



TOWN OF  
**HILLSBOROUGH**  
NORTH CAROLINA

October 25, 2021

Dear Commissioners, Mr. Peterson, Chief Hampton, and Mr. Hornik,

The Mayor's Task Force on Re-Imagining Public Safety was established in November 2020. The task force was charged to "Assess and determine a model for community safety review appropriate for the Hillsborough community in terms of charge, appointment, and composition, within the confines of state and local law."

In June of 2020, the Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution entitled "Resolution Denouncing the Murder of George Floyd." One of the actionable items in this resolution was a commitment to establish a standing advisory board to consider issues of importance to the community regarding policing. Upon reflection, and in consultation with the town manager, I felt it was important that the form and substance of this advisory board be community driven, rather than a top-down decision by elected officials and town staff. Ultimately, the decision of what any advisory board looks like and how it operates is up to the Board of Commissioners; but given the power differentials between police, elected officials, and the public, having significant community input felt paramount. In addition, the resolution asked the town manager and police chief to engage with the public regarding concerns the community has regarding public safety and policing. That engagement has occurred in various venues, and the task force provided an opportunity to dive into some of these issues in depth.

There were over thirty applications to the task force, demonstrating a high level of interest in this initiative. A selection committee comprised of myself, Mayor Pro Tem Mark Bell, Fairview Community Watch President Faylor Riley, and Planning Board member Lisa Frazier met to review the applications. The selection committee settled on fifteen members for the task force, representing a full array of Hillsborough neighborhoods, including several areas where the town typically struggles to manifest participation in volunteer advisory boards.

Although task force members originally committed to four to six meetings, that estimation was well exceeded. The task force met a total of ten times, beginning in December 2020 and ending in September 2021. Members also met separately in two smaller groups to discuss and draft recommendations based on the content of task force meetings and community needs. Although not all task force appointees were able to continue past the initial time commitment, every member made important contributions to this effort. I am deeply grateful to the members, to Hillsborough Police Department Management Analyst Eli Valsing for providing technical and other administrative support, and to Chief Duane Hampton for his multiple in-depth presentations, time, and attention to the task force.

The topics addressed by the task force were:

- Mental health calls: the nature and number of these calls and Hillsborough Police Department response challenges
- Use of force policy

- General policies and practices of the Hillsborough Police Department
- Data showing activity and patterns in Hillsborough Police Department patrols
- Data showing racially disproportionate traffic stops, including a presentation by one of the leading experts on this issue, Dr. Frank Baumgartner
- Policing advisory boards: models used by other jurisdictions, what does and does not work about these models and why they are often unsatisfying for the public, and innovative models to better meet community needs and expectations.

In this packet, you will find recommendations on topical areas into which the task force delved, including recommendations for a standing advisory board. In making these recommendations, I urged the task force members to not be held back by questions regarding cost, legality, or capacity in order that they might be expansive in their asks for what the community needs. Thus, these recommendations need vetting by the town attorney. In addition, the town board, the town manager, and the police chief have an important task before us — to take these recommendations and consider how we can implement them in service to the public safety of our residents.

We are in a transformative time in the realm of racial justice and public safety. The call from our community in the wake of the George Floyd uprising across the country was clear. The ball is in our court now for how we will answer. I look forward to working together to implement policies and practices for a more just and equitable Hillsborough that is safe for everyone. This will take time, ingenuity, and strong communication with each other and with the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenn E. Weaver", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Mayor Jenn Weaver