

A Police Advisory Board meeting was held on the above date via Zoom conference call, with the following members in attendance: Salahudin Bin-Yusif, Linda LaRue, John Carwell, Sue Mitchell, Debbie Harrington, Wanda Dean, Jason Hunt, Yvette Santiago and Joyce Kidd. Middletown Police Chief William Texter, FOP Representative Michael Hilliard were also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairman Bin-Yusif.

The minutes for January meeting were approved after a motion by John Carwell and seconded by Joyce Kidd. Moved 9-0.

The first order of business was to welcome Elder Linda LaRue and introduce all of the board members to the new member.

Bin-Yusif said the board needs to develop a strategic plan. We have to make sure we are not doing this as just “wandering around.” He said he would like to work in the next few meetings to put the strategic plan in place. He said the board will need to reach out to other advisory boards to see what they are doing and we really need to focus on doing a survey to make sure this board is doing what it needs to be doing to serve the community.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **A. Police Report Evaluation Committee**

Bin-Yusif reported that the Board is working on compiling a document, a spreadsheet, for it to keep track of crimes that are reported each month by Chief Texter. He said work will need to be done outside of this monthly meeting to compile that data so the Board will be able to stay on top of crimes that pop up and for the Board to know when it needs to reach out to the community and let it know about certain instances of crime to watch out for.

### **Community Connections Committee**

John Carwell reported that his committee met on Feb. 8 and discussed the Facebook page. Thank you to everyone who sent bios and headshots. He said the FB will go live next Monday, so if anyone hasn't sent in their bio / headshot yet, please do so by the end of this week.

He said the subcommittee also talked about looking at ways to recognize good works by officers in the MPD. They also talked about Crimestoppers and having more community meetings with the various neighborhoods, to let them know what a valuable resource Crimestoppers is to be partners with, along with MPD.

Carwell also talked about “Courageous Conversations” and launching that here in Middletown because we heard it was successful in another Delaware community.

MSgt. Saunders reported that he had a community meeting with local businesses to discuss common concerns, loss prevention and other crime prevention techniques.

Carwell said a Drive in Movie night is coming up on April 8 & 9; and there was an idea to have a recruitment liaison from the MPAB Board to talk about MPD's hiring process along with the MPD recruitment team.

## **B. Research Committee**

Debbie Harrington reported that she and Wanda Dean met with New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer and the 911 Call Center there.

Dean said there are eight 911 Call Centers in Delaware.

Harrington said they learned the call centers are staffed by citizens, not police officers. She said the call center civilians get to know the community and can offer good customer service.

Dean said it is very tricky how the money is divided up to the call center. From the County Executive's perspective, he likes it being centralized in NCC.

The board members also toured Newark and the University of Delaware's 911 Centers. Dean said she felt the two community call centers were more community-oriented. They said if a Town can get their own 911 Call Center, it would be a win-win for the Town and for the police department.

Bin-Yusif said more research needs to be done to balance the two types of call centers to show the benefits and drawbacks of each, so a complete report can be made to the Mayor and Council. He said the costs of implementing this in Middletown will need to be evaluated, compared to the cost of the current situation.

## **Police Chief Report**

Chief Texter shared the police report for the months of December and January. The following discussion was had after the report:

Chief said the MPD is planning to host a lot of community meetings in March, following the several they had in February.

He said the department is still working hard with their recruitment process. They are always looking for new and different ways to recruit people. He said all departments are struggling to find officers.

Harrington said during their meeting with Newark Police, they heard about a \$10,000 bonus for officers. Texter said yes, that idea came from MPD, we gave them that idea as we have already been doing that.

He said as soon as the posting is ready for the next hiring process, he will get it to the MPAB, so they can share it with as many people as possible.

Bin-Yusif said a common thread in the police reports is that fact that young people are doing these crimes and we need to continue to work to try to get to these young people before they get into a life of crime; and the Board needs to continue to work to find an outlet, like a PAL Center, for these young folks.

Dean asked why the MPD doesn't offer the signing bonus for regular people to go into the academy, since our starting pay is so low, because to do it for someone who is already a police officer, the \$10,000 will cause them to still go backwards in pay. Chief Texter said all police officers go backwards in pay when they leave their current situation, that's just how it is.

Dean asked if all of the MPD officers are assigned to MPD or if they work assigned outside?

Texter said MPD has one officer assigned to the DEA drug task force, but they work primarily on Middletown drug investigations. Some investigations do lead the officer to work outside of Middletown, because drug dealers do not worry about state lines or town limits, he said.

Dean said wouldn't that officer better serve Middletown by working in Middletown because we are short-staffed?

Texter said we have had a drug enforcement officer for many years and the officer has made one of the biggest drug arrests in the State of Delaware history and they help us with resources from the Federal government.

Dean asked if the MPD lost one of the candidates in the police academy. Texter said yes, there will be three graduates of the academy going on right now.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Bin-Yusif said the quarterly report is ready and needs to be reviewed by all 15 members of the Board before it can be submitted to Mayor & Council. He said the Board needs to be better about getting this report out.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Sue Mitchell said she would like to see the Board do a community survey like is done by the City of Newark. She said she believes the survey is done every five years and it is a really well-done survey.

Bin-Yusif asked Mitchell to bring the Newark survey to the Board for review so it can be discussed at a future meeting.

**NEXT MEETING:** March 21, 2022 via Zoom. It was discussed having the next public meeting at Town Hall for the April meeting.

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