



DOMINICK PANGALLO  
MAYOR

**CITY OF SALEM  
RACE EQUITY COMMISSION**

98 WASHINGTON STREET  
SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS 01970  
978.745-9595 x. 41505

REGINA ZARAGOZA FREY, CHAIR  
ALPHONSE WRIGHT, VICE CHAIR

**DRAFT  
MINUTES OF THE RACE EQUITY COMMISSION  
April 4, 2024**

A meeting of the Salem Race Equity Commission (REC) was held on April 4, 2024, at 5:30 pm via ZOOM, an online video conference call system in accordance with Chapter 107 of the Act of 2022.

**1. Roll Call**

Present on the call were: Regina Zaragoza Frey (Chair), Alphonse Wright (Vice Chair), Shantel Alix, Rosa Alvarado, Nicole McLaughlin, Paola Miranda, Tara Dhanraj Roden, City of Salem Human Resources Director Lisa Cammarata, Chief of Police Lucas Miller, and City Council Liaison Jeff Cohen.

Absent were: Alexandra Ramos, Kenzie Chin, and Salem Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Stephen Zrike.

Other meeting attendees include: Nathan Thomas (SATV)

**2. Approve previous meeting minutes.**

a. March 7, 2024

Alexandra Ramos sent an email before the meeting requesting a change to the minutes. Where it says “Salem Charter School” should be changed to say “Salem Academy Charter School.”

Chair Zaragoza entertained a motion to approve the previous meetings’ minutes for March 7, 2024 with the requested change. Motion was made by Vice Chair Wright, seconded by Tara Dhanraj Roden, and the motion was carried unanimously.

**3. Public Comment.**

Chair Zaragoza made a call for public comment. There was no public comment.

**4. Discussion regarding Race Equity Task Force report.**



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### **a. Update on Public Safety section by Chief of Police Lucas Miller.**

Chair Zaragoza introduced Chief of Police Lucas Miller to present the update.

Chief Miller began by expressing his gratitude for being included in the Race Equity Task Force meetings in 2021 because it provided a lot of guidance as he was newly appointed Chief of Police.

Chief Miller reported the Department Demographics for 2024 and how much they have changed since the Race Equity Task Force report was released in 2021. One of the items in the report was about how the Police Department reflected the diversity of the Salem community. Salem is above most of the other Police Departments in the area in terms of diversity.

- 94 Uniformed Officers
- 20% Persons of Color (+5%)
- 15% Latino/Latina (+5%)
- 1% Black (-1%)
- 10% Female (+4%)
- 2% LGBTQ (+1%)

From the Salem Race Equity Task Force Report:

- “The members of the Salem Police Department (SPD) need more one-on-one training to better work with Salem residents who are members of non-white communities, and the LGBTQ+ community as well.”
- “Based on officers’ responses, it was clear that the SPD could also use cultural sensitivity training internally, to address minor cultural and LGBTQ+ microaggressions, and the understanding of others and their values from all perspectives (white, PoC, and LGBTQ+).”

Chief Miller shared that since July 2021, members of the SPD have received annual trainings for Implicit Bias and Cultural Competency. In addition, DEI Director Regina Zaragoza has worked patiently with the department to implement ongoing DEI training specifically tailored for police officers. Chief Miller expressed appreciation to Chair Zaragoza for all of her leadership and support. Members of the department all received the first module before the end of 2023. Chief Miller anticipates beginning the second module immediately after the beginning of the new fiscal year.

From the Salem Race Equity Task Force Report:



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- “Further training in de-escalation techniques and there should be incentives to recognize those who either use them or encourage other colleagues to do so in the heat of the moment.”

Chief Miller shared that de-escalation has been incorporated into ongoing training every year since the report was published. Officers have attended de-escalation training both as a stand-alone module and incorporated into their annual use-of-force training. ‘Active Bystander’ training has also been incorporated into this use-of-force training.

From the Salem Race Equity Task Force Report:

- “SPD should be provided the proper budget for the implementation of body cams that cannot be tampered with to show the efficacy of the training and the bias that may remain in others. This will help to protect officers and community members alike.”

