

A Police Advisory Board meeting was held on the above date via Zoom conference call, with the following members in attendance: Salahudin Bin-Yusif, Emy Diaz, Jelani Bryant, Yvette Santiago, Jacqueline Burditt, Michael Harpe, Linda LaRue, Jerry Kissel, Joyce Kidd, Charles Warrick, Jason Hunt, and Wanda Dean. Police Captain Ron Davis was also in attendance. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chairman Bin-Yusif.

It was moved by Michael Harpe and seconded by Joyce Kidd to approve the minutes from the September meeting as presented. Motion carried 12-0.

It was moved by Jelani Bryant and seconded by Linda LaRue to move the agenda forward as presented. Motion carried 12-0.

TERM LIMITS DISCUSSED:

- Chair Bin-Yusif said the board is in a transition phase as the board members who have terms that expire at the end of this meeting and some that continue through October, 2023. Three members have resigned as of right now, Justin Faulkner, Susan Mitchell and Emy Diaz. Emy Diaz said, however, her appointee, Councilman Jim Royston, has requested that she stay on the board until the end of 2022, and she agreed.
- Billy Warrick said he also received word from the Mayor & Council that he should stay put on the board until the end of the year as well.
- Kristen Krenzer confirmed that the Mayor & Council are working to find replacements for those who have left the board and have requested everything remain intact until the end of the year.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

- **Quarterly report due soon.** Bin-Yusif said the next quarterly report will be due soon so stay tuned for the first draft that will be coming out soon. Make comments, please, he said.
- **CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY:** Bin-Yusif and Joyce Kidd are attending the current Citizens Police Academy and he said he can't say enough good things about how much he has learned so far in the academy. He said he expected to learn a lot, but has been taken aback by the reality of what he is learning about. He highly recommends everyone attend the next one. He said he and Joyce will be giving updates to the MPAB at the next meeting about the overall feeling about the academy.
- **BYLAWS:** Bin-Yusif said he has some suggestions for bylaws changes. He said he was asked by one of the Councilman to put down on paper what he would like to see changed in the bylaws to make the PAB better, after its first two years in existence. He suggests the following:
 - ^ We are looking at shrinking the number of the board to 7 or 9 members. He said in speaking outside of this meeting, there are others who think we should stay at 15.
 - ^ He said these changes will not be put into place until at the end of the full terms (three years) ending 2023.
 - ^ Emy Diaz said it should remain in place that Mayor & Council should still have half of the appointments, no matter the number of residents on the board.
 - ^ Jerry Kissel said he thinks the Mayor & Council should have the majority of nominations for the board. As a taxpayer, he doesn't feel comfortable with an outside organization

having the majority vote on nominations to a board giving advice to the Mayor & Council, even though the Mayor & Council approves the members, there shouldn't be an outside organization giving the majority of the nominations to the board. Emy Diaz said she agrees with that statement.

^ Wanda Dean said she does not agree. She said this is because the outside entity (NAACP) was responsible for the hard work and effort to make this board happen and it did not happen overnight, she said. She said this board was formulated out of the efforts of Rev. Broughton after the community rally for Black Lives Matter.

^ She said the idea of the board came out of that rally and subsequent meetings with the Mayor and he was receptive to the idea of starting this board, but it was out of the requests of the NAACP.

^ Billy Warrick said yes, the things that were happening at that time and boards like this one were set up all over the State of Delaware and the United States and they're all set up different. He said we want to be fair all the way across the board and don't want to turn it into a Black Lives Matter thing and come together as a board and do good things for the community.

^ Joyce Kidd reminded the group that the NAACP nominates 8 members and Mayor & Council nominate 7. Bin-Yusif reminded the group that the Mayor & Council has the ultimate say on all of the appointments, no matter where they come from.

^ Debbie Harrington said she didn't want to beat a dead horse, but for history's sake, wanted to say this organization / board started back in 2012, established by the community itself, established by the community itself. She said the NAACP has been asking for this board for a long time before George Floyd or any other rally happened in Middletown.

