

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
EASTERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)	CASE NO.: 1:15-CV-01046
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	JUDGE SOLOMON OLIVER, JR.
vs.)	
)	<u>MOTION SUBMITTING OFFICER</u>
CITY OF CLEVELAND)	<u>FOCUS GROUPS REPORT</u>
)	
Defendant.)	
)	
)	

Under Paragraphs 361, 363, and 367 of the Consent Decree, the Monitoring Team is tasked with conducting a methodologically rigorous survey of the Cleveland community, including “attitudes among police personnel, and the quality of police-citizen encounters[,]” in order “to measure whether implementing this Agreement has resulted in constitutional policing.” Dkt. 7-1 at ¶¶ 363, 367. These assessments play a part in determining the progress of the City of Cleveland (“City”) and the Cleveland Division of Police (“CDP” or “Division”) in implementing the terms of the Consent Decree. Ultimately, the assessments “may be used to demonstrate sustained compliance with this Agreement.” *Id.* at ¶ 371. To that end, in December 2017, the Monitoring Team conducted eight focus groups with 78 sworn CDP personnel (about 5% of sworn personnel).

A summary report of the discussions that were generated during those focus groups (“Officer Focus Groups Report” or “Report”) is attached as Exhibit A.

The Team worked with CDP to randomly select officers across all of CDP’s Districts and platoons. The eight focus groups included 5 all patrol officer groups; 1 all white patrol officer group; 1 all non-white patrol officer group; and 1 all sergeant group. The focus groups were structured around a set of open-ended questions developed by the Monitoring Team, including: (1) relationships and engagement with the community; (2) use of force; (3) discipline and accountability; (4) supervision and leadership; and (5) general experiences with the Consent Decree. Ex. A. at 4.

As summarized in the Officer Focus Groups Report, the Monitoring Team found that “much work remains on transforming the Division into an organization that works both for officers and the community that they serve.” *Id.* at 8. Perhaps foremost among the Team’s observations was officers’ perception that a “lack of effective communication regarding CDP efforts to change its policies and processes, entrenched morale issues, and an adversarial relationship between line officers and the administration have tended to hamper the Division’s internal transformation.” *Id.*

While the focus groups indicated a strong sense of dedication from individual officers, the officers altogether exhibited “low morale and a lack of confidence in the [Division].” *Id.* at 36. The low morale both highlights the need to continue developing important reforms, such as the Community and Problem-Oriented Policing Plan, and further indicates that “CDP has a lot of work to do to train, communicate with, and support its officers through this change process.” *Id.*

In discussions with City and CDP leadership, the Monitoring Team has emphasized that the Report is not meant to be a criticism of CDP. Instead, CDP should take the Report as an opportunity to address both critical Consent Decree requirements and working conditions for its

personnel. For example, the Team was encouraged to hear that most officers want more opportunities to engage with the community rather than having to continuously respond to calls for service. CDP has an opportunity to address this issue (among many others) in its ongoing efforts to develop and implement a Staffing Plan and a Community and Problem-Oriented Policing Plan.

The Monitoring Team submits the Officer Focus Groups Report to this Court as an important baseline measure of CDP officers' perceptions of the Division of Police and the ongoing changes required by the Consent Decree. The Team plans to conduct similar focus groups in the future and hopes to observe positive changes that reflect improvements to the Division's systems of communication, staffing, management, and leadership.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Matthew Barge

MATTHEW BARGE
Monitor
234 5th Avenue, Suite 314
New York, New York 10001
Tel: (202) 257-5111
Email: matthewbarge@parc.info

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on June 21, 2018, I served the foregoing document entitled Motion Submitting Officer Focus Groups Report via the court's ECF system to all counsel of record.

/s/ Matthew Barge
MATTHEW BARGE