

Meeting Minutes
Police Advisory Board Meeting
VIA TELECONFERENCING
5:00 PM Tuesday, August 24, 2021

Board Members Present: Chair Melinda White; Kris Lukens; Winnie Wilkinson; Tom Benton; Danielle Lindley Mitchell; John Nicholls

Board Members Absent: Co-Chair Jamie Pinkham

Public Present: Reier Erickson; Zach Scheffler

1) Call to Order – Chair White called the meeting to order at 5:01.

2) Agenda Introduction & Review – Chair White shared the agenda through screen sharing. She noted Co-Chair Pinkham's reports on the data committee's work would be postponed, since Co-Chair Pinkham was unable to make the meeting.

Member Benton suggested tabling the board member check-in due to board member absence. Chair White said she had considered that; she said she planned to let individual board members check-in if they wished, and otherwise to table the board member check-in until the next meeting.

3) Open Brief Public Comment on Agenda – None of the public commented during this time.

4) Mission Review – To shake things up a bit, Member Nicholls took a turn reading the PAB's mission aloud: "To offer advice to the St. Albans Police Dept. for the successful implementation of 21st Century policing strategies, and to assist the police dept. in following the established 'Road Map' as amended by the city council."

5) Consider approval of meeting minutes – Member Benton made a motion to approve the prior two months' worth of meeting minutes. Member Nicholls seconded. The board approved the motion.

6) Areas of Focus:

Data – Chair White tabled discussion due to Co-Chair Pinkham's absence.

Community Partnership Committee – Chair White told the board the Franklin-Grand Isle Community Partnership plans to invite the police advisory board to present at the community partnership's November meeting "so... our community partners... can better understand the work that we're doing, so we can get their voices and build stronger partnerships."

Chair White said she would individually connect with board members to ensure those willing to participate are prepared to do so.

Chair White also said she plans to look into more training both for the police advisory board and for SAPD officers. Chair White said she's considering reaching out again to Nikki Fuller, who conducted an implicit bias training for the board earlier this year.

Member Nicholls said he "would be happy" to participate in any additional training, and asked Chair White if she has focus areas in mind. Chair White said the focus right now is equity training.

Member Wilkinson said she hoped for training allowing people to see others without considering gender identity, which she said is a "huge problem." Chair White said there does seem to be "a lack of training, a lack of awareness" around the issue, and that she "can't see where it would hurt" to pursue training in that regard.

Chair White closed the discussion by telling the board she will investigate the board's budget and funding options for further training with the city manager in the coming weeks.

Board Member Check-In – Member Nicholls took the opportunity to publicly share some thoughts about a "tangible direction [the board] could go in." Member Nicholls said he hopes the police advisory board can investigate expanding or supporting the work of local mental health crisis workers responding to police calls.

Member Lindley-Mitchell said she believes she can speak to funding issues regarding those crisis workers. Chair White said "it's definitely worth having more of a conversation around that," and told the board she actually reached out two days earlier to see if the city's crisis workers could speak at an upcoming meeting about their perspective.

Member Lukens, having joined the meeting after a situation involving unlocking her house, said she would like to see an emphasis on substance use specialists as well as mental health workers.

Member Lindley-Mitchell weighed in again at the end of the conversation to suggest Chair White reach out to the director of behavioral health at Northwest Counseling and Support Services, who Lindley-Mitchell said could speak about the crisis worker program's budget as well as advocacy for the program at the state and legislative levels.

7) Public Comment – Reier thanked the board for bringing up the topic of crisis workers. He said, based on his own professional experience, he feels it is "vital" the community have people trained to respond to mental health crises.

Reier also reiterated his disappointment with SAPD Chief Maurice Lamothe's comments at the board's last meeting regarding July's Community Rally for Togetherness. Reier said the event's organizers used the public comment portion of a city council meeting to invite city officials to help with the event, and that many responded. But Reier said the SAPD did not.

Another member of the public said that while she was not looking to defend any actions in particular, she felt if the public is patient with Chief Lamothe "he will get there."

8) Adjourn – Member Benton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Nicholls

seconded the motion. The board approved the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 5:28.