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Opinion: Collaborative Agreement overdue for an overhaul

Bill Frost Opinion contributor

Published 8:58 a.m. ET Aug. 24, 2020

The Black Lives Matter protests, along with the high rate of shootings in our city this year, make it clear that we as a city need to do something different. In 2002, that "something" led to the Collaborative Agreement, which ushered in changes in how Cincinnati police perform their duties and how our communities organize, lead and represent themselves. However, even before the shocking realities of 2020, the Collaborative Agreement was overdue for an overhaul after almost 20 years.

There was a Charter Amendment proposed for the November ballot that proposed scrapping the police department and creating a much broader safety department. It now appears that the amendment failed to make the November ballot. However, the initiative was a reminder that we need to consider what Cincinnati can do to react to this overdue public awakening to systematic racism in our society.

Instead of a charter amendment, we should consider just how effective the Collaborative Agreement has been for our city. There are clearly changes that we could make in the Police (and City Social Services) involvement in: drug overdose, homelessness, mental health and domestic abuse calls. But let's not forget that some of these situations can turn violent very quickly.

Compared to the rest of the country, Cincinnati has shown many times that it is capable of facing tough truths about itself and working as a community to get better. Instead of turning our back on the past 18 years progress, we should concentrate on the acceleration of "Collaborative Agreement 2.0."

This review **MUST** be done in partnership with the city neighborhoods, city leadership, the city medical and social assistance community, police and fire departments and their labor unions. Fire crews and police officers have been dealing with these issues for decades. It is

crazy to sideline the very folks who know the systemic failures up close. Only by consulting with ALL of these groups will an effective and acceptable solution be found.

Bill Frost is a Charter Committee board member and a candidate for Cincinnati City Council in 2021.