COMMON COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
Dorcey Applyrs, Chair

Meeting called by: Dorcey Applyrs, Chair Date: 10-9-18 Time: 5:30PM

Attendees: Applyrs, Chair ☒ Igoe ☒ Kimbrough ☒ Balarin ☒ Hoey ☒
Council Members Present: President Pro Temp Conti, President Corey Ellis, Flynn, Anane, Johnson, Love, Robinson and Fahey
Chief Eric Hawkins
Commander Michael Basile

Invitees/ Speakers: Dr. Alice Green

City Personnel Present: Jared Pellerin, Corporation Council William Kelly, and City Auditor Susan Rizzo

Minutes

Discussion:
The meeting was called to order by the Chairwoman Dorcey Applyrs.

Points of Discussion:
• Albany Police Department Chief Eric Hawkins gave his condolences to Ellazar Williams and hope for a speedy recovery.
• Chief Hawkins stated that this incident happened prior to being the Chief of Police and the reviewed report that has been completed.
• Chief Hawkins said that that shooting involving officer detective James Olsen and 19-year-old Ellazar Williams was justified and “the investigation, from my experience, was procedurally sound.”
• Chief Hawkins said that "this incident should not fracture this community."
• Dr. Green believes that we lacked all the information to properly determine what transpired that day and she has requested additional information regarding the incident.
• Dr. Green made the following requests;
  o Chief Hawkins provide a written investigation report to the community that includes all surveillance camera videos, dash-cam videos, and/or audio recordings in possession of the Police Department related to the incident. A written report will serve as the foundation for a collaborative Department/Community assessment of factors that precipitated the incident, as well as a plan for preventing such tragic events in the future, which includes finding ways to address the widely-held negative stereotypes of black males.
  o A copy of all 911 calls, dispatch calls, signed and dated incident reports, arrest reports, and use of force reports be released.
  o The name of the arresting officer who failed to sign the arrest report should be revealed to the public.
• Dr. Green made the following recommendation;
Section 50-A of the Civil Service Law should be changed so that all use of force reports involving a police officer’s use of a weapon while on duty during tenure with a police department could be released to the public as well as disciplinary findings sustaining any disciplinary charges against the officer could be released.

The Center for Law and Justice recommends that all shootings by a police officer be investigated by the New York State Attorney General. We recommend such an investigation in the shooting of Mr. Ellazar Williams.

- Councilman Alfredo Balarin stated that he was a powerful witness to a police shooting and it happens so quickly. He claims that camera allows people to have a better understanding of an incident. Councilman Balarin asked when all officers including detectives have body cameras.
- Chief Hawkins stated that they will have it within weeks.
- Councilman Thomas Hoey noted that we do not have a video of the incident and do not know what happens.
- Councilman Hoey asked how can we prevent these things from happening in the future, and would police dogs help in situations like this.
- Councilman Kelly Kimbrough, a former police officer stated that the accounts we are receiving are not lining up with the video. Councilman noted that he does not what he would do in that situation.
- Councilman Igoe stated that we will never if Mr. Williams turned around during the shooting.
- Councilwoman Fahey noted the confusion of the distance from the shooter and Mr. Williams.
- President Pro Temp Conti asked if this case met the required for Special Prosecutor.
- Chief Hawkins answered it did not. The Attorney General office did review the case and did not take the case. The District Attorney’s office is investigating the matter and will present its findings to a grand jury.
- President Corey Ellis asked if the caller there was an African American man with a hoody and gun questioned. President Ellis noted that we could not see a gun on the video.
- Chief Hawkins answered yes that person was interviewed.
- Councilman Jack Flynn stated that the shooting happened in the area of the school and there was possible that children could have been dangerous.
- Councilman Owusu Anane noted that Detective Olsen is modified duty.
- Councilman Derek Johnson stated that the video clearly showed Ellazar Williams was trying to flee police and "the video doesn't show imminent danger."
- Dr. Green stated that the there is no evidence that Mr. Williams had a knife.
- Commander Basile states that we cannot release evidence on an on-going investigation.
- Chief Hawkins stated that we are going down a dangerous slope if we are questioning the indignity of officer’s statements.
- The Public Safety Chair, Councilwoman Dorcy Applyrs stated that trust for police officers by the community must be earned.
- Councilwoman Joyce Love asked if officer is not part of the community.
- Councilman Jahmel Robinson stated that he has an issue with Mr. Williams’s charge. He is worried about a young man serving time for a crime he did not commit.
- Commander Basile stated that he cannot interview Mr. Williams.
- Many who spoke during public comment interpreted the video differently and were critical of the way the incident was investigated.
- The chief said that "An officer needs to hear what the community is saying and the frustration and the pain, but also the community needs to hear about the challenges and frustrations and some of the things my officers are going through as well. They're both real experiences."

After public comments, the Chairperson asked for a motion to adjourn, which was duly made, seconded, and passed.