

Community Justice Center

Advisory Board Development Committee

Joint Recommendations

to the

Common Council and the Tompkins County Legislature

Process Overview: In response to Executive Order 203, the Tompkins County Legislature and Common Council adopted joint resolutions on March 30 and March 31, 2021, to address systemic inequities including disproportionate minority contact on People of Color, specifically Black people in the public safety system. The report included the establishment of a Community Justice Center to coordinate the implementation of approved collaborative plans. To support the Community Justice Center, the County and City governing bodies agreed to establish an advisory board to guide and advise on plan implementation.

The City and County established a short-term subcommittee of the following:

- Cynthia Brock, City of Ithaca Common Council
- Laura Lewis, City of Ithaca Common Council
- Schelley Michell-Nunn, City of Ithaca Human Resources
- Shawna Black, Tompkins County Legislature
- Travis Brooks, Tompkins County Legislature
- Deanna Carrithers, Tompkins County Administration
- Dr. Paula Ioanide, Chair and Professor, Ithaca College
- Sean Eldridge, Center for Policing Equity

Committee members met routinely from September 29, 2021, to April 19, 2022, with the goal of providing a report with recommendations for the establishment of the Community Justice Center Advisory Board. The Committee engaged in rigorous discussions regarding transparency, equity, accountability, and integrity which elevated the following:

- How does the Advisory Board guide the implementation of approved plans in the Reimagining Public Safety Collaborative?
- What is the role of the Advisory Board in relationship to the Community Justice Center Project Director and associated CJC staff?
- How do we center equity and the experiences of minoritized communities, specifically Black and Brown communities?
- What authority will the Community Justice Center Advisory Board have in relation to the process?

- What will the role of the CJC Advisory Board be in measuring success of the implementation of Executive Order 203 plans?
- What is the relationship to other boards serving similar constituencies? (i.e., Police Review Board, CJATI, etc.)

All meeting notes are posted on the Reimagining Public Safety website at www.publicsafetyreimagined.org.

To achieve the goal of reducing disproportionate contact with minoritized groups in the criminal justice system, the committee recommends the following *duties* as a framework for the Community Justice Center Advisory Board:

- Role of the Community Justice Center Advisory Board
 - CJC Board will provide guidance of the implementation of and guide the RPS plans
 - Serve as a vehicle for transparency and accountability for the Reimagining Public Safety process
 - Serve as a communication mechanism between minoritized communities, elected leaders, governmental departments, and non-profit agencies
 - The CJC Advisory Board shall be responsible for actively soliciting, receiving, and reviewing community input
 - Serve as a liaison, and at the request of Common Council or the Legislature, the Sheriff, and/or community groups or organizations involved, serve as a support to help resolve potential disputes between the Criminal Justice System and members of the community, or organizations within Tompkins County
 - Recommend to Common Council or the Legislature as appropriate, resources, training, and services needed to implement collaborative Reimagining Public Safety Plans
 - Promote understanding of the ways minoritized people's intersecting social identities (e.g., their race, gender, LGBTQ+, class, ability, religion, etc.) may produce overlapping and compounding discriminatory effects as they interact with the criminal justice system.
 - Consider budgetary needs, requests, and funding sources, and make budgetary recommendations to the CJC Director, City Common Council and County Legislature
 - CJC Board will make policy recommendations to elected officials including Common Council, County Legislature, Sheriff's Office, District Attorney's Office regarding CJC and public safety policies
- Role of the Community Justice Center Director
 - Leads and operationalizes the implementation of the Tompkins County and City of Ithaca Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations.
 - Develops and implements a comprehensive community engagement strategy to ensure the community is involved in all aspects of the implementation process.

- Develops systems and process timelines for informing elected leaders, staff, and community members of plan progress.
 - Directs, organizes, and facilitates working groups.
 - Develops reports and presentations with clarity to ensure understanding at all levels of the community.
 - Provides leadership, guidance, training, and support to internal and external partners in the development and implementation of recommendations.
 - Provides expert technical guidance and leadership to stakeholders including management and elected officials of social justice issues affecting County/City programs and practices based on data and analysis of proposed legislation and regulations related to the public safety system.
 - Coordinates with the Tompkins County Public Safety, Health and Human Services Committee, and Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committees and other legislative committees.
 - Directs, evaluates, and coordinates analyses pertaining to plan recommendations regarding race and equity policy issues and long-term plans to address department needs and services and the needs of the community.
- Role of Working Groups
 - Working groups serve as the vehicle to implement RPS plans. Working groups are composed of impacted stakeholders such as community members, department staff and elected officials as appropriate. Working groups are designed to develop the requested work product directed to resolutions approved by the Common Council and the Legislature.
 - Working group members are selected by the Community Justice Center Project Director in collaboration with City/County elected.

