process can be confusing and intimidating for residents, and including a third party in discussions to explain procedures, identify cultural differences, and clear up miscommunication, would be helpful.

APPENDIX E: Goals of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Considered by the Study Committee

One of the more interesting facts to emerge from the Study Committee's research was the realization that civilian oversight of law enforcement is not a recent innovation but has been in use since the mid-19th century. Over the years, dozens of states and municipalities have experimented with various organizational structures, some more successful than others, and each with its own mission and goals.

NACOLE reports that today there are more than 200 civilian review boards in use across the U.S. with almost no two exactly alike. Despite their differences, however, the majority of civilian oversight boards fall into three (3) distinct models, with the remainder being best described as "hybrids," blending functions and characteristics of the other three.

The goals of these oversight boards are usually similar. NACOLE has identified eight (8) common functions which the Study Committee believes are appropriate to our Charge.

1. To Establish a complaint process that is accessible to all and to remove impediments to the filing of complaints
2. To Ensure that investigations of civilian complaints are fair and thorough
3. To Promote public confidence in the police
4. To Enhance transparency of police departments through a process of accountability
5. To Improve the public's understanding of police policy, training and practices
6. To Deter officer misconduct by establishing effective and consistent investigation and disciplinary processes
7. To Analyze patterns and data to improve police policies, practices, training and management
8. To Reduce legal liability from officer misconduct

The Study Committee believes that its recommendation to Town Meeting for a permanent Civilian Police Advisory Committee fulfills many of these goals and functions identified above. Specifically, it is the Study Committee's recommendation that:

It shall be the duty of the Arlington Civilian Police Advisory Commission to serve as qualified advisors to the general public, the Arlington Police Department, and other Town staff with respect to policing in Arlington from a civilian perspective. The Commission shall serve as a technical resource for persons wishing to file specific complaints against or commendations of Arlington Police Department personnel, a forum for both positive and negative feedback about police conduct and policy in Arlington, and collaboratively engage the Arlington Police Department in its development or revision of police policies

Appendix F: Models of Civilian Oversight Researched by the Study Committee

There is a great deal of variation in the structures of civilian oversight entities. While these models were interesting and informed the Study Committee's discussions, not one of these models fulfilled the specific needs and preferences identified during our study; thus, our recommendation does not urge the adoption of one of these models.

Investigative/Quality Assurance Model

The Investigative model of civilian oversight board investigates individual complaints filed by members of the public; this model operates independently of the local police department, sometimes replacing the internal affairs functions of the local police force and other times working in parallel to it.

Investigative models can vary significantly, but share these characteristics:

- Receive and review complaints to confirm jurisdiction;
- Classify complaints according to their seriousness and other factors;
- Investigate allegations, subpoena witnesses and documents, and hold hearings both public and in executive session;
- Reach findings and conclusions, and recommend appropriate discipline to Town and police management if the allegations are proven.

Key Strengths:

- May reduce actual or perceived bias in police investigations and/or their outcomes because they are independent of internal affairs operations;
- May increase community trust in police misconduct investigations
- May be conducted by and with civilians with highly specialized training

Potential Weaknesses:

This model is the most expensive to fund and the most complex to operate because it typically requires the hiring of a regular staff with investigative training. Civilian investigators may face resistance from police officers, police management, defense lawyers and union representatives as they go about their work; and public confidence may decline over time if recommendations for discipline are not frequently adopted.

Locations where used: Syracuse, NY, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., New York City, San Diego County, CA, Pittsburg, PA.