^ Jerry Kissel said he doesn't debate how it started or any of the history of it, just that the outside board should not have the majority of nominations. Bin-Yusif said although NAACP makes one more nomination, Mayor & Council still have complete oversight of the MPAB.

^ Jason Hunt said he would like to see the nominations come from each entity equally to keep there from being any type of majority. He said it is always better to have an equally-yoked board.

^ Billy Warrick said he wanted to correct a statement made earlier. He said there has always been a police advisory board in Middletown since the start of the Middletown Police Department. He was a part of that board until it was swapped out for this new advisory board.

^ Emy Diaz said if someone was to play back the tape of this meeting, it would sound like both sides of this board are being very territorial and it shouldn't be that way. No one person or entity "owns this board," she said. It is a taxpayer-funded board, overseen by the Mayor and Council. She said it should be open to anybody who wants to be a part of the board, not just people who are part of a certain community group in Town.

^ Bin-Yusif asked members to write down their feelings about the number of board members and changes to the bylaws and send them to him via email.

^ In addition to the number of board members on the board, it was also discussed about how to fill vacancies on the board and a potential application process. Bin-Yusif also asked for comments on the potential scenario for changing the way things are done now.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Police Report Evaluation Committee

No report.

B. Community Connections Committee

Jason Hunt reported there have been several followers joining the MPAB Twitter, Facebook and Instagram social media pages. He thanked members and Kristen Krenzer for sending him items to put on the social media pages and said to keep them coming because the pages are starting to “pick up some steam.”

C. Research Committee

No report.

Debbie Harrington asked the status of the potential survey from Ms. Krenzer. Krenzer said she is still looking for a few pieces of the survey that was used during the comprehensive plan process and will send out the draft survey shortly.

D. Strategic Planning Committee

Jerry Kissel said he is trying to put together a strategic plan and what the benefits to the community would be and he asked for a list of what the group would actually like to start planning to do.

Police Chief Report

Captain Ron Davis gave the Police Report that was delivered at the October 3 meeting of the Mayor and Council from data that occurred in the month of September. The following questions were asked following the report:

- Debbie Harrington asked about the number of police reports and how the numbers compared to last year. Capt. Davis said it looks like we wrote 250 reports this year versus 161 last year.
- He said the department has had to increase the number of reports written mostly due to speeding in the past year. He said the most complaints the MPD are hearing these days are due to speeding in the neighborhoods.
- That’s why the residents will see the speed trailer being placed around communities more and more as a reminder of the speed limit, he said. After the trailer is there as a reminder, the officers will then start writing citations, Capt. Davis said.
- Bin-Yusif said he has seen the speed signs that have been posted in more of a “constant location” in some areas nearby. Do those signs work? he asked.
- Capt. Davis said he wasn’t sure, but the data collected from our speed trailers shows that it doesn’t seem to matter, people must not see the signs at all in some cases. He gave an example of a 75 mph reading on the speed trailer on Silver Lake Road in the 35 mph zone.
- Harrington said she feels like shootings are getting more frequent in Middletown.
- Capt. Davis said she is correct that they have picked up since 2007, but unfortunately, it’s due to the fact that it’s juveniles and the younger age bracket committing these crimes and because they are in that age bracket, there’s almost a revolving door with them getting out and continuing to commit the same crime.

- Harrington said with the escalating crime, why are we sticking with the same number of officers. Capt. Davis said the department is trying so hard to recruit people, but it's a national issue, no matter what we offer people, they are not interested in working as police. He said each candidate has their own issues and desires for coming to a certain department, ranging from overtime wants to even getting the chance to wear a beard on the job.
- Joyce Kidd asked about the two women who attended the Citizens Police Academy who were interested in joining the department. Capt. Davis said Lt. Brenner followed up with them and they were scheduled to do the physical fitness test to see if they were eligible.
- Billy Warrick said his issue is the department needs to analyze why officers are leaving, noting MPD officers going to New Castle County, State Police and even the most recent, DNREC Police. What motivates them to leave? he asked.
- Capt. Davis said officers leave for their own reasons and they're all different reasons, just like the reasons they would join the department. We just have to keep going at them and trying different avenues, he said.

NEXT MEETING: November 21, 2022