

SUMMARY MINUTES FOR THE POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

September 14th, 2021

Sgt. Staffelbach 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 was the only attendee present. All other attendees were participating virtually.

INTRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Donald called roll call of the committee members.

Committee members present:

Kevon Gainer, District #1
Robert Cherry, District #4
Betsy Ray, Mayoral
Carol Ann Bass, District #5

City Staff Members present:

Sgt. Michael Staffelbach
Billie Jo Viverette
Donald K. Phillips
Deputy Chief Ted Sauls
Chief Holtzman
Camillia Smith, City Clerk's office

Absent

Carol Ann Naipaul, District #2
Louis Warren, At-large
Robert King, District #3

Carol Ann Bass asked for approval for tonight's agenda. Robert Cherry made the motion; seconded by Betsy Ray. Donald called roll call for approval due to virtual meeting; motion carried.

Carol Ann stated that since there wasn't a quorum during the June meeting, that the May 11th meeting minutes need to be approved. Robert Cherry made the motion; Betsy Ray seconded the motion. Donald called roll call for approval due to virtual meeting; motion carried.

Carol Ann read the mission statement for the PCRC committee.

Carol Ann stated that tonight's topic is Calls for Service; and asked if Deputy Chief Sauls if he was asked to speak. DC Sauls stated that he was not but he would be glad to speak on the topic, as well as Chief Holtzman who was present also.

DC Sauls discussed how the stats on gun violence have decreased from previous years. He stated that however everyone has probably seen an increase in traffic stops. He discussed in detail the many tools that are being used to reduce vehicle crashes and personal injuries. He discussed the traffic delineators that are being placed throughout the city to assist in lowering the number of vehicle crashes. He stated that he hoped that people understand what they are trying to accomplish. He asked the members to please share with everyone that the Police Department is trying to bring the speed down and get people to comply with safe driving habits. He stated that traffic stops are on the increase, as well as personal contact with the public on the increase.

He stated that the number one call type happening right now is property crimes, relating to vehicle break-ins and larcenies. He stated please share with everyone, please lock your vehicles and remove any valuables from your vehicles. He stated that we share this advice all the time, because it occurs so much.

Carol Ann asked are they looking for certain items. DC Sauls said they will take whatever they can get, especially if the vehicle is unlocked. He stated that one quick study of approximately 100 cases of break-ins of vehicles resulted in guns taken out of approximately 70 unlocked vehicles. Chief Holtzman stated that he agreed. Chief said just today a kid got a gun out of an unlocked vehicle. He stated that it's not the gun, it's the message. Please lock your guns up. Chief stated that DC is correct; we are trying to reduce the number of crashes. He stated we're starting to see the numbers increase again, so that's why we are increasing the number of traffic stops. He stated that there are approximately 400 crashes a month, 10 to 12 crashes a day. He stated that gun violence is still out there, so we're still working on different concepts to bring that down. Chief stated that we need to work together to reduce it. He stated that he would love to hear any ideas from the members or the communities on any of these topics.

Carol Ann asked are there any other programs besides driver's education for teenage drivers, new drivers that could teach them more about driving. Chief stated that he believed that there was a defensive driving course at the college, but that could possibly be a future topic with our Traffic Unit. Chief stated that his daughter took a course called Street Survival, which was a one day course.

Carol Ann asked are the SRO's seeing more gun violence in the schools. DC Sauls stated that we have a very proactive public school system. He stated that we have 10 school resource officers in schools; the Sheriff's Department has several officers in schools. He stated he has seen some schools hiring private security. He said that the officers are there for safety, but the relationship building is paramount. He advised that no one needs to be paranoid, just be prepared, observant. He asked that everyone also please share any information that may be concerning or suspicious.

Sgt. Staffelbach discussed the hiring process and the BLET program at Pitt Community College. He discussed how you can go to the police academy program with the Greenville Police Department paying for everything, along with an agreement of employment. He stated please share information if anyone is interested in law enforcement. He asked everyone to share the link, joingpdnc.com with anyone interested in learning more information about law enforcement as a career. He stated please spread the word. We need more personnel to help with all of these calls for service.

