

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS POLICE ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
5:00 PM TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024

DRAFT

Board Members Present: Marcus Neabar, Chair; Melinda White, Vice Chair; Kris Lukens; Winnie Wilkinson;

Board Members Absent: John Nicholls; Danielle Lindley Mitchell;

City Staff present: Paul Olshan, Minute Taker; Police Chief Lamothe;

Members of the public present: Denise Smith

1. **M. Neabar called the meeting to order at 5:05.**
2. K. Lukens read the St. Albans PAB Mission Statement.
 - 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.*
3. Consider approval of Meeting Minutes: 10/24/23 (D&V)
 - **W. Wilkinson motioned to approve the minutes from 10/24/23. Seconded by K. Lukens. The motion passed with all in favor. No additional discussion.**
4. Sharing about Respite Bed (Community Resource), Denise Smith
 - M. Neabar gave a brief introduction for D. Smith.
 - D. Smith described what Respite Bed was, the program’s purpose, and an overview of the funding. She described where some of these apartments were located as well as the need for coordination with the police in case any of the residents break the agreement. But this is exceptionally rare.
 - M. White asked specifically about detox beds. D. Smith specified that they can be used for people with substance use disorder, but they are not set up for detox. The locations are substance free as well.
 - W. Wilkinson asked specifically about how the police would be involved, and whether there would be social workers involved in the process. S. Smith clarified and confirmed that there would be social workers and behavioral specialists heavily involved.
 - Chief Lamothe asked about their amenities and how wellness checks might be

processed. D. Smith specified that they do have internet access, a phone, and the staff will have keys to access the room.

- **D. Smith left the meeting at 5:28.**

5. Discuss terms of PAB Members

- M. Neabar moved onto the discussion of PAB Member terms.
- There was a discussion on how the town and city boards would combine in the future. Also, M. White mentioned that J. Nicholls was officially stepping down from the board.
- **W. Wilkinson motioned for K. Lukens to continue serving the board past her term's expiration date. (There was no Second or vote.) K. Lukens agreed.**
- Chief Lamothe read the contract of the Police Advisory Board.
- W. Wilkinson asked about whether the contract or purpose of the board should be amended in the future. K. Lukens wondered about the mission or purpose of the Town's board as well.
- W. Wilkinson also discussed a comparison with the Burlington Police Advisory Board, the positions of people involved and why they meet. She also wanted to see more data on autism and mental health concerns throughout the community.

6. SAPD Update, Chief Lamothe

- M. Neabar began the discussion on SAPD updates, new hires, and community trends/changes.
- Chief Lamothe updated the board on the numbers of officers. They're looking to have 16 when the city and town merge, and they are currently at 12 officers with one going through training and another out of state officer transferring.
- The city is hiring a new specialist for narcotics and burglaries which would be incredibly helpful.
- W. Wilkinson asked about the demographics of the applicants and whether there was a push specifically for hispanic, Native American, or black officers. She specified that there are incentives that could be utilized to help have officers that look and sound like her.
- Chief Lamothe gave an update on several campaigns and diverse hiring initiatives. Ideally, he was in agreement with W. Wilkinson.
- Chief Lamothe started a discussion on the trends on crime and substances in the city. Retail theft is also on the rise, and due to how it's treated as a misdemeanor, they are sometimes charging the same person multiple times each week. There is also a high amount of arrest warrants.
- There was a discussion on physical arrests and how they're supposed to be carried out without hurting the suspect.
- Chief Lamothe ended this discussion with an update on the community events. There was also a conversation about the frequency of meetings, the meetings might continue on a bimonthly basis as they recruit and plan for the merger.

- **Chief Lamothe left the meeting at 6:19.**
- 7. No Public Comment
- 8. **W. Wilkinson motioned to end the meeting. Seconded by K. Lukens. The motion passed with all in favor. No additional discussion.**