Based upon the framework, the committee recommends the following structure for the Community Justice Center Advisory Board:

- **Purpose:** The purpose of the Community Justice Center Advisory Board is to advise the Tompkins County Legislature, City of Ithaca Common Council and Community Justice Center Project Director to improve public transparency and accountability with respect to the City of Ithaca and Tompkins County public safety systems, by providing robust opportunities for community engagement, ongoing analysis, and oversight of the implementation of the Reimagining Public Safety plans.
- **Oversight and Appointment:** The Community Justice Center Advisory Board will be jointly overseen by the City of Ithaca Common Council and Tompkins County Legislature. Appointments to the Community Justice Center will be made jointly based upon mutually agreed upon terms and conditions in consultation with the Community Justice Center Project Director. The 7 appointed impacted stakeholder agency positions will be divided as follows: 5 will come from County recommendations (Sheriff's Office, District Attorney, Assigned Counsel, Mental Health, Harm Reduction Agency), 2 will come from City recommendations (IPD Chief, LEAD). The 7 appointed impacted community representative positions will be divided as follows: 5 will come from City recommendations and 2 will come from County recommendations. Any changes to the

board appointment process must be mutually agreed upon by both the City and County elected leadership.

- **Composition of the Board:** The Community Justice Center Advisory Board will have an inclusive composition of impacted stakeholder agencies, community members and elected officials that include both voting members and associate non-voting members. The board will be composed of voting members to include the Community Justice Center Project Director plus 14 individuals, appointed jointly by both the Common Council and Tompkins County Legislature.
 - The following impacted stakeholder agencies appointed to the board shall be:
 - Seven designated appointees from the impacted stakeholder agencies shall include:
 - Ithaca Police Department Chief or their designee
 - Sheriff's Office (Elected Sheriff or their designee)
 - District Attorney or their designee
 - Assigned Counsel
 - Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program Representative
 - Mental Health Representative
 - Harm Reduction Agency (Reach Medical)
 - Seven appointees from impacted community populations to the board shall be appointed based upon the following criteria including:
 - Persons with lived experiences and;
 - Promote community engagement to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy in the process and;
 - Ability to address racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color.

The board will also include Associate non-voting members as contributors who provide critical insight and are actively engaged in the discussions and activities of the Board. Associate members may be directly impacted or indirectly impacted by the outcomes of the Reimagining Public Safety plans.

Associate non-voting members shall be identified based upon content expertise and ability to contribute to the implementation of the Reimagining Public Safety plans. Criteria for consideration would include:

- Mental Health
- Youth Services
- Legal
- Common Council
- Tompkins County Legislature

- **Meeting Frequency:** The Advisory Board will meet monthly and no less than quarterly. Meetings will be public and Advisory Board members may request an executive session to discuss confidential matters, as necessary.

Special Meetings: The Chair may, when deemed necessary, call a special meeting of the CJC Advisory Board with notification at least five days in advance, unless there is an urgent situation at which the board must take action. Confirmation of receipt of notification is required. The Chair shall call a special meeting at the written request of five voting members. The request shall be submitted to the Chair, and copied to staff, by email, fax or paper communication.

- **Vacancies:** The appointing governing body (City or County) will appoint members to fill vacancies on the Advisory Board created by events other than the normal end of a member's term in accordance with the process set forth. Vacancies shall be filled within 60 days of member resignation. Appointments to fill a vacancy shall not constitute an appointment for a full term but solely to fill the balance of the unexpired term.
- **Term of Service:** Exclusive of impacted stakeholder agencies, each member shall serve for a two-year term. The term for all members shall begin January 1 and end December 31. However, the first term of all members who are the initial appointees to the Advisory Board, shall be deemed to commence on the date their appointment is approved by the appointing governing body and will end on December 31 of a succeeding year as set forth by the appointing governing body.

