

Meeting Minutes
Police Advisory Board Meeting
VIA TELECONFERENCING
5:00 PM FRIDAY FEBRUARY 24, 2021

Board Members Present: Chair Melinda White; Co-Chair Jamie Pinkham; Danielle Lindley; Kris Lukins; John Nicholls; Winnie Wilkerson

Board Members Absent: Tom Benton;

Staff Members Present: Wendy-Ayn Coy, Minute Taker

Public Present – Chief Maurice Lamothe, Rier Erickson; Zach Sheffler; Mike Hoeflich; Lieutenant Paul Talley; Angela Strum; Lauren Dees-Erickson

- 1) **Call to Order** – Meeting was called to order at 5:01.
- 2) **Agenda Introduction & Review** – None
- 3) **Open Brief Public Comment on Agenda Items** –
 - **Angela Sturm** – Legal Aid wrote a letter VT school about SROs. Ms. Sturm read the introduction to Board. The entirety of the letter was sent to the Board
 - **Reier Erickson** - ACLU sent a letter to the City of St. Albans. Mr. Erickson reviewed the eight different items that they recommended. One of the items on the list was removal of SROs. The MOU needs to have a very strict accountability policy
- 4) **Mission Review** –
 - **Mission:** To offer advice to the St. Albans Police Department for the successful implementation of 21st Century Policing strategies and to assist the Police Department in following the established “Road Map” as amended by the City Council
- 5) **Review and Approval of School resource Officer (SRO) policy** – Lieutenant Talley informed the Board of the different policies that had been instituted. One states that the SRO would not remove the student from the educational environment unless there were exigent circumstances. The first part of the MoU states who they are and how they operate. Co-Chair Pinkham pointed out that this policy is the guardrails for the MoU. She did not see the crosswalk between the SRO policy and SAPD around complaint policy. Lieutenant Talley stated that it is understand that the SRO is accountable in the same way the police officers are to the community. The SROs would be bound by them whether they are listed in the MoU or not. Member Wilkerson stated that if it is not documented then it didn’t happen. It should be abundantly clear. It should be written and clear cut. Each police officer must have their own liability insurance so that the tax payer doesn’t pay for it. Member Lindley would look at it from the perspective of transparency. The complaint and grievance policy is crystal clear but the MOU is different than the policy. The SRO policy has changed since two years ago. It is much more detailed and inclusive. It lists different situations and what the role of the SRO would be. Member Lukens stated that there was nothing training. What qualifications and training are necessary for an

officer to be an SRO. Lieutenant Talley stated that each officer had to take a 40 hour basic SRO course. The school board had requested juvenile mental health, de-escalation, anti-bias training which the officers did. Any training that the school board requested was done. The training should be spelled out in MoU. The Board asked how many times the police were called to the schools before SROs were placed. Chief Lamothe estimated BFA calling once a day and the other two schools calling multiple times a week. Member Lukens asked what type instances prompted the calls. The Board requested more specific language around training. Chief Lamothe will make the requested changes and bring it back to the OAB for review before it goes to the school board for review. Member Nicholls suggested that there be an additional level of accountability. Chief Lamothe was open to the suggestion but asked what that would look like. A suggestion was made that the school boards write their level of expectations and add their suggestions to the MoU.

6) Independent Survey / Data Collection – Chair White talked to the Board about putting together a two question survey that would help the Board get feedback from the public. The Board discussed how many questions there should be and what the best ways were to get feedback from all parts of the community. Suggestions included a table outside of City Hall on Town Meeting Day, posting it to Front Porch Forum and putting it in the Messenger. Member Lukens also thought to put a table outside of Collins Pearly to get feedback from the member of the St. Albans Town community as well. Chief White asked members of the Board and public to email their question ideas to the Police Advisory Board email.

7) Identify Results Based Accountability (RBA) Map – Member Lindley posed the questions - if you knew this Board was successful, what would be different in this community. There were several different responses

- Interactions between community members and police would be less.
- Law enforcement would be engaging where they need to be. They would be allowed the opportunity to do the work they need to be doing.
- Effective policing –
 - (a) Problems would be handled individually in accordance with the actual issue. Drug problems would not end up in the back of a police car when they should be in treatment. Cops would work in coordination with drug counselors and the drug counselor would be advising an untrained officer. –
 - (b) The officers would not ask unnecessary questions that puts the person on the defensive.
 - (c) Response to Resistance numbers would go down. Chief Lamothe stated that with the new rules dictating when a response to resistance instance is reported, the numbers might go up before they go down.

Chair White posed three questions to the Board. How does the Board access the why of the responses; how does the Board start capturing the community contacts; what information does the Board want. Member Nicholls stated that the Board needed to come up with a plan to align the City's law enforcement resources with the values that the Board is expressing. Member Lukens stated that the Board needed data on the breakdown of calls, arrests made, how the calls categorized. Chief Lamothe stated that the breakdown of mental health related calls are not coded correctly and have never been accurately recorded. The Board agreed that the data might not be

perfect but it would be a starting point in the data. Angela Sturm posted call data broken down by category

- **Desired Results -**
- **Indicators/Benchmarks -**
- **Strategies -**
- **Performance Measures -**

8) Community Engagement / Capital & Impartial Policing Data – Not discussed at this meeting

- **Total Breakdown of Complaints from 01/2020-present by type and volume**
- **Total Number of Excessive Force Complaints 01/2020-Present**
- **Total number of internal investigations into inappropriate actions**
- **Total number of traffic stops broken down by race of driver pulled over**
- **Benchmarking data if available from local, regional and national police departments/communities of similar size and landscape (Seguino Report)**

9) Public Comment –

- **Angela Sturm** – President Obama talked about 21st century policing. It is designed to restore trust in policing. There needs to be a really clear relationship and protocols.
- **Wendy Coy** – One of the benchmarks that needs to be achieved is to restore the public trust in the police departments. There are some who won't call for a police officer even if one is needed.
- **Reier Erikson** – The community can't trust the people who are enforcing the law to follow the law. The issues need to be resolved over a long period of time. The goal should be to have less police interactions. We should not be normalizing police interactions. The goal should be to make this Board defunct.

10) Adjourn – Member Wilkerson made a motion to adjourn at 6:30. Co-Chair Pinkham seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. Next meeting will be on March 23, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.