

The June 15 meeting of the Special Policing Subcommittee was called to order at 6:04 pm. Andre Green, Ellenor Barish, Sarah Phillips, Dayshawn Simmons, Paige Tobin, Aisha Banda, Elizabeth Doncaster, and Mary Skipper were present.

Chair Andre Green opened the meeting with a timeline: the subcommittee is to present a recommendation to the full School Committee at the end of the calendar year, following the collection of student, parent, and community input.

He then announced the agenda - an opportunity to talk with district's attorney Paige Tobin about the State's new MOU. She has submitted a memo on the topic.

Attorney Pagie Tobin provided background information on the Commonwealth's new model MOU, which serves to clarify and limit the role of SRO compared to previous versions.

She laid out the primary differences between the district's 2018 MOU and the new model MOU.

- Mandates expanded training and new certification
- Clarifies and limits the ability of SROs and police in general to enter school grounds to make an arrest or take action for non-violent incidents.
- Clarifies that the SRO is not involved in school discipline nor do they assume the role of a counselor or social worker.
- Describes how SPD and school would set out procedures that will be consistent and reviewed on a yearly basis.

There followed a discussion about how families have used the schools as a resource when deciding whether to file reports on incidents happening in or outside of school. Anecdotally, more families are filing reports directly with the police for issues arising outside of school.

Chair Green brought the conversation back to the MOU. Attorney Tobin explained that the purpose of the MOU is to be transparent about the relationship between SPS and SPD. She clarified that the School Committee can modify the MOU to cover additional processes or restrictions on police involvement as allowable by law. Even the SRO position is optional, but this MOU is specifically about the SRO role. Without the SRO role or a separate MOU, information sharing between SPS and SPD would revert to state and federal law.

There followed a discussion about law enforcement response to mental health issues. The attorney and district administrators clarified that they would not want an SRO to be handling those situations but that on occasions when staff request police presence at the time a student is being taken for evaluation, an SRO (or other officer with similar training) is preferred over a standard officer.

The possibility of having some of the SRO duties covered by a police department employee who is not a sworn and armed officer was discussed, but the attorney did not think it was realistic given the skills laid out in the MOU and bargaining implications. Superintendent Skipper described situations when an armed officer might be uniquely prepared to respond, though we haven't needed them in that capacity in recent years. She pointed out that while we have not

had SROs at other schools in the district, an SRO assigned to the high school could be sent to another school to respond to a threat.

Conversation shifted to whether SPS should adopt an MOU that would cover non-SRO police involvement with schools. Attorney Tobin expressed concern about deploying Community Police Officers as de facto SROs without SRO training.

The group discussed whether an SRO has to be in uniform while on duty - no, and whether they must be armed when on duty - yes. It was noted that some community members would not be comfortable with an armed officer in the building.

While the Juvenile Justice Roundtable is not included in the Commonwealth's Model MOU, Attorney Tobin recommends adding it if School Committee opts to reinstate the SRO. Attorney Tobin and administrators clarified that individual students are not discussed at Juvenile Justice Roundtable.

A request was made to invite people to describe how alternative MOUs might work or how other districts (such as Worcester) that have eliminated the SRO are navigating. In terms of the MOU presented by the advocacy group. The Worcester Superintendent has just retired and the district was not able to send someone when invited. Attorney Tobin addressed one alternative MOU that calls for termination of the SRO program, which she does not recommend. She also expressed concern regarding some aspects of that proposal which are not legal and/or have important collective bargaining implications. Chair Green invited advocacy groups and other districts to submit memos like Ms. Tobin has.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 pm.