

Williamstown CARES Community Safety and Wellbeing Assessment: Myths & Facts

MYTH

FACT

<p>The town's social work project has changed/keeps changing.</p>	<p>Since its inception, this has been a community assessment research project. When Select Board members stated (in January 2021) that the project had changed, they were provided with evidence to the contrary. The initial RFQ posted by the Town in November 2020 was for a research facilitator to conduct a thorough needs assessment. This is still the project.</p>
<p>This is not a town project.</p>	<p>The Town posted an RFQ for a research facilitator to conduct a needs assessment. The Town hired the Research Director for Community Engagement and Assessment as a Town employee. The former Town Manager commissioned and funded the project on behalf of the Town.</p>
<p>The project is over-priced.</p>	<p>The Research Director and Advisory Committee have worked hard to keep the cost of the project manageable. Members of the Advisory Committee have volunteered hundreds of hours of professional labor. For research of this caliber, the cost of the project is quite low.</p>
<p>The Advisory Committee recently asked for a budget increase due to cost overruns.</p>	<p>The former Town Manager instructed the Advisory Committee to design the project before preparing a budget proposal. Once it was possible to complete a proposal, the Primary Investigators sought a meeting with the Interim Town Manager to discuss it. They had a preliminary discussion with the Interim Town Manager who has not followed up with them since then.</p>
<p>There are no funds available for this because none were promised in the budget.</p>	<p>The former Town Manager committed to funding the research to completion, indicating that a line item was not needed as there would be other funding sources available.</p>
<p>The Advisory Committee has not cooperated and has resisted lowering the budget.</p>	<p>The Primary Investigators provided the Interim Town Manager with all requested information and have been waiting to hear from him to continue budget discussions. He has not responded to their emails.</p>
<p>The Town doesn't need this project.</p>	<p>The project will benefit ALL community members by assessing how well the Town is meeting residents' needs and recommending ways to do so even more effectively. The Town itself has cited the project as evidence that it is complying with Articles 36 & 37 passed last year.</p>
<p>Additional staffing is overkill; that's why the research facilitator was hired.</p>	<p>A full-scale needs assessment requires a tremendous amount of labor. The Research Director was hired to direct the project. To include all interested Town residents and complete the project in a timely manner, additional support is needed. The Advisory Committee is volunteering hundreds of hours of work and asking for funding for 1-2 trained individuals to assist.</p>
<p>The methodology and sampling are biased, because the researchers only want to hear from certain people.</p>	<p>ALL community members have the opportunity to share their thoughts about what Williamstown needs to be a safe and welcoming community. Flexible interview options (at home, at Town Hall, outside, Zoom, telephone) are in place to make sure the study reaches as many residents as possible, and all interviews will be included in data analysis and subsequent recommendations. The research has been designed by qualified experts. It does not use the sampling or quantitative methods of a randomized controlled trial (RCT), because that framework is inappropriate for a community needs assessment.</p>
<p>The Select Board didn't have enough information about the</p>	<p>Members of the Advisory Committee have spoken in multiple public meetings, including the January 4, 2021 Select Board meeting, when they</p>

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<p>project to make informed decisions.</p>	<p>spent over an hour explaining the project and answering questions. They have also engaged in one-on-one and small group meetings with Select Board members. The Advisory Committee has a Town email address and has consistently provided all requested information.</p>
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