Chief Jacobson,

Here is a list of recommendations that CRB members have made over the last 24 months. In almost all cases, the recommendations got to the prior chiefs after they had already rendered decisions on discipline, so our recommendations had no direct impact. We would like you to see and consider our recommendations as you proceed to revise policies and practices. We think meeting regularly will help with providing you timely updates on recommendations. Thank you in advance and we look forward to meeting with you at our next meeting. The below recommendations are not intended to be a complete list, or a final answer to difficult situations, but more of a work in progress.

**Courtesy/De-escalation/Honesty/Profanity/Respect/Trust**

- When police officers lie to civilians or other police, they should face significant punishment, up to and including a multiple-day suspension, demotion or even firing. If they remain on the PD, they should be retrained and should make a public apology to the complainant, to signal that this kind of behavior will not be tolerated. We also think the police leadership should reiterate that they don’t tolerate lying and should intercede early in an officer’s career if they’re concerned about credibility.

- The CRB notes a pattern of discourteousness/disrespect in a number of cases. All officers should be cautioned to show empathy and respect for civilians, especially people of color—recognizing the effects of systemic racism. We also note that officers frequently use profanity. The careless use of profanity is highly unprofessional and it’s not de-escalation.

- We recommend that the Chief advise officers that when they engage intensely with civilians who turn out to be innocent, including pointing guns at them and putting them in handcuffs, that they issue apologies afterwards. Officers should explain why they followed the procedures as they did and should apologize to the person for inconveniencing them and putting them into a frightening situation.

- We note that in many instances we have reviewed, officers frequently use profanity. The careless use of profanity is highly unprofessional and it’s not
de-escalation. We also note that in one of the cases officers on the scene of the arrest congratulated other officers, proclaiming loudly, “That was great! Great call out!,” as if it was a sporting event victory. We don’t think this kind of behavior is appropriate; on the contrary, it is dehumanizing

- Shouting is counterproductive, and escalates tensions, precisely when officers should be working to de-escalate emotions. Police officers are adults with extensive training, and the CRB is aware that “de-escalation” is a significant and important part of officer training. Shouting and cursing at civilians, especially youth, reflects poorly on the NHPD, and raises questions about the effectiveness of the current training standards for de-escalation

- Developing Community Relationships: In an effort to restore a stronger relationship between the police department and the families, officers should make in-person, public apologies to the juveniles and their parents in cases where it is warranted. Developing community relationships are important. The Department should explore Community Policing, being involved in community events and determining how to develop positive relationships with the youth.

- We have seen a few cases where if police officers had explained themselves as we’re recommending here, it would have helped build trust

- We recommend that officers be trained to recognize when people they are dealing with feel they are being singled out and treated poorly because of their race, and respond appropriately

**Police Station**

- The chief should caution front desk officers to be attentive, polite, and solicitous to people who approach the front desk in the lobby

- Officers in the lobby should turn on their body cams when they engage with civilians. We also think the Milestone system should continue to operate even if it’s not triggered by motion

- Lobby: The Dept should consider exploring other Police Department lobbys and determine what could be done to make New Haven’s lobby more inviting (i.e. lighting, color, signage). When an individual comes in to make a report (which could be private and emotional and related to assault) they
should be able to speak to someone in private rather than needing to give a report publicly in the lobby. The Dept has an officer assigned outside of the police dept. This could be viewed as the police having a police officer police the police station. Maybe the dept can explore having this officer available so when individuals need to make a complaint related to an assault or when they are in need of support services this person could take them into a private area so they could make a report or assist them. It is important to have this person aligned with necessary services that they could provide to the community

*Body Camera Policy*
- Body cameras should be turned on when an officer begins their response to a call for service, not waiting until they encounter a civilian. Body cameras should remain on for the entirety of any incident; i.e. when engagement with civilians is complete. Body cameras should be required to be turned on while handling firearms
- We urge the department to procure equipment that records audio from the time a camera is turned on, not 30 seconds after the video is activated
- In cases where officers fail to turn on body cams or turn them off during the incident, they should receive significant discipline as a deterrent
- The NHPD should change its policy concerning bodycams—requiring officers to activate their body cams prior to leaving their vehicles in response to criminal complaints so they capture early evidence (not waiting until they engage with a civilian) and they should leave the camera on for the entire span of the engagement.

*Use of Force*
- In a number of cases, we felt the officers used too much force too quickly. We urge you to intensify training on de-escalation.
- We recommend to the chief and board of police commissioners that they remove punches to the head, face or other body part that could injure your internal organs from the list of permitted uses of force, except in rare and extreme circumstances.
- Officers should be cautioned that choking is not permitted and should be required to attend refresher training in de-escalation

**Training**

- Civilian Training: To our knowledge, all new officers are trained by officers. The Department should consider receiving training by civilians to understand their view on the way things should be handled. (i.e. a well versed and trained special education teacher/social worker/psychologist could provide training for officers on various disabilities and topics, they could train officers on how to best handle their needs (i.e. an individual with Autism may need to be handled differently due to sensory needs), they could provide training related to Intellectual disability and guardianship along with other topics such as mental illness and the best ways to address it. Civilians should be involved in the training process and determining what further trainings they need.

**Other**

- We recommend that the police department establish follow-up procedures in potentially traumatizing situations for civilians to check in with the person involved, and, potentially, to refer them for mental health treatment. This should be done within a certain period of time after an incident (i.e. a week, two weeks and if they don't receive a response maybe have a team do a home visit).

- There should be a protocol in place to determine necessary steps to search a vehicle, an area or a person so personal items are put in a specific place (i.e. evidence bag) and logged

- We have found that in many cases IA has determined that cases were unfounded. The CRB has not been in agreement with all these decisions. We question if IA is fully staffed with to handle all the complaints

- It is key that they Chief review recommendations with the Chief regularly in order to explore changes that could benefit the community
● Case Checklist: Create a checklist (digital, hand held reference guide for car) for each case/scenario/investigation (i.e. car accident, handling firearms, domestic violence...)
● Handling firearms: procedure discussion about having an evidence bag to be kept on the patrol vehicles’ dashboard (to hold at all items)
● Guardians: Youth and Individuals with Significant Intellectual Disabilities should have their guardians present before they are questioned, investigated or detained in any way. The Department needs to explore an agency connection or division that can assist with determining if an individual’s guardian needs to be contacted
● Community Crisis Response Team - We recommend the establishment of the CRRT as soon as possible. In the meantime, all of the officers should be cautioned to be on the lookout for emotional-response issues and to respond appropriately. Perhaps all officers need to be retrained in dealing with this kind of situation. Also, other officers on the scene, regardless of rank, should feel empowered to counsel an officer who is behaving inappropriately to change her or his approach, or to ask that officer to step back from the situation