

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE MINUTES

JANUARY 15, 2025

Overview

The Police Accountability Committee Meeting convened for its inaugural meeting to address key issues surrounding police recruitment and community engagement in Middletown. Members introduced themselves, highlighting challenges in recruitment and officer retention, with contributions from local youth providing insights on community perceptions of law enforcement. Chief Texter presented an overview of the Middletown Police Department, noting staffing shortages and the need for improved recruiting strategies, including outreach to schools and involvement with military veterans. Discussion points included leveraging technology for better communication, maintaining a positive media presence, and enhancing community programs. The committee agreed to quarterly meetings, with actionable tasks assigned to members, such as evaluating the department's website and promoting police career opportunities. The next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2025, emphasizing ongoing efforts towards enhancing community relations and effective recruitment.



Introduction and Background

- Committee members introduced themselves and their backgrounds
- Chairman: David Thomas – Town Councilman, retired Delaware State Police, U.S. Marshal
- Martin Bradshaw – Middletown Crossing – Attends Town Council meetings to discuss suggestions for police action in the community
- Carol Bright – Parkside – active in the neighborhood association and attends community functions; has ideas to share with MPD
- Alan Jones – Longmeadow – clergy member
- Matthew Kolbjornsen – youth perspective
- Matthew Luckini – local business owner (Sweet Dreams Confectioners)
- Nicole Maltby – Millbranch – long-time resident who has worked with MPD for community issues
- James Reynolds – Former Vice Mayor (retired after 35 years), has years of perspective on hiring and recruitment issues the Town has had, along with perspective on years of police service prior to MPD being formed
- Billy Warrick – Willow Grove Mill – Retired Wilmington Police, still contracts as researcher for the Delaware Court System.
- Sarah Shaw – Wawa manager, not able to attend.



Police Department Overview

- Chief Texter presented an overview of Middletown Police Department
- Department has 41 officers, ideally should have around 60
- Challenges in recruiting and retaining officers discussed
- Reasons for lack of interest in policing career explored

Community Perspectives

- Committee members share experiences and suggestions for improvement
- Discussion on community engagement and perception of police
- Importance of positive interactions with youth emphasized
- Suggestions for improving recruitment strategies

Education and Outreach

- Discussion on police involvement in schools and educational programs
- Importance of early engagement with elementary school students
- Exploration of different recruitment strategies, including military veterans
- Mental health support for officers highlighted as retention strategy

Technology and Communication

- Suggestions for using technology to assist police work
- Discussion on improving social media presence and community outreach
- Importance of positive media representation of police emphasized
- Challenges of staffing and workload discussed

Department History and Statistics

- Chief Texter presents history and milestones of Middletown Police Department
- Overview of department structure, calls for service, and community programs
- Discussion on traffic enforcement and collision data
- Explanation of CALEA accreditation and its importance

Community Services and Outreach

- Presentation on various community programs and events
- Discussion on youth academy, senior center programs, and Special Olympics involvement
- Overview of drug take-back programs and community policing initiatives
- Emphasis on positive community interactions and mentorship

Recruitment and Benefits

- Detailed presentation on officer pay, benefits, and pension
- Discussion on recruitment challenges and strategies
- Overview of application and hiring process
- Emphasis on work-life balance and job satisfaction in policing career

Statewide Recruiting Initiative

- Presentation on new statewide recruiting website and initiative
- Discussion on modernizing application process and outreach methods
- Emphasis on showcasing diverse aspects of policing career

- Exploration of targeted marketing strategies for recruitment

Meeting Logistics and Next Steps

- Discussion on scheduling future meetings and frequency
- Agreement on quarterly meetings, with next meeting set for March 12, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.
- Homework assignments for committee members discussed
- Emphasis on improving department website and social media presence

Action Items

All committee members

- Review and provide feedback on Middletown Police Department website
- Reach out to potential recruits and promote police career opportunities

Matt Kolbjornsen

- Provide insights on effective social media strategies for youth engagement

Kristen Krenzer -- Send out meeting reminders for future sessions

Chief Texter

- Arrange ride-along opportunities for committee members