

RESOLUTION NO. 79 OF 2020

A RESOLUTION TO CREATE A TASK FORCE TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS AND HEARINGS REGARDING POLICE REFORM AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

BY: COUNCILWOMAN TABATHA TAYLOR

WHEREAS, on May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46 year old black man, was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, during an arrest for allegedly using a counterfeit bill; and

WHEREAS, the remarkable video images - captured by 17 year old, Darnella Frazier, of Mr. Floyd's death as Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, knelt on his neck and back for almost nine (9) minutes while Mr. Floyd was handcuffed and lying face down in the street, begging for his life and repeatedly saying "I can't breathe"- demonstrated the problem that black men, women and children have with police departments across this nation. The video shocked all people of good will and galvanized worldwide demands for the reform of police departments everywhere; and

WHEREAS, the KSLA video of Tommie McGolthen's encounter with Shreveport Police officers and his death while in their custody, provides an additional example of the need to reform the Shreveport Police Department; and

WHEREAS, because of these events and the expectation of citizens, the Shreveport City Council is, as Dr. King said, confronted with "The Fierce Urgency of Now. This is not time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous action"; and

WHEREAS, the Shreveport Police Department should adopt policies to require each officer to serve and protect all citizens and to provide appropriate discipline swiftly when those policies are violated; and

WHEREAS, because a complete reform of the Police Department cannot be made by this Council, or the Mayor, or the Police Chief, we must divide our efforts. We must take actions to make changes that the city council and city administration can make, and we must urge actions by citizens and the Louisiana Legislature to make other systemic and structural changes; and

WHEREAS, many rules and regulations of the Police Department that need to be changed cannot be changed because of provisions of State Law; and

WHEREAS, hearings are needed to gather information to determine the rules and regulation that need to be changed, any laws that prohibit the city from changing them, and the steps that are needed to make the changes; and

WHEREAS, these hearings can best be timely performed by a task force (subcommittee) of the Public Safety Committee.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Shreveport in due, legal and regular session convened, that the Chairman of the Public Safety Committee shall appoint a task force (subcommittee) of the Public Safety Committee consisting of three (3) council members and a Chairman who is a member of the Task Force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Safety Committee Task Force is authorized to hold hearings and conduct an investigation as authorized by 4.29 of the Charter, and to exercise the powers provided for therein, unless said powers are prohibited by law. The City Attorney shall specifically advise the Task Force in this regard.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Safety Committee Task Force is authorized to hold hearings to determine the feasibility of, and the steps needed to accomplish the following:

1. Train police officers to de-escalate and avoid force, provide policies and procedures to ensure that the use of force is their last resort, and to ensure compliance.
2. To provide body cameras for all officers, and provide policies and procedures needed to require them to be activated during interactions with citizens and to ensure compliance.
3. To provide early warnings for problematic officers, and policies and procedures to correct their actions or eliminate said officers from the force.
4. To ban neck restraints.
5. To determine the feasibility of creating, funding and determining the powers and responsibilities of a Citizen Police Review Board.
6. To determine whether certain existing laws limit the ability of the City of Shreveport to operate an effective Police Department for all citizens; said laws to be examined include but are not limited to the Constitution of the State of Louisiana, the Police Officers Bill of Rights and the Fire and Police Civil Service Law.
7. To take other actions needed to ensure that the Shreveport Police Department is an effective organization that serves and protects all citizens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Safety Committee Task Force will report its findings and recommendation through the Public Safety Committee to the city council and urging the city council to forward the report and findings to the state legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if any provisions or items of this resolution or the application thereof are held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications of this resolution which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end, the provisions of this resolution are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all ordinances or resolutions or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM:

City Attorney's Office