Auditor/Monitor-focused Model

This model evaluates the process by which police misconduct complaints are submitted, and assesses the thoroughness and fairness of the investigative process used to address them. This model typically provides for:

- Overseeing complaint intake and quality control
- Data collection and analysis
- Identifying policy and practice concerns
- Assisting with Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Public reporting

Key Strengths:

- Monitors the efficacy of internal affairs/professional standards
- Identifies and addresses problems with the complaint filing process or the investigative steps and procedures used by the investigative body
- Identifies gaps in police training, policies or procedures
- Ensures fairness and consistency in disciplinary investigations and outcomes
- Facilitates public reporting and data access to improve transparency, enhance community-police dialogues and inspire confidence in the community

Potential Weaknesses:

The Auditor/Monitor model is advisory in nature with a focus on long-term improvements. This model is not case specific; rather, it examines broad patterns of community policing concerns. This model's success often depends on the professional expertise of the volunteers or staff tasked with the auditing and monitoring functions.

Locations where used: Tucson, AZ, San Jose, CA, Denver, CO, New Orleans, LA, Los Angeles, CA

The Review-focused Model

The Review model examines the quality of internal investigations, particularly those conducted by internal affairs officers/units. Civilian boards which use the Review model engage in these functions:

- Receive complaints from the community
- Assess the quality of already completed police internal affairs investigations
- Advocate to town and police officials for further review and investigation on individual matters
- Hold public meetings to gather, review and report on issues of public concern about local police activity or absence of police response

Key Strengths:

- Ensures community input in complaint investigation process
- May increase public trust in police misconduct investigative process

- Considered the least expensive model because the work can usually be accomplished by town resident volunteers

Potential Weaknesses:

The Review model grants less authority and typically operates less independently than other oversight models. This model may not authorize the evaluation of police policies or procedures, or provide opportunities to recommend policy changes or examine patterns of police conduct.

Locations where the Review model is used: Albany, NY, Indianapolis, IN, Urbana, IL, St. Petersburg, FL

The “Hybrid” Model

The Hybrid-model reflects its name: it contains elements from two or more of the traditional civilian review models and incorporates modifications to address the particular needs, preferences, and goals of the community it serves while respecting budget and resource limits.

APPENDIX G: Background and Timeline of Events

The Arlington Police Department (APD) is professional, proactive, and conducts its business in accordance with the principles of 21st-century policing. APD is one of just 103 of the more than 450 law enforcement agencies in Massachusetts that is accredited by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission. Successful accreditation is a significant achievement and considered to be a measure of best practices in policing.

Nonetheless, since 2018 the town of Arlington has experienced a series of local controversies related to policing that ultimately led to Town Meeting’s vote on November 18, 2020 to establish the Study Committee.

The most significant occurred in October 2018 when [media reported](#) that the incoming president of the Massachusetts Police Association, an APD lieutenant, had written three columns for the organization’s newsletter urging police officers, among other things, to “meet violence with violence.” These revelations ruptured the foundation of trust previously enjoyed between many residents of Arlington and the APD. Management of various aspects of this crisis continued over the next two years until it was formally resolved with residents of Arlington on September 22, 2020 in a public forum titled, “[Apology and Acknowledgement.](#)”

Other key moments leading to the creation of the Study Committee include the following:

January, 2020: Town Meeting member Jordan Weinstein and ten registered voters [submitted a warrant article](#) to Town Meeting to “form a committee of Town Meeting to study, craft and submit a Warrant Article to Town Meeting in 2021 for the creation of an Arlington police civilian advisory board.”

March 6, 2020: APD Chief Julie Flaherty [submitted a memo](#) to Town Manager Adam Chapdeleine proposing the creation of the Arlington Police Chief's Resident Advisory Committee on 21st Century Policing (PCAC). Chief Flaherty wrote, in part: "In an effort to further our mission of building and maintaining community relationships, building trust, fostering cooperation, and increasing transparency, I would like to form this commission to involve residents of Arlington in the overall mission of the police department. ... The mission of the PCAC would be to foster open communication and cooperation among community members and the police department. The PCAC would be tasked with advising and making recommendations to the Chief of Police, enhancing police community relations by serving as a liaison between the police department and the community, and reviewing and making recommendations on policies, procedures, recruitment, training, culture, and programs."

