

A Police Advisory Board meeting was held on the above date via Zoom conference call, with the following members in attendance: Salahudin Bin-Yusif, Justin Faulkner, Michael Harpe, John Carwell, Emy Diaz, Billy Warrick, Susan Mitchell, Yvette Santiago, Jacqueline Burditt and Joyce Kidd. Middletown Police Chief William Texter, Capt. Ron Davis, FOP Representative Michael Hilliard and MSgt. Scott Saunders also attended.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Bin-Yusif.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** Chairman Bin-Yusif asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. Hearing none, he said the minutes are approved as written.

**CHAIR'S REPORT:**

Chairman Bin-Yusif asked the board to approve a date for his requested board "brainstorming" workshop in the beginning of 2022. Emy Diaz said because she works for the State Legislature, she has a hard time committing to another nightly meeting. He asked the board to consider meeting on any of the Tuesdays in January. Diaz asked why the board had to have a separate workshop. She said she felt the board could meet next month, for example, and have the workshop instead of holding a separate meeting and push some of the regular items to the following month. Bin-Yusif agreed that could be possible and he will consider it, along with another meeting in January.

Bin-Yusif also reported to the Board that at the Nov. 1 meeting of the Mayor and Council, a councilman asked him what he felt the board has accomplished in the past year to address crime solving. He said the councilman said "I see you guys have been working and doing some things and coming up with some ideas, but can you pinpoint what you've brought to us specifically to help solve crimes?"

Bin-Yusif said he responded that he thought the PAB's goal was to be a conduit between the police department and the community, so community members will come to us and share information with us. "We've been getting some of that, but not a whole lot of that," he said, adding that having a Website or Facebook page up and running by the end of the year would help give people a place to share information.

He said, after the meeting, he wished he had said that the PAB is not so much a board to "solve crimes" but to help prevent them by coming up with ideas to keep the streets safer, by stepping outside of the box and working with and having a homogenous relationship with the police department.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**A. Police Report Evaluation Committee**

No report.

**Community Connections Committee**

John Carwell reported that his committee met on Tuesday, Nov. 9, with Bin-Yusif, Wanda Dean, Joyce Kidd, himself and Cpl. Michael Hilliard. Hilliard recently took over the community services position in the department. Due to staffing, several officers have been rotating in this position and it has been great to see the different policing styles of Sgt.

Saunders, Cpl. Howard and now Cpl. Hilliard, Carwell said. He reported that the fall is busy with the Trick-or-Treat on Main Street event with more than 1,000 children on Main Street and the drug take-back event. These are both great events where the community connects with the police department, he said. He said the community services department seems to be cohesive and have the same vision as they move forward.

## **B. Research Committee**

Susan Mitchell said she was looking forward to hearing the research done by Wanda Dean and Debbie Harrington, as they reported last month they have a contact at the Smyrna PD and would be visiting their 911 call center and reporting back with information.

Bin-Yusif asked if anyone had further information on call centers at this time.

Mitchell said the information online is lacking regarding response times. She did find in her research that nuisance calls like fender benders (minor car accidents with no injuries) take an inordinate amount of time that affects how quickly officers can get to the next call. Capt. Davis said he wanted to clarify something regarding call centers. He said Smyrna PD does not have a 911 Call Center. He said Smyrna has call takers, so the call takers take the call, but then they have to send it out to the police – so you still have information going from one place to another and then in turn being dispatched to an officer.

He said there is a slight delay between when the caller calls into the 911 Call Center (RECOM) because they take down a lot of information before they dispatch the call so the officer knows everything possible before heading to the call, like whether the person has a gun, if someone is shot, etc.

He said the officers are trained to prioritize, so if there is a shooting, it's "all hands on deck." If an officer is working at a scene where there's a fender bender and no one is injured – but a call comes in for a shooting – the officer will leave the scene of that accident and go to the shooting.

Capt. Davis said he really hopes the PAB can take part in taking a tour of the 911 Call Center so everyone can see how it works.

