

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS POLICE ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
5:00 PM TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2023

DRAFT

Commission Members Present: Jamie Pinkham, Chair; Melinda White, Vice Chair; Kris Lukens; Danielle Lindley Mitchell; Winnie Wilkinson; John Nicholls; Marcus Neabar

Commission Members Absent:

City Staff present: Paul Clapps, Minute Taker, Police Chief Lamothe

Members of the public present: Jen

1. Call to Order. J. Pinkham began the meeting at 5:06.

2. J. Pinkham started with the Agenda Introduction and Review

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

- There was a question asking whether they said the pledge before every meeting, and J. Pinkham responded by saying that they do not. J. Pinkham's personal preference is to follow what other committees are doing, but the board was not opposed to it.
- J. Pinkham opened it up for public comment on the agenda.
- A member of the public had two questions/comments.
 - Are there any metrics being collected after officers take equity training to ensure that they are applying the lessons?
 - With the start of autism awareness month, she's concerned that there will be badges sold with the autistic "puzzle piece" that can be seen as detrimental to the cause of autism awareness.
- J. Pinkham reassured Jen that the symbol on the patch is already the "infinity rainbow" logo that it should be.
- J. Pinkham appreciated the feedback on the training issue, and they will discuss ways to report metrics in the future.
- Someone else tried to call into the meeting but their audio couldn't be heard.

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.*
- M. White reviewed the mission. J. Pinkham commented on why the board is an "Advisory" board and not an "Accountability" board. The mission explains this clearly, and there was a lot of thought behind the City Council's decision.

- J. Pinkham also brought up a concern that the board is being “counseled” by the police, and answers that by mentioning that the only police officer member that joins the meetings is the chief and he is **not** a member of the board. The board has an accountability to city council.

5. Consider approval of meeting minutes. There will be no minutes approval this meeting. The board does not have them. J. Pinkham will motion to approve them in the future.

- September 2022
- December 2022
- February 2023

6. Discussion: SAPD Internal Affairs Investigations (IA’s), Chief Lamothe

- J. Pinkham wanted to give Chief Lamothe a chance to explain how internal investigations work in the city.
- Chief Lamothe explained in detail the IA process. There are two main types of internal investigations, minor reports that are sent to an immediate supervisor or manager, and major reports that are investigated by a specific in-house specialist. There are also progressive discipline measures in place to ensure officers don’t make the same mistakes multiple times in the future.
- J. Pinkham paused the discussion to allow for board members to ask questions.
- M. White asked if it’s uncommon for a police department to not have an IA process. Chief Lamothe answered that the state of Vermont has dictated that every police department has this process in place. He didn’t know the extent of their investigations, but the processes exist.
 - M. White thought it’s not necessarily a bad thing that there are reports every year, because it means that officers are being held accountable.
- D. Lindley Mitchell asked whether these reports will influence policy or policing changes. Chief Lamothe responds by saying that this definitely does happen. D. Lindley Mitchell wonders if there’s a way to capture that data to publish for the public.
- J. Pinkham related this to Airlines in how complaints help keep people safe.
- Chief Lamothe specified that there’s no written description for what constitutes a minor and major complaint. He brought up an example of a minor complaint vs. a major complaint. There are so few complaints that fall clearly in guidelines, so it would be hard to write out these rules for metrics.
- J. Nicholls asked if there were any financial reasons to not send a complaint further along the process. Chief Lamothe did clarify that an investigation is expensive, and when officers are being investigated, they are dismissed, so it is a possibility.
- **K. Lukens arrived at 5:36.**
- There was further discussion on the types of complaints the department receives.
- Chief Lamothe began explaining the different ways a complaint is adjudicated.
- J. Pinkham would like to see this data more frequently instead of just at the end of the year. D. Lindley Mitchell thought it should be presented quarterly. Chief Lamothe mentioned that the data won’t look as neat if it’s presented quarterly. The board planned on going over this data in May.

7. General Discussion: Law Enforcement Hiring Practices

- Chief Lamothe gave an overview of the hiring practices of SAPD. There are various stages of the hiring process, from taking a polygraph test to an internal investigation, and even a physical training test.
- J. Pinkham clarified that if an employee leaves the police department and moves somewhere else, the SAPD has an obligation to report factually.
- M. White asked what the timeframe would be between an incident and the decertification of an officer. Chief Lamothe specified that if they're not employed by SAPD anymore then they may never hear if the officer was decertified or not.
- There were no additional questions.
- Chief Lamothe specified that there are several officers currently going through the process to soon become officers. His goal is to have at least four new officers.

8. Areas of Focus SAPD 2022 Data for 2023

- J. Pinkham started discussing the focuses for 2023, including a public comment about making the training process more transparent.
- There were no other comments or questions.
- Chief Lamothe just asked that he get a heads up on whatever data the board requests.
- There was clarification on the gender checkbox of a "use of force" section in the data.
- J. Pinkham presented a graph of the type of calls in 2022.
- Chief Lamothe explained the differences between the types of calls in more detail, as well as an update on the parking garage.
- J. Pinkham presented a chart that shows the top 30 charges. J. Pinkham made the comment that "Disorderly Conduct" is a section that can get a lot of press, since it covers a wide area of things.

9. 2023 Committee Focus

- J. Pinkham discussed what will be brought up in May and June meetings.
- There was no further discussion.

10. Public Comment

- Board members had no comments for the chief before he left.
- J. Pinkham gave a statement on the recent mass shooting and encouraged the public to speak to local representatives.

11. Motion by M. White to adjourn at 6:30. Seconded by K. Lukens. There was no discussion. Motion approved by a vote of all in favor.

Motion by X.XXXXX to [Specific wording of the motion. If it's for minutes, give the date of the minutes being approved.] **Seconded by X.XXXXX.** [Summarize discussion or lack thereof.] **Motion Approved/Failed by a vote of** [All names] **in favor,** [All names] **against, and** [All names] **abstaining** [or just "with all in favor"].