Chief Miller shared that through local funding, a state grant, and a federal grant, all Salem Police Officers are issued a Body-Worn Camera and we have a robust policy for their use. The SPD also hired two employees responsible for maintaining the video footage and indexing it to the relevant incidents. The SPD recently added a sensor to the officers’ holsters so that anytime an officer grabs their gun, it will automatically turn on their camera and those of the officers in the immediate vicinity. The SPD is also looking into implementing additional technology that will automatically turn on the cameras in the police cars every time officers turn on the car lights and sirens. Chief Miller believes the addition of these body cameras is one of the most successful initiatives that he helped implement.

The Salem Race Equity Task Force recommended the creation of a Civilian Oversight Group comprised of citizens with knowledge of policing and members of the department. This recommendation is harder to implement because there is a strict structure and hierarchy of the SPD. Chief Miller also pointed out that the term “oversight” isn’t clear in terms of their influence on the decisions of the SPD. The SPD is answerable to the Mayor and City Council and they participate in many committees, including the Race Equity Commission.

Shortly after the Race Equity Task Force recommendations came out, the State implemented the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission which does have rather robust oversight of Police Departments.

- Nine members board consisting of six civilians, a Police Chief, a union representative, and an officer of color.



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- Reviews all complaints and investigations of police misconduct (internal and external).
- Can initiate their own investigations.
- Can discipline officers up to and including decertification.
- Publishes past disciplines and new findings.
- <https://www.mass.gov/doc/disciplinary-records-by-law-enforcement-agency-as-of-february-7-2024/download>

As a measure of success, Chief Miller shared the number of Civilian complaints. For context, typically in a year, the SPD makes over 1,000 arrests and criminal court referrals as well as over 5,000 traffic stops that result in a citation or warning.

- 2020 - 21 complaints
- 2021 - 21 complaints
- 2022 - 19 complaints
- 2023 - 17 complaints
- 2024 (YTD March 31) – 2 complaints

Vice Chair Wright expressed his appreciation and pride in the progress that the SPD has made and in his partnership with them. He liked that Chief Miller is working to change the culture of the SPD by incentivizing de-escalation. Vice Chair Wright asked how many of the complaints reported come in October. Chief Miller did not have the numbers broken down by months, but he does recall that many encounters increase in October which does increase complaints during that time.

Tara Dhanraj Roden expressed her appreciation for sharing this information and prefaced her questions by sharing that she works in the justice reform policy field. She first asked who leads the implicit bias and cultural competency trainings. Chief Miller responded that both trainings are offered by MPTC, a state funded training.

Dhanraj Roden asked about the trainings being offered by Chair and DEI Director Zaragoza including what topics, how many modules there intend to be, and any additional information. She mentioned that the REC could potentially be involved in helping with these. Chief Miller explained that the second module is still being developed, but currently they are working with HAWC to integrate domestic violence topics to the training. Chair Zaragoza further explained that the highest ranking officers including Chief Miller went through what is now the City of Salem's onboarding DEI training which is required by all full time city employees. In regard to other law enforcement staff, she was hearing from nonprofits like HAWC that they wanted the partnership with the SPD and Fire Department so Chair Zaragoza partnered with them to do the training. Specific topics



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include the four “I”s of oppression, the systems of oppression (or “isms”), implicit bias, privilege, microaggressions, inclusive language, and a discussion about how DEI applies to each specific role. For the SPD training specifically, the sections that need to be covered for module 2 are privilege and language access. Chief Miller added that he did put a line in this year’s budget specifically to cover DEI training so there should be room to incorporate additional topics so he would welcome any ideas the REC has.

Dhanraj Roden asked if there is buy-in with the officers about using the body cameras. Chief Miller said he thinks the vast majority do support the use of them. He went on to explain that the body cameras have resulted in several incidents where officers were disciplined for misconduct, but there have also been incidents where the body cameras have been used to defend officers whose actions were questioned internally or by a civilian complaint.