Bin-Yusif said there are plans to have this tour in the spring.

Emy Diaz asked if things like this in the citizens police academy can be recorded on YouTube, so everyone can participate. Sgt. Saunders said he doesn't feel as if the same results are gotten from a video than being in person. He said these tours are very interactive and the impact gets lost over video.

Michael Harpe agreed. He went through the academy a couple of years ago and he said it's very important to do the academy in person, to see the perspective of all of the participants and how they change as they go through the various lessons.

## **Police Chief Report**

Chief Texter shared the police report for the month of October that was given at the November Town Council meeting. He also reported that the drug take-back event collected more than 100 pounds of medicines.

Also, he reported the police department is doing "No Shave November" where the police collect donations from the community to be able to have beards in November and December. Female officers are allowed to paint their nails as part of the fundraiser. Last year's beneficiary of the donations was the M.O.T. Senior Center. Cpl. Hilliard reported this year's donations will go to Kay's Kamp, a summertime camp for kids with cancer.

Chief Texter reported the police department is hosting a “Fair and Impartial Police Training” at the Town Hall with police departments coming in from all over – even as far as Colorado. The department will also be doing de-escalation training in the early part of December, training our officers and police from towns like New Castle and Seaford doing the training with us. Chief said he is excited that all of these trainings are coming into fruition as he feels like they have been talking about them for awhile.

The PAB had the following questions regarding the police chief’s report for the month of October:

Bin-Yusif asked if the citizens police academy will contain any of this new information, like fair and impartial training and de-escalation. Sgt. Saunders said he is always willing to add new information to the academy and he will look into doing that, especially for the PAB’s training.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **PAL Center:**

Bin-Yusif said members of the PAB have been reaching out to community leaders and leaders in the PAL Center group to see how we can help. He reminded the PAB that the PAL Center will have its own board when it is created. He is hoping to have PAL officials come to the PAB meeting in January.

Carwell asked if there is any overlap between the PAL Center and the future Middletown YMCA? He asked if there could be unintended consequences of competition.

Bin-Yusif said although both centers are focused on children, the PAL center would be more focused on getting the police working with the children – both athletically, yes – but based on research I’ve done, he said, communities with PAL centers have better results regarding reducing crime.

Justin Faulkner asked if anyone from the PAB has contacted Mayor & Council or the Town’s finance department to find out if there is funding for a PAL Center.

Bin-Yusif said no, not anyone on this board, that would be more for the board that is working to create a PAL center and moving it forward.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Emy Diaz said she wanted to bring up a question she had about partisan politics and the PAB. She said she felt uncomfortable during the Fall Festival on Sept. 11. She said she was asked to sit at a table during the event and discuss partisan politics (explain what the representative does and answer questions from the community.) At the same time, she was wearing a Police Advisory Board T-shirt because she thought she was attending the event as a member of this board. She said she wanted to discuss whether we should, or should not be, involved in partisan activities like that.

Bin-Yusif said because PAB is a new board, things like this are going to happen. He said the Fall Fest was the type of event where people were wearing all kinds of hats. People were doing “double duty” at several different booths with community groups they are part of, like sororities, fraternities, the PAB and elected officials. He said the PAB is non-partisan and probably should try to stay away from doing partisan politics, especially when wearing the PAB shirt. But members are also individuals, and as long as it’s clear which

hat they are wearing at the time, can feel free to support whomever they want outside of sitting at the table with the rest of the PAB board.

Joyce Kidd said it is perfectly understandable to make a choice at an event like that to say “maybe next time” if someone is asked to sit at a partisan table but they were planning to attend the event as part of the PAB group.

Sue Mitchell said a statement should be added to the minutes to let everyone know about this. Joyce Kidd said she believes this should be added in some form to the bylaws.

Bin-Yusif said he will bring this up during the discussion next month’s brainstorming session.

**NEXT MEETING:** Dec. 20, 2021

Moved by Joyce Kidd and seconded by Mitchell to adjourn at 8:29 p.m. Moved unanimously.