

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, Jerry Kissel, Sue Mitchell, Debbie Harrington, Michael Harpe, Jacqueline Burditt, Emy Diaz, and Joyce Kidd. Police Chief William Texter and FOP Representative Mike Hilliard were also in attendance. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairman Bin-Yusif.

Chair’s Report:

Chairman Bin-Yusif welcomed new board member Jerry Kissel, who replaced John Carwell, who resigned prior to the last meeting. Bin-Yusif also reminded board members to try to attend meetings, as the by-laws state that if a member misses more than three consecutive meetings or four in one year, they may be asked to give up their seats on the board. Bin-Yusif said he is finalizing the quarterly report and will be sending it out soon. Please let him know if there are any comments on the report, he told the board.

Senate Bill 149:

Bin-Yusif said the Bill did not get out of committee and the Senators who sponsored the bill are going to continue to work on it, so we will have time to get our comments together as a board.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Police Report Evaluation Committee

No report.

B. Community Connections Committee

No report.

C. Research Committee

Sue Mitchell asked what the status is with the City of Newark survey she had emailed to Kristen Krenzer a couple of meetings ago. Krenzer said she emailed the survey to all of the PAB Board members and has not received any comments or suggestions about the survey. Krenzer suggested that to get things moving, she would create a survey in the free survey program called “Survey Monkey” and pass it on to the committee so they can add the questions they want to put in the survey. The board liked that idea to get things moving on the survey. She said she would have something before the next MPAB meeting to share.

Emy Diaz said the survey is a good idea and we should probably keep it to 10 questions or so and 5 very important questions. Perhaps there could be a link to take them to further questions if they want to get involved further. She also asked if the survey sparks a need for funding, would we reach out to the State Legislature for funding projects?

Krenzer said the Town always takes issues on a case-by-case basis and has always partnered with the State Legislature and other state programs for funding when it’s available.

D. Strategic Planning Committee

No report.

Police Chief Report

Chief Texter gave the Police Report for the month of June, 2022, that was issued at the July Mayor & Council meeting. The following questions were asked about the report:

Debbie Harrington asked how the police department uses the data from the police reports each month. Chief Texter said the data is used to show trends. For instance, right now, we have some grant funding to be able to use deployments from thefts and of motor vehicles, he said. We use the data in all different ways, he said.

Harrington said the reason she asked is because one of the committees we have is trying to collect the data to help tell the police department with trends and she was wondering why the police department doesn't use their own data.

Chief Texter said the department has a staff member who compiles the data and does the crime analysis for the department. He is a retired County officer, who has been with the department since it started. He also collects and categorizes all the evidence in the department, so he is able to help us daily with tracking all trends, Texter said.

OLD BUSINESS:

Emy Diaz asked about linking the Zoom videos to the Town Website to be able to watch the meetings again. Kristen Krenzer said she is researching how to put the videos on the Website and will come back with information next month.

PAL Program Update:

Bin-Yusif said there are three things we need to do. We need to put together a board to recommend this PAL program, acquire a 501c3, and eventually we will need a letter of support from the Chief and others like the Mayor.

He said at one point in time, we are going to have to put our ideas down on paper, He said there are folks in the community who are interested in making this happen, so our goal is to have these things in place, a good plan in place, by the end of this year.

The board that is created in the community will be the one who will be doing all the work to get the program running. We will have to put a little effort in to get it going.

Emy Diaz asked if the MPAB is a part of this effort. Bin-Yusif said no, the board will be made up of community members, but we will support that board by giving them all of the information we have gathered, such as at the National PAL Convention.

TERM LIMITS ENDING:

Bin-Yusif said there are seven (7) members whose terms are going to end in October, so we need to discuss the process for finding new members for those who are not interested in continuing to serve and having the members who want to return for another term to contact the person or entity who nominated them to see if they would like them to return.

Kristen Krenzer showed the board members the spreadsheet listing the term limits, so they would be aware of when their term is up.

Emy Diaz said the spreadsheet was incorrect because it listed her being nominated by the NAACP, but that Councilman Jim Royston nominated her. She said that was not correct because she was never contacted by the NAACP to be on this board and she is concerned that they would not re-nominate her if the time came for her to be re-nominated.

Krenzer checked with Mr. Royston following the meeting and he confirmed he nominated Diaz.

BRAINSTORMING IDEAS:

Debbie Harrington suggested looking at giving the board a break in the summer months, especially July, because people are usually traveling. She said it would be good to consider not meeting next year in either July or August.

The committee agreed this would be a great idea for next year. Emy Diaz said it should be added to the bylaws.

Jerry Kissel asked a recruitment question. He asked if the police visit local colleges like Del Tech. Chief Texter said they recruit at all of the local colleges, including doing recruitment events. He said they do all of the Delaware colleges, in the City of Philadelphia and nearby New Jersey.

Debbie Harrington asked about the school shooting incident in the elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, where “what should have happened did not happen.” She asked what the Chief thinks about it and what does the Police Department in Middletown think about events like that and coordination with the Delaware State Police and the school district.

Chief Texter said he feels the State of Delaware is ahead of the curve with handling active shooters. We all have the same policy, same response plans, he said. He said the entire State of Delaware has worked together on the drills and performed drills together five years ago in the schools. He said all of the police departments require certification training on active shooters and how to handle them.

He said there is going to be training coming up soon that includes the fire department and EMS, with police officers providing the protection for them to come into a scene like that. He said the board members should feel comfortable in the training and plans we have in the State of Delaware for emergency situations like that.

NEXT MEETING: Aug. 15, 2021