As part of the original creation of the Advisory Board only, the initial Advisory Board members shall be divided into two groups, with Group A serving an initial one-year term, Group B serving an initial two-year term. The initial one-year term of Group A shall not be considered towards the restriction of two full two-year terms as described in this section. The initial appointees to the Advisory board members shall be placed into two groups as determined by the City and County appointment process.

No member may serve on the Advisory Board for more than two full consecutive terms unless such limitation is waived by the appointing governing body. After serving two-consecutive terms, prior members may be considered for re-appoint after a two-year period. Membership may not automatically be extended.

- **Attendance:** After the second absence from CJC Advisory Board meetings within a calendar year the member will be contacted by the Chair to see if there are problems that can be remedied.

After the fifth absence within a calendar year the CJC Advisory Board shall vote on whether or not to recommend to the Chair of the County Legislature to declare that member's seat vacant and request replacement of that member due to non-attendance at CJC Advisory Board meetings. The member may appeal to the full CJC Advisory Board for reconsideration of any non-attendance recommendation due to special circumstances.

Members may also request a leave of absence from the CJC Advisory Board prior to any necessary prolonged absence. Such leave is not automatically granted but will be decided by vote of the CJC Advisory Board based on the best interests of Tompkins County and the City of Ithaca.

- **Annual Reporting:** The Advisory Board shall report no less than annually and no more than quarterly to the Common Council and Tompkins County Legislature. All information provided must be shared with both municipalities.
- **Coordination and Cooperation:** In the discharge of its duties, the City Ithaca Common Council and Tompkins County Legislature directs all officers and employees of the coordinating entities to cooperate with the Advisory and, to the extent permitted by law, promptly supply copies of requested documents and records, so that other public officers and Advisory Board members can fully and properly perform their respective duties.
- **Training:** Each Advisory Board member must successfully complete a comprehensive training and orientation program within six months of appointment. Failure to complete the training may result in disqualification. The training program shall be robust and cover constitutional policing including such topics as use of force, mental health issues, etc. Each board member shall actively participate in the ongoing training program as necessary to fulfill the duties as required for Advisory Board participation.
- **Board Leadership, Organization and Meeting Cadence:** The Community Justice Center Advisory Board will elect its own chairperson annually and shall establish scheduled monthly meeting dates and will meet no less than quarterly. No chairperson shall serve for more than two consecutive one-year terms but may be re-elected after a minimum of a one-term period has elapsed since that person last served as chairperson.

The Advisory Board shall, with the advice of appropriate parties, prepare and adopt necessary rules and regulations for the conduct of its business. A copy of the rules and regulations shall be filed with the City and County Clerks' Offices. The Advisory Board shall conduct itself in accordance with the rules and regulations approved in consultation with the Project Director.

One member of the Community Justice Center Advisory Board or another person so designated by the Community Justice Center shall serve as Secretary for the purpose of recording and distributing minutes of the meetings, and other administrative duties. Each member shall have the right to present agenda items for discussion.

- **Evaluation:** At the end of the third year of the Community Justice Center and implementation of the Reimagining Public Safety joint plans, the Advisory Board shall undertake a detailed self-evaluation. This detailed self-evaluation shall include a candid assessment about the strengths, weaknesses, successes and challenges of the Advisory Board and implementation of joint plans. It shall also contain recommendations as to whether the Advisory Board should continue in existence and if so, any recommended revisions to its responsibilities and/or authority and whether an independent management audit should be conducted.

The self-evaluation should also contain recommendations on improvements regarding the Advisory Board's operations. The self-evaluation shall be submitted to the City of Ithaca Common Council and Tompkins County Legislature and made available to the public, subject to applicable privileges and protections.

The City of Ithaca Common Council and Tompkins County Legislature shall, within 90 days following the Advisory Board self-evaluation being transmitted to the Board, review the Advisory Board's self-evaluation, and determine whether an independent management audit should be conducted.

Within one year following the issuance of the self-evaluation, the Advisory Board shall provide a written report to the Tompkins County Legislature regarding the status of the implementation of the recommendations identified in the self-evaluation. This written report shall be made available to the public, subject to applicable privileges and protections.

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