

CITY OF NORWICH
Police Reform
Community Advisory Board (“CAB”)
Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2020
3:00 p.m.
Zoom meeting/In person meeting at City Hall

PRESENT

Mayor Shawn Sastri
Police Chief Rodney Marsh
Assistant Police Chief Scott Burlison
Aldерwoman Nancy Allaire
Police Officer Brandon Clarke – PBA President
Pastor Jen Westervelt
Adrienne Zornow
David Jennings
Melody Girgenti
Missy Beers
Lynn Murray

Friends of Recovery (FOR) will be at this meeting to discuss their services.

Union Contract

Officer Clarke started the meeting regarding the PBA contract. The union provides Patrolmen and Sergeants a voice with how the city acts with the department and community. The contract ensures that all officers have a voice whether they are brand new or a long-term employee regarding pay, benefits, better work environment, and legal services. Unions have been around for 100’s of years and is a way to communicate with the City about issues within the ranks. Somethings that PBA union supports the community are sponsor a little league team, no shave November, scholarships for students graduating and going to college in law enforcement, toys for tots, trunk & treat program, and the after prom party. The union members contribute for each of these community sponsored events. Adrienne asked if the officers did this stuff on their own time or doing work hours? Officer Clarke said that most are completed off duty. Missy asked why off duty conduct was vague in the union contract? Officer Clarke said that off duty conduct is subjective and depends on each person’s point of view. Adrienne would like to have more discussion on this topic. Adrienne also stated that the committee will need to discuss vacation time, she feels like there is not enough vacation time and that could impact the officer’s wellbeing. Pastor Jen will make a note to re-visit contract on 12/16/2020.

Plan proposals

This section will depend on any updates from last week’s meeting.

The group asked for guidance on the Park and Bark job description, they wanted to know if there was anything that needed to be added or modified and if the group should review. Lynn will upload the job description for the Park and Bark officer to the google drive and put in the Collaborative Info Folder. The group has decided that this position should be a part of the collaborative plan. What would be the next steps, HR will follow up with regulations related to the position.

Officer Clarke and Pastor Jen are working on the Secretary/Public relations position. There was a question about what the public relation position would do? Adrienne said that person would oversee making sure community knows about any surveys being done, do press releases, community outreach and field media requests. The police blotter was discussed, members had different point of views on that topic. Pastor Jen wanted to know if this position could promote events like a food drive. Officer Clarke said he did not think it was a concern. Lynn just wanted to remind everyone that any press releases must be approved by the Mayor's office before they are released. Adrienne thought maybe this position could be a shared position between police and fire and any other department in the City.

Guest speaker Debra Berrios from FOR (Friends of Recovery) joined the meeting to discuss the organization and its role it plays in the community.

Pastor Jen asked if Mayor Sastri and Lynn decided how best to share Dr Harpers findings? Mayor Sastri and Lynn will discuss and get back to the committee.

Asst Chief Burlison have you been able to find anything else about Coffee with Cops? Asst Chief Burlison stated that this program is a national program that started in 2011. It is a free program and there is training that starts on October 6, 2021, it is a 4- and 8-hour training program. The program looks like a decent program and he will be uploading the resources on google drive. Melody wanted to know if there were more community policing resources the Norwich PD could do. She gave suggestions about a national night out, neighborhood barbeques, and exercising with cops. Pastor Jen asked if any of the community members were interested in assisting the Norwich PD with community engagement? Melody, Missy, Adrienne, and Pastor Jen would be interested.

Brandon was asked if he had heard anything about the Citizen's Police Academy? Officer Clarke said he has not heard anything; he has reached out to 3 agencies in the Southern Tier.

School Resource Officer, Officer Clarke was asked to discuss his findings: He has reached out to different agencies and talked with the Chenango County Sheriff Department (they have a strong SOR program). The consensus was that there should be a memorandum of understanding between the school and the police department. This approach is recommended in the Governor's handbook. Do other districts in Chenango County have a SOR? Yes, the Sheriff's office does a good job of covering the county schools. Melody had questions concerning a SOR in the school. Discussion ensued and it was decided that this topic will be tabled and discussed later.

Community Survey - Distribution is not completed. Adrienne does not see it in Evening Sun, on the Facebook page or the CAB home page. This information will be posted on the City website. The deadline will be moved up to December 14th.

Closing

The topics that will be discussed next meeting will be Leadership & Culture, Training and Education, and the Police Mission.

Next meeting December 9, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom or in person at City Hall

Closed meeting at 4:35 pm