

CITY OF NORWICH
Police Reform
Community Advisory Board (“CAB”)
Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2020
3:00 p.m.
Zoom meeting

PRESENT

Mayor Shawn Sastri
Police Chief Rodney Marsh
Assistant Police Chief Scott Burlison
Michael Ferrarese – District Attorney
Christine M Rudy – First Assistant District Attorney
Alderdwoman Nancy Allaire
Police Officer Brandon Clarke – PBA President
Pastor Jen Westervelt
Adrienne Zornow
Dave Jennings
Melody Girgenti
Missy Beers
Lynn Murray

Meeting Intro

The meeting of 12/3/2020 has been changed to 12/1/2020 at 3:00 pm, via zoom and/or City Hall

Reducing Racial Bias

Adrienne discussed Strategies to Reduce Racial Disparities & Build Trust.

- a. Training PO in implicit and racial bias.
- b. Training should be from the top down; leadership need to understand how PO bias affects the community. Conversational training is the best way to train and there is a IAT (Implicit association test) that can be found on-line and used to measure the strengths between stereotypical associations.
- c. Review the officer survey
- d. Have a community event that discusses racial discrimination (possible with SUNY Morrisville or Chenango Health Network)
- e. Lexipol policy (what it says and how the PD will be trained)
- f. Avoid situations that lead to use of force.
- g. Build trust with community and try to avoid situations that put PO and community members in jeopardy.
- h. Banning use of force on certain arrests.
- i. Change the rules of engagements.
- j. In certain situation the tone of someone’s voice could either escalate a situation or de-escalate the situation.

Officer Clarke noted that no officer walks around with the intent to pick a fight. The situation, factors and person dictate the way a PO responds to a situation. Use of force is based on the actions of the person dealing with the PO.

DA Ferrarese talked about bail reform there were 131 Felonies and 865 misdemeanors in 2018; 85% of these are now part of bail reform.

Officer Clarke used an example of use of force, there was one individual that was arrested 3 times in one day, on the 4th arrest he was handcuffed. Use of force starts when the other person uses force against the PO.

The committee questioned who reviews use of force. Chief Marsh stated:

- a. The PO fills out a use of force form and turns that into the supervisor
- b. The supervisor turns the form into the Assistant Police Chief.
- c. The Assistant Police Chief turns over to the Police Chief.

The committee wanted to know if the police department was the only department that reviews the use of force paperwork.

DA Ferrarese stated that the district attorney sees all body cam footage and some use of force instances.

The committee believes that someone other than the Police Department and District Attorney office should review use of force paperwork.

Melody stated that at the end of the day everyone works closely together and someone else needs to review use of force paperwork other than the DA office and police department.

Discussion on the training of de-escalation for police officers and regulating the use of force.

The committee discussed that the Norwich PD needs to be more transparent with the community. The discussion centered around the Police Chief releasing information to the public on use of force incidents.

Chief Marsh discussed that in 2017, 2018, and 2019 there was an average of 4 complaints. He stated that he does an in-depth investigation that leads to a PO being reprimanded, having a counseling, or being suspended.

A question was asked if the Norwich PD has quotes for PO.

Officer Clarke stated that there are no quotes or incentives.

Other personnel considerations

Discussion for the hiring of personnel: higher standards, better pay and a diverse workforce. It was noted that there should be more females and a more diverse force.

HR Director was asked to explain the civil service process.

- a. The police officer exam is announced.

- b. People that qualify for the exam fill out a civil service application and pay the appropriate fee.
- c. The HR Director reviews applications and ensures that the minimum qualifications are adhered to: Minimum qualifications are a high school diploma and the age of 20 and not more then 36.
- d. The test is administered.
- e. The results are sent back to HR Director and an eligible list is established.
- f. Once the list is established the candidates in the top 3 undergo a physical agility test. Candidates must pass this test (part of civil service exam) if they do not pass, they are not considered for an interview.

The interview process begins with the Police Chief, Assistant Police Chief, a member of the PBA and the HR Director asking questions. The candidate must undergo a physical, psychological test, polygraph and background check with reference checks.

Community Policing and Diversion Program

For fist time offenders, youthful offenders, and mental health issues:

Offenders should be utilizing the Place, YMCA, Salvation Army, local churches, Improve Norwich Now, Friends of Recovery (not currently set up, Aunt Mary's house (not currently set up)

Ruth Roberts also stated that there are treatment programs and court ordered programs and that MCAT helps with mental health issues.

Hate Crimes will be discussed later

Police Officer Survey

12 PO responded to the survey concerns and suggestions were as follows:

- a. 50% of PO would like a Chaplain
- b. Training was the most noted area of concern.
- c. Citizen Police Academy.
- d. Community events and community policing.
- e. School resource officer.
- f. Promoting ride-a-longs.
- g. 12-hour shifts are good, but the PO would like to see going from days to nights switch from once a month to about 6-8 months.
- h. Overtime is a generally a concern.
- i. Staffing concerns – more PO and Detectives
- j. Morale is low – more training and education
- k. PO's dislike stray dogs, parking signs, mental health, and the amount of paperwork they must complete (they thought a secretary might be helpful)
- l. No upward movement (maybe training would help)

Community Survey and draft letter

Adrienne talked about the community survey and editing rights, she believes that not everyone on the committee should have editing rights, however everyone will be able to view the survey. There was discussion about locations to place signs and papers survey. The timeline and distribution were

discussed. City Hall will be making copies of the survey to hand out. Distribution date will be 11/23/2020 with a return by date of 12/7/2020. The cover letter and survey will be reviewed by the Mayor before distribution.

Next meeting November 25, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom or in person at City Hall

Closed meeting at 4:40 pm