March 9, 2020: The Select Board voted to [take no action](#) on the proposed [warrant article](#) submitted by Town Meeting member Jordan Weinstein and ten registered voters described above.

June-August, 2020: In response to the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer, Arlington residents joined millions of people throughout the country protesting police violence by lining the sidewalks of Massachusetts Avenue from Arlington Center through the Heights every day at 6 pm. Many held signs calling for the firing of the APD lieutenant; demanding an end to police violence; and expressing solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement.

August, 2020: Town Meeting member Jordan Weinstein and ten registered voters submitted a [revised warrant article](#) to Town Meeting to "vote to form a Committee to study the creation of an Arlington police civilian review board independent from the police department with the authority and resources to receive and investigate complaints, review police services and make recommendations for their improvement."

September 10, 2020: In response to the town of Arlington's decision to hang a "Black Lives Matter" banner outside of Town Hall, the advocacy group "America Backs the Blue" held a rally to demonstrate support for law enforcement. Staged in front of Town Hall, the event drew a counter rally. Several hundred people, most of them Arlington residents, attended. [Media coverage](#) of the rallies describe them as divisive, tense, and marked with expressions of open hostility among participants.

September 22, 2020: The town held "[Apology and Acknowledgement](#)," a public forum featuring an apology to the community by the APD lieutenant. The public apology was followed by community reaction and discussion moderated by a member of the NAACP's National Board of Directors.

October 28, 2020: The Select Board voted unanimously to send the revised warrant article to the Special Town Meeting with the [following comment](#): "The Select Board urges Town Meeting's support for the establishment of a study committee to evaluate the creation and use

of alternative, civilian-based mechanisms to examine complaints about police interactions in Arlington. While there is not universal agreement on what kind of independent police review, if any, is appropriate in Arlington, it is the Board's collective view that a study committee informed by a diverse set of perspectives, equipped with data and information about the experiences of comparable communities, and advised of the potential impacts of pending statewide police accountability legislation, can and should be entrusted with researching these matters and making recommendations to Town Meeting on this important issue.

"It must be stressed that the Board supports this measure as parallel and complementary to the Police Chief's development of a Chief's Advisory Board, the quality work of the Arlington Police Department's Professional Standards team, and related work of APD, Town staff, volunteers, community groups, and residents to advance dialogues and relationships on a range of policing issues. Moreover, neither the Board nor the Committee's charge presupposes an outcome. Rather, it is the Board's hope and expectation that this Study Committee will bring together representatives of dedicated stakeholders for earnest and thorough exploration of their mission to advance our understanding of the best ways for Arlington and its police department to facilitate mutual respect and shared confidence in the discharge of police duties."

November 14, 2020, the town's Finance Committee published "[Arlington Police Department Review](#)," which addressed the growing discontent among "many residents of Arlington ... expressing a desire that the Town's [police] force better reflect and represent its diversity and values." Created in anticipation that "Town Meeting Members would turn to the Finance Committee for guidance in making decisions concerning the police department budget" the report sought to "determine the extent of the [Arlington Police] Department's resources and to assess how those resources are currently being deployed."

November 18, 2020, the Special Town Meeting [voted to establish](#) a Civilian Police Advisory Board Study Committee.

February 12, 2021, Police Chief Julie Flaherty [announced the formation](#) of the Chief's Advisory Committee writing on the APD blog: "Amid calls for accountability and transparency in policing, it has become more and more apparent that police departments and community members must work together to create change and to foster trust and cooperation. I recognize the importance of and value in regularly welcoming feedback and giving consideration to input from our residents, and to this end, I am pleased to share that I am launching a Chief's Advisory Committee that will provide a forum for police and community interaction." Stressing the importance of diverse community representation, she also writes that the Advisory Committee will have representatives from "the Human Rights, Disability, and Rainbow Commissions; Arlington Public Schools; Student Council; the religious community; the Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee; and the business community."

On March 18, 2021 the Study Committee met for the first time.