Donald asked Sgt. Staffelbach if he and Chief Holtzman could discuss how the telecommunicators are a vital asset for the calls for service for the police department. Chief stated that we are one of few departments that actually pay for you to attend the police academy. He stated that it is an excellent opportunity to get a paid education, along with a position with the police department. He stated that telecommunicators is another excellent opportunity. He stated they answer the thousands of calls that come into the police department, as well as monitoring cameras, working on computers in various programs. He said they stay extremely busy, but that they are the lifeline for police officers and the community.

Chief stated that there are a lot of different civilian positions and roles that work together to keep the police department running smoothly. He said please check out that link to see all the career opportunities available.

DC Sauls invited anyone that wants to see what we do, to come out. He stated that remember though that because of covid there are certain restrictions. He said that when restrictions are lifted we can go back to allow ride alongs.

Donald stated that we haven't been able to do the citizens academy as well. Sgt. Staffelbach stated that as soon as restrictions are lifted, we get back to the academy again. Chief asked didn't we do a virtual academy. DC Sauls said yes we did. DC Sauls stated that we are doing meetings virtually again. He stated that we're even doing roll call meetings virtually again.

DC Sauls told the members please come and see what's going on. He stated it would benefit everyone to understand and learn. He stated that please bring a mask, but that you would definitely be given a tour to see everything, except the Communications room. Chief Holtzman said please come by; we'll do it safely. He said I'd love to hear your ideas.

Robert Cherry thanked Sgt. Staffelbach, Chief Holtzman, and DC Sauls for coming tonight. He stated that he was very encouraged by the topic of increasing patrols. He discussed his concerns with the speeding, the increasing crashes, but also with the severity of the accidents. He also discussed several ideas with the delineators. He discussed how the response to the accidents, numerous emergency vehicles, are contributing to the bottleneck of traffic. He thanked everyone for their service and their time. Chief Holtzman discussed certain procedures that are used by the police and fire departments when responding to accidents.

Robert Cherry discussed a conversation with a parent of how she was concerned how her daughter, who is an ECU student, was treated when trying to enter a club downtown. The mother stated that her daughter was denied entry and assaulted as she was removed from the club. He said he told her that he would bring this information to the committee. He asked if there are any trainings for the staff of the clubs. DC Sauls asked Robert to relay to the mother to please contact him so that they can discuss the assault. He said that we do a bouncer training. There was a Nighttime Safety Task Force years ago. It led to an ordinance that required all bouncers hired by a club to receive training from the police department. He stated that they are taught what their boundaries are inside the establishment and what the boundaries are when the citizens are escorted outside the clubs. DC Sauls stated that the allegations of assault and mistreatment have significantly decreased since the ordinance. He

reiterated to please tell the mother that if she or her daughter would like to speak with someone to please give him or Chief Holtzman a call to discuss her concerns.

Chief Holtzman stated that she could also call the Pitt County A.B.C. office, because they assist in overseeing the managing of the clubs. Chief also suggested that she call the clubs and speak with someone because a lot of the clubs require membership. Chief said however, we have charged bouncers when they have been too aggressive and crossed the line; but thankfully those incidents are decreasing due to the training.

Kevon Gainer expressed his concerns of officers treating people of color more aggressively in the downtown area. He stated he has noticed that himself over the years. His concern is just wanting to see a balance of treatment towards all people. DC Sauls thanked him for his expressing his concerns and perspective. He discussed briefly what officers are responsible for when working downtown. He stated that if Mr. Gainer and his friends would like to come together and have a discussion to please let him know. He said that discussing different views and concerns is helpful in coming up with solutions. Chief Holtzman thank Mr. Gainer for his feedback on the downtown area. He stated that there would definitely be a conversation with supervisors for the downtown units. He also encouraged him to speak with supervisors while he is downtown and has concerns. Chief thanked him again for speaking up and discussed how the police department is trying to build up relationships with people everywhere in the community.

DC Sauls stated to Mr. Gainer is to remember that what you're discussing is what this committee is for, to discuss issues and concerns in the committee. He stated then you go back to the community and share what we're doing. Then if your constituents want to discuss face to face, we'll be glad to meet and have further discussion to come up with solutions. That's what this committee is for.

Carol Ann asked for a motion to adjourn if there is nothing else. Betsy Ray made a motion to adjourn; Robert Cherry seconded the motion. Donald called roll call vote to adjourn; motion was passed. Meeting adjourned.