Richard Hardesty

Comments on the Citizen Review Committee's Taser/Less Lethal Work Group.

Have you considered watching someone being shocked as part of a meeting's agenda? It would be sobering, no doubt. I urge you to consider that the use of cattle prods were once considered a form of torture. If we must continue to shoulder the financial burden of compensating victims for the improper use of this weapon - and not eliminate it from domestic armament - I would ask it become policy that electric shock not be employed to prod, or obtain compliance with officer instructions. Please remove from the officer the predictive opportunity to asses a threat likely; instruct users that they may only employ this device when experiencing a demonstrable threat.

Please join community efforts to design better systems for reviewing and improving Bureau employee conduct. Recommendations should come forward that defines in what ways the current police union contract prevents superior case reviews following the use of less-lethal force. Recommend a structure for improving training from learned results in case reviews.

Our employees left Chasse and Campbell without a medical response for disgraceful intervals. Could it fall within this work group to enlarge the concept of policing to include its health consequeces? Health considerations should be made prior to relying on shock, and plans should be in place to remedy all consequences of its use.

I'm fairly certain (from traffic stop data and other assessments) that race-based disparities come into play when any police response escalates to use of force. As the City of Portland is under a national spotlight for civil rights violations, would it not be wise now for the work group to document what we know about bias as it involves the decision to use shock, and to get ahead of the curve by proposing remedies to this injustice?