Dhanraj Roden asked if the SPD analyzes arrest record data, such as comparing arrest records to racial breakdowns in the city, then makes it available to the public. Chief Miller said he does this himself twice a year so he is aware, but this information is not currently available publicly on the website. Chief Miller continued to explain that the arrest record data does not perfectly mirror the demographics of the city, but it is close enough that he is confident the officers are going about the role in an unbiased way. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts does an annual hands-free analysis that the city of Salem was called out in many years ago, but has not been statistically biased since then.

Chair Zaragoza welcomed Dhanraj Roden to share any recommendations she learns about from working in this field. She also gave a shout out to Chief Miller and the SPD for devoting budget to this because there is a lot of overtime that needs to be paid in order to ensure officers participate in these 4 hour training sessions. The city of Salem is ahead of other local communities in providing these comprehensive DEI training for officers.

Vice Chair Wright clarified that there are 9 officers who have not completed the first module yet. Chief Miller confirmed. Vice Chair Wright asked if there was a timeline in which the officers are mandated to complete it. Chief Miller said these are 9 new officers who were hired after the previous session was offered and Chair Zaragoza is planning to do the training for just these officers. Chief Miller concluded by expressing his gratitude to Chair Zaragoza, Vice Chair Wright, and the REC for being advisors of this work.

- 5. Update regarding Discrimination Form reports.**
  - a. Adding REC members to the list of email recipients.**



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Chair Zaragoza shared that REC members will be added as recipients for all new discrimination reporting form submissions. She will forward all previous report submissions. Chair Zaragoza asked if Human Resources Director Lisa Cammarata, Chief of Police Lucas Miller, and City Council Liaison Jeff Cohen would also like to be added as recipients. All said yes.

### **6. Update on Equity Audit project.**

- a. ReadySet will be in Salem during the week of April 22 to conduct a community assessment. They will be hosting a “Community Jam” in the Community Life Center to obtain feedback.**

Chair Zaragoza shared that the “Community Jam” event will be on Tuesday, April 23 from 5-6:30pm at the Community Life Center. This event is open to everyone in the community who would like to talk to them and share feedback. Additionally, while in Salem they will be hosting many one-on-one interviews and focus groups with community groups such as the Latino Leadership Coalition, the North Shore Community Development Coalition (CDC), Salem Pantry, church services, and other types of community gatherings. Chair Zaragoza encouraged REC members to attend the Community Jam. She shared that the hope is for the consultants to also reach the community members who we don’t typically hear from by just walking around the community and businesses.

Director Lisa Cammarata shared that ReadySet reached out to her because they wanted to do a focus group with the Commission on Disabilities and she is wondering what this might entail. Chair Zaragoza clarified that this would be a working meeting for them to ask questions and gather feedback because it is important that the Commission on Disabilities is included. Cammarata welcomed REC members to attend this on April 16.

Vice Chair Wright shared his experience of talking with them on the phone for a one-on-one interview. He said the questions mainly focused on where he thought equity needed attention in the city and where it was improving. They made it a very comfortable conversation.

Councillor Cohen said that the Commission on Disabilities is a great group for ReadySet to talk to because they have good attendance, a great conversation, and they are a diverse group.

### **7. New business.**

- a. May meeting – Salem Public Schools to give an update regarding progress made from the Race Equity Task Force Report.**



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Chair Zaragoza shared that this update will be similar to Chief Miller's update at this meeting. As REC members are hearing these updates, she encouraged them to think about any next steps such as recommendations or additional ideas.

Dhanraj Roden asked if the agenda at the next meeting can include a follow up discussion about Chief Miller's presentation so REC members can share any additional recommendations or ideas. Chair Zaragoza confirmed that this will be added.

Vice Chair Wright shared that one of the recommendations from the Race Equity Task Force was a central depository of resources that residents can turn to such as for food, housing, healthcare, and schools. He shared that this could be a great first step in supporting residents' access to information without needing to contact people directly. Chair Zaragoza confirmed this will be added.

**8. Adjournment.**

Motion to adjourn was made by Lisa Cammarata, seconded by Vice Chair Wright, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Giffen  
Race Equity Commission Minute Taker