

Chief's Call Group

History

Since 2005 an on-call citizen's advisory group of Federal Way civilians, led by Dr. Bob McKenzie, gathered to meet with the Federal Way police chief to discuss a variety of topics and issues related to the community and policing. Based on the strategic alignment of the group alongside the chief, they called themselves "Chief's Call."

The "call" was Dr. McKenzie's initiative. He wanted a strong representation of African-Americans and almost all of the original group members were. The police chief was their guest. The group wanted to meet at the police department and they did. It was informal. Invited or screened by Dr. McKenzie, the group was small and trusted, which fostered open discussion of intimate details. Group members expressed their concerns and gave their opinions about emerging issues in the nation, Federal Way, police training, policy, and occasionally specific local cases. Meetings were originally held monthly; but that settled into quarterly and continued to the present time. Over the years most of the original members moved on, replaced by others who were invited or screened by Dr. McKenzie.

Purpose and Practices

1. Purpose of the group: *to serve as a personal communication channel and information access pathway between a select group of Federal Way civilians and the Police Chief. Accordingly, this group is not selected to provide oversight; but rather to provide insight, which is an essential precursor to good leadership and community-oriented policing. Adhering to this level of community engagement assists all in avoiding the slippery slope of hindsight by enhancing the Chief's ability to make more informed and just decisions. In so doing, the group's efforts enhance every person's ability to play an active role in the action planning processes concerning public safety within the City of Federal Way.*
2. Meetings to be held once per quarter, unless the group's chair (Dr. McKenzie) or the police chief requests an additional meeting (such as when there is a sharp community concern or a crisis).
3. Group meetings are private, by invitation from Dr. McKenzie. The group size: *at least 10 and no more than 15 people.*

4. Group members will function as part think tank and part action group, making recommendations to the Chief about relevant issues in the community.
5. Members of the group will engage in two-way communication with their community constituency, advocating for their perspective, ideas, and concerns; serving as a responsible conduit for communicating, and updating their community on police actions and decisions.
6. As much as possible, members of the group shall mirror the demographics of the Federal Way community.

Selection Process

Membership requirements include:

- The person must live, work, or own a business in Federal Way or its proposed annexation area.
- The person must be willing to attend group meetings and engage in the purpose of the group, including the purpose and practices listed.
- Attend the Federal Way Police Department's Citizens Police Academy.
- Apply in writing to Dr. McKenzie. (Email is sufficient – csifedway@aol.com.) If selected by Dr. McKenzie, he will forward the name to the police chief for a background check.
- Pass a background check at the same level as a police department volunteer.