

SUMMARY MINUTES FOR THE POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

March 9th, 2021

Carol Ann Bass called the Police Community Relations Committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., at the Greenville Police Department. Since the meeting was held virtually, Sgt. Staffelbach and Carol Ann Bass were the only attendees present in. All other attendees were participating virtually.

INTRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Carol Ann asked for roll call of the committee members.

Committee members present:

Carol Ann Bass, District #5
Betsy Ray, Mayoral
Carol Ann Naipaul, District #2
Robert Cherry, District #4

City Staff Members present:

Sgt. Michael Staffelbach
Sgt. R.L. Williams
Billie Jo Viverette
Donald K. Phillips
Camillia Smith, City Clerk's office

Absent

Louis Warren, At-large
Robert King, District #3

Carol Ann asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Robert Cherry made the motion; seconded by Carol Ann Naipaul. Donald called roll call for vote from each committee member:

Carol Ann Naipaul – Yes
Carol Ann Bass – Yes
Betsy Ray – Yes
Robert Cherry – Yes

The agenda was approved unanimously. Approval for the February minutes was asked. Carol Ann Bass made the motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Betsy Ray. Donald called roll call for vote from each committee member:

Carol Ann Naipaul – Yes

Carol Ann Bass – Yes

Robert Cherry – Yes

Betsy Ray – Yes

The motion carried and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Carol Ann Bass read the mission statement.

Carol Ann Bass introduced Sgt. Ritchie Williams with the Greenville Police Department Cops and Barbers program.

Sgt. Williams gave a brief history of the Cops & Barbers program. He explained that it was a community outreach initiative that started in Charlotte, North Carolina. He stated that basically it was started to bridge the gap between police departments and that African American Community, communities that were underprivileged. He said that, since barbershops are like the pillars of the African American communities where people feel free to talk about any topics, that it was decided the barbershops would be the right place to bridge that gap. He stated that Deputy Chief Sauls saw the presentation that was made at the 21st Century Police Initiative in Washington, DC when President Obama was in office. Deputy Chief Sauls was impressed and discussed the idea with Chief Holtzman; and so they decided to launch the program. Sgt. Williams state he discussed how he came to be the current liaison for the program. He stated that the program was launched in 2016. He said that the Greenville Police Department was the 2nd in the nation to launch this program.

He talked about how he introduced the program to the barbershops and encouraged them to participate in helping build positive relationships between the police department and the community. He discussed how that the program is a success and how it is a great partnership between the barbershops and the Police Department. He introduced Erick Barns, one of the barbers participating in the program.

Erick Barns discussed how he and Sgt. Williams met and discussed ongoing issues in the community. He talked about how Sgt. Williams informed him on the details of the program and how the partnership would benefit the community. He discussed how the program has been helped the community and how he is proud to be a part of a solution to help with issues in the communities.

Carol Ann Bass thanked Sgt. Williams and Erick Barns for launching this program and for their commitment. She stated that when things get back to normal she would like to go into the barbershops. Sgt. Staffelbach asked if anyone had any questions. Betsy Ray thanked them for coming and for their dedication. Carol Ann Naipaul thanked them for the presentation because she learned a lot. She stated that the young people really need this kind of commitment and she stated to contact her if they needed any volunteers. Robert Cherry thanked them for their efforts and dedication.

Sgt. Staffelbach stated that once things get back to normal, he would like to have a meeting at Erick Barns' barbershop. He stated he would like to have that opportunity to have honest conversations between the committee and the community. He said that we need to get to

know one another and build on those relationships. He stated that hopefully in the fall one of the meetings can be held at his barbershop. Erick said that he would be glad to have a meeting at his barbershop; he said to just let him know when. Carol Ann and Sgt. Staffelbach thanked them both for coming.

Sgt. Staffelbach talked about how there is only three months left before we take a summer break from meeting. He asked for everyone to make contact with their communities and discuss issues or ideas that they would like to address. He discussed with everyone about encouraging their communities to participate; that anyone can be included in the zoom meetings. He stated he also wanted to do something to give back to the communities, as a group from the PCRC committee. He stated that it can be just something small, like Carol Ann's idea with the backpacks. He stated he wants to get back to going into everyone's district and having something in each area, to try to get people involved. He asked everyone to be thinking of ideas. He stated that we can get the officers there; he stated that we need everyone to get the community there and involved. He said that we need to get the community together with the Police Department, to have an opportunity to get to know one another.

Betsy Ray discussed a few ideas that she and Carol Ann Bass could possibly work on. Carol Ann Bass asked if Robert Cherry had any topics or ideas that he wanted to discuss. He stated that not right but he would get back with her. She asked Carol Ann Naipaul the same question. Carol Ann Naipaul thanked Sgt. Staffelbach for his ideas. She stated that she would like to have a discussion on substance abuse, but not just about illegal drugs. She said she would like to have a discussion on vaping, on the effects on the youth. Sgt. Staffelbach stated that we would have to bring in an expert but that a large area would be needed so that a large amount of people could participate. He suggested using a middle school or a high school for that topic. Carol Ann Naipaul stated that's a good idea. She stated however that there is still a trust issue between the community and the police. She said we can start out small to work on building that trust. She stated that when we are ready, her husband has contacts with the Homeowners Association, and that maybe they can get that group to have something. She stated that maybe something can be planned in the future at J.H. Rose. She thanked Carol Ann Bass and Sgt. Staffelbach and she stated that she looks forward to working with everyone.

Carol Ann Bass thanked everyone and told them she would be in touch. Carol Ann then asked Donald if she then asks for a motion to adjourn. Donald said yes; he asked for a motion to adjourn. Betsy Ray made the motion to adjourn; seconded by Carol Ann Naipaul. Donald asked if there was any discussion and then stated there is a motion to adjourn. He called by roll call for everyone's response.

Carol Ann Naipaul – Yes

Carol Ann Bass – Yes

Robert Cherry – Yes

Betsy Ray – Yes

Donald stated that approves and passes; we stand adjourned.