

**MINUTES**  
**Police Advisory Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 25, 2022**  
**5:00 – 6:30 PM**  
**City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room**  
**DRAFT**

**Board Members Present:** Melinda White, Chair; John Nicholls; Winnie Wilkinson (via Zoom); Jamie Pinkam, Vice Chair (via Zoom); Kris Lukens (arrived at 5:04 PM).

**Board Members Absent:** Tom Benton; Danielle Mitchell.

**City Staff Present:** Chief Maurice Lamothe, Saint Albans Police Department; Angela Bernard, Minute Taker.

**Members of the Public Present:** Lane McElree, Northwest Access Television; Reier Erickson (via Zoom); Daniel Towle (via Zoom).

1. Call to order

**M. White called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.**

2. Agenda Introduction & Review

M. White opened the floor to agenda revisions. None were offered.

3. Open Brief Public Comment on Agenda Items (limit 2 min. per person)

None.

4. Mission Review -

M. White reviewed the mission of the Police Advisory Board.

• *Mission: To offer advice to the St. Albans Police Department for the successful implementation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing strategies and to assist the Police Department in following the established "Road Map" as amended by the City Council*

5. Consider approval of November Meeting Minutes -

**J. Pinkam made a motion to approve the minutes. Second by J. Nicholls. Minutes approved at 5:05 PM.**

6. PAB positions moving forward

M. White expressed interest in stepping down as chair but remaining on the board as a member.

J. Pinkam announced that she is running as representative for the City Council and said that might affect her place as a member on the PAB.

M. White asked for input from the board regarding strategy and next steps for navigating these changes. She said she would like to no longer be chair of the PAB by the March 2022 meeting. She asked for nominations or any interest from the board in stepping up to chair.

K. Lukens, J. Nicholls, W. Wilkinson all agreed that opening the floor to volunteers first and then moving onto nominations and a vote is their preferred route. J. Pinkam said someone could volunteer but then they should be nominated as well. M. White said this should be on the agenda for next month's meeting to give the absent board members a chance to weigh in on the conversation. M. White suggested that putting it off will also encourage members to think more about it and how they want to proceed.

#### 7. Data –

J. Pinkham discussed the results of the surveys that were sent out to all city residents. She said they received 100 returned surveys (approximately 5% of the surveys that were mailed out) and she is busy compiling the data. She said they are pleased with the results and learned a lot they can apply to future surveys. She said it's a great place to start.

M. White asked about what the next best steps are. J. Pinkam said they could use the data gathered here as a standalone since it's the first one and then put it together with other data points. She is planning on putting together a Power Point slideshow to present the data.

J. Pinkam said someone from the community asked her how the board and the police department share their data with members of the public. Chief Lamothe said they don't publish data publicly all year, but that there will be a compiled data packet sent to City Council next month. Once the department's entire packet of data (including details on all internal investigations, stops, etc.) is presented to City Council, it will then be released publicly. J. Pinkam said the bigger question is if there is a place online, the PD site or the PAB site, where members of the public can see data. Chief Lamothe said it will be on the website once the City Council sees it in February.

M. White made the decision to add a synopsis of the police department's data packet and information to the agenda for this evening's meeting. She said the PAB has time now to hear a little more about the data and that she would love to hear more tonight. A review of the PD data from 2021 was added to agenda for after the Policy and Procedure section.

#### 8. Policy & Procedure –

J. Pinkam said these policies are mostly the same as last year, which means that they're reviews and not new policies. Chief Lamothe explained that, from this point on, the policies have been changed from annual review to triannual reviews.

Chief Lamothe introduced the slate of policies and explained that the state's Body Worn Cameras Policy has been adopted by the SAPD but that it's identical to the one the department was following anyway (SAPD was the first department in the state to adopt such a policy). Changes across the policies under review were minimal and included changing the address for the police department to reflect their move in 2021 and changing the date on all policies.

- Body Worn Cameras Policy – updated policy provided by State of Vermont

- St. Albans Personnel Selection Policy
- IA Policy
- Fair and Impartial Policing Policy

M. White asked Chief Lamothe to release some of department data compiled over the past year. Chief Lamothe gave the board members present copies of some of the data for response incidents in 2021. Highlights included:

- 9,018 calls in 2021.
- .33% of those calls implied "use of force," which includes anything between grabbing a wrist to place handcuffs on to deadly force. None were reported by the public.
- More males than females were arrested in 2021.
- One incident of an officer's taser displayed, out of the holster, but not used over the year.

