

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE MINUTES

April 15, 2026

A Police Advisory Board meeting was held on the above date in the Town Hall Council Chambers with the following members in attendance: Chairman David Thomas, Carol Bright, Billy Warrick, Jim Reynolds, Luke Luckini. Middletown Police Chief William Texter was also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Thomas.

1. New Deputy Police Chief

The meeting opened with Chief Texter introducing Jon Wood as the new Deputy Police Chief, highlighting his 33 years of law enforcement experience. Wood's extensive background includes 29 years with Delaware State Police and 4 years with Cecil County Sheriff's Office, bringing strong administrative and operational expertise.

His experience spans patrol, detective work, internal affairs, human resources leadership, and troop command. Wood emphasized excitement to contribute and work closely with the community and staff.

2. Plans for Police Department Remodeling

Chief Texter said the Middletown Police building expansion at 130 Hampden Road is underway with architect Becker Morgan leading the project, aiming to alleviate current space shortages.

The expansion will add to the east side of the building, where property space allows. Surveys and planning are ongoing, with a final plan expected before the next fiscal year budget (FY27 starting July 1).

The project includes careful utility mapping to prevent disruptions during construction.

Key design features for community engagement include a large community room accessible without entering the police station, to facilitate public events safely and independently. The current community room only fits about 30-40 people, whereas the new design will match the size of the Milford police facility's large room, Chair Thomas said, which he has visited and believes this will be fantastic for Middletown.

Stakeholder involvement in design includes soliciting staff feedback to identify workspace challenges and improve operations, Chief Texter said, adding the building's design aims to separate victim waiting areas from public meeting spaces to enhance privacy and security.

The police station will continue to function as a critical emergency backup location for town operations, he said.

3. Promotional Process

The committee reviewed the updated promotional process for lieutenant and sergeant positions, emphasizing a more rigorous and transparent testing protocol managed by an external company.

Vacancies include one lieutenant spot and the resulting sergeant opening, with six lieutenants and nine sergeants eligible or participating in testing.

The process includes a written test focusing on department policies and Delaware law, an oral board with external supervisors, evaluation of past performance, and a final interview with town leadership. The outside testing company designs and administers the tests nationwide, ensuring fairness and confidentiality.

Traditional criteria such as education and military service are not formally weighted in the promotional testing per current collective bargaining agreements. Past promotions have included candidates with diverse backgrounds, but no formal bonus points are given for these qualifications.

Committee member Carol Bright expressed interest in observing the oral board process, or allowing members of the public to observe, but legal and personnel privacy issues likely prohibit public attendance, Chief Texter said. Chief explained that personnel confidentiality is protected under HR rules.

Recruitment pipeline includes recent graduates and academy trainees with a Dover Police Academy class tentatively graduating June 5 and others completing the Delaware State Police academy by August.

4. Opioid Grant Settlement Discussion

The Town of Middletown is set to receive \$94,000 in opioid settlement grant funds for FY24, which must be applied for by June and used strictly for approved opioid epidemic-related programs.

Grant funds are distributed annually for at least the next 10 years and require yearly reapplication and reporting to ensure compliance.

The grant focuses on healthcare providers, emergency services, crisis stabilization, and other opioid-related interventions.

The amount Middletown receives reflects its relatively lower opioid-related crime rate compared to other Delaware towns.

The Committee discussed potential uses for the funds, with mental health crisis intervention and frontline training as leading priorities.

Suggestions included funding a dedicated mental health professional to assist police during crisis calls.

Other ideas involved overtime for drug enforcement and partnerships with local mental health providers.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Committee member Jim Reynolds asked about a recent request from the public for police reports to be broken down into categories showing race and sex of the people charged or receiving tickets. Chief Texter explained that he has been researching how this request is handled by police departments in Delaware and nationwide. He said it is not clear to him how breaking out these specific data points are helpful to the community as there are so many other variables in every interaction police have with residents and non-residents, for example, the demographics of the people calling 911 to report crimes, which are out of the control of the police officer but those numbers would be included in the data set.
- Community engagement on the opioid grant use was encouraged, including possible surveys or polls to gather resident input on spending priorities. Mayor and Council hold final authority over grant application and fund allocation decisions.
- Resident Mary Caroselli said she doesn't think there is enough community involvement or attendees at these meetings. Suggestions included more active promotion through social media, community events, and possibly hosting informal listening sessions outside official meetings.
- Chief Texter highlighted extensive community programs such as youth academies, drug take-back events, coffee with a cop, and community services outreach. The department uses Facebook and monthly police reports to communicate activities and maintain transparency.

NEXT MEETING: TBD

Plans are underway to coordinate a business-focused police accountability meeting involving local Chamber of Commerce and business leaders by late June or July.

Notices will be sent out once dates are finalized.