K. Lukens asked how the data compared to other years. Chief Lamothe said there were more cases called in 2020 (around 11,000) and 37 use of force. M. White asked of the number incidences of use of force, could it be some of the same people over and over. Chief Lamothe said yes, this counts incidences, not people. J. Pinkam asked the Chief to explain what the expectation is of an officer who draws their taser or weapon are they required to fill out a report even if it wasn't used. Chief Lamothe said yes, but they are separate reporting forms. Taking the taser out of its holster is one report and the gun has another report. J. Pinkam asked about mace or baton. Chief Lamothe said those go under regular use of force forms. Use of force encapsulates everything, but the gun and taser can present a substantial increase in injury, so they require separate forms.

Chief Lamothe said the entire packet would be visible to the public on the department's website in February.

Chief Lamothe then introduced the Internal Affairs data, which means any time there was an investigation of an employee. In 2020, there were 12. In 2021, there were 21. He said the department is holding employees accountable. The two categories for IA investigations are external (from the public) complaints and internal. There are five ways these IA investigations can be ruled: not substantiated (can't be proven), substantiated (proven), unfounded (no way it happened), exonerated (it did happen but is not what it seems), or not following policy (includes things there were no policy in place for at the time). There were 13 external complaints in 2021 and 8 internal complaints in 2021. All 8 internal complaints were deemed to be substantiated.

Chief Lamothe went over the separate Internal Affairs investigation incidences from throughout the year and explained details from each case, including the results of each investigation. Chief Lamothe said they need to hold everyone accountable, and an IA investigation is launched on every complaint, no matter how small it is, and that each complaint requires a full, thorough investigation.

M. White asked about the internal complaints and investigations and asked if the eight complaints could be the same person over and over. Chief Lamothe said yes, and that the department has progressive discipline and that employees should be learning from mistakes and not making them repeatedly.

Chief Lamothe then went over statistics and exact numbers for calls, accidents, vandalism reports, DUI arrests, juvenile incidents, etc. He said the busiest month of the year was May. Overall, he said, calls were way down in 2021. Almost every arrest for the year was externally generated and called in by someone in the public. M. White asked why May. Chief Lamothe said there's no rhyme or reason to it and that previously it was February, the shortest month of the year.

M. White opened the floor to questions from the board. J. Pinkam asked if someone from the department circles back to the complainant in all IA investigations, informing them of the results of the investigation. Chief Lamothe said yes. They get a letter at the beginning of the investigation and then they get a letter with a result at the end. But the only thing they are not informed of is what the punishment was if the complaint is deemed actionable.

#### 9. Public Comment

D. Towle told J. Pinkam that two members of the Montpelier City Council sat in on that community's Police Advisory Board, so it is possible to do both. He then offered a follow up on his report before the Board in November 2021. D. Towle then said there have been a lot of developments in the state regarding crisis response management. He said he is working with a group at the State House to get a bill written and passed to support peer response crisis work. He thanked the board for making the recommendation to the City Council to add another mental health specialist in place with the SAPD. He said he remains available and willing to help in any way that he can. M. White thanked him for attending and said the board would probably be reaching out to him in the near future. J. Pinkam thanked him and said that she is weighing her options if she gets elected to City Council and said she would still like to sit on the board, but maybe just not in the Vice Chair position.

R. Erickson commented that past Police Department data was released to public monthly, and he wondered why that changed to an annual release of data instead. He expressed interest in learning more about what St. Albans looks like in its BIPOC response and arrests. He commented that the St. Albans Police Department also hasn't adopted a social media policy. He expressed concern about what current members of the department follow on their private social media pages and said he would like to see a social media policy pushed forward for the entire department. M. White asked R. Erickson if he knew when the published data switched from monthly to annually. R. Erickson said it was in September 2021. J. Pinkam said the social media policy is worth pushing to have on next month's meeting agenda and that city attorneys have it under review. M. White said they should move the policy discussion back to agenda and ask the Chief about the frequency of data release.

#### 10. Adjourn

**K. Lukens made a motion to adjourn. Second by J. Nicholls. Meeting adjourned at 6:24 PM.**