

A Police Advisory Board meeting was held on the above date at the MPD Headquarters and via Zoom conference call, with the following members in attendance: Emy Diaz, Wanda Dean, Debbie Harrington, Linda LaRue, Yvette Santiago, Jason Hunt, Michael Harpe, Salahudin Bin-Yusif, Joyce Kidd, and Billy Warrick. Police Chief William Texter, Captain Ron Davis and FOP President Joseph Womer were also in attendance at the MPD HQ. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Acting Chairperson Debbie Harrington.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Mayor & Council Special Meeting: Acting Chairperson Debbie Harrington gave a synopsis of the Special Meeting of the Mayor & Council on Sept. 6.

She said the Mayor & Council gathered with the current members of the Police Advisory Board and members of the public, to discuss some upcoming proposed changes to the Police Advisory Board.

Harrington said the Mayor & Council stated the following:

The Police Advisory Board will be comprised of 7 members, appointed by the Mayor, with recommendations from each member of the Mayor & Council.

The members must live in the incorporated limits of Middletown.

The meetings will be in person only, and may be moved to Town Hall.

Applications will be accepted from current members who would like to be re-appointed to the board, as well as potential community members who are interested in joining the board. The requests to remain / join the board need to be submitted to Kristen Krenzer, who will turn them into the Mayor & Council.

There was no deadline set for the applications. Harrington said she suspects the Mayor & Council will mention the deadline at the October Mayor & Council meeting.

Harrington asked for any comments about the meeting.

Joyce Kidd said she was disappointed in the outcome of the meeting. She said she felt the Board was criticized for not following Roberts Rules of Order regarding the quorum and bylaws changes made over the three years. She said Mayor & Council received a copy of the bylaws and notes about all of the changes over the years and no one said anything. She said she would have liked to have heard about these issues in year one instead of year three.

Also, Kidd said she believed one of the board's members has an obvious problem with the NAACP's involvement with the MPAB and "has the ear of the Mayor and Council members" so it's evident why these changes are happening.

Billy Warrick said he knows Joyce is referring to him and he does not have the ear of the Mayor and hasn't called him or met with him about any of this. He said all he does is speak up about things he doesn't like and he will also speak up if he hears things about the police department that he doesn't like.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community Connections – Jason Hunt said he has been working diligently to post as much local news and information that would be beneficial to the community on the MPAB social media accounts.

POLICE CHIEF REPORT

Chief Texter gave the police report that was distributed at the September meeting of the Mayor & Council. The following questions were asked following the report:

Harrington asked if the Chief has given any thought to having an academy at the Appoquinimink School District to help recruit officers in the future from the local area. She said the district offers academies for nursing and other “pathways.”

Chief Texter said he has been in conversations with the district about a Criminal Justice pathway and the district is planning to implement one. In fact, he believes they have hired someone to oversee the program.

Joyce Kidd asked about the protocol for the non-emergency number and whether officers are required to show up for them. She said there have been a lot of complaints in Willow Grove Mill that people are calling late at night with nuisance complaints of people loitering and other issues that aren’t emergencies, but the residents are not getting feedback about their complaints, so they don’t even know if an officer came out to address the problem.

Chief said a lot of times, the officer will go out to the nuisance complaints and the kids who were being loud at the time of the call are now gone, so there is nothing to address. And, the police don’t call the person who made the complaint unless the 911 operator notes on the account that they person wants to be called back.

He said all phone calls into the 911 Center are logged, so if there is ever a concern that officers are not responding, he is able to contact the 911 Center and review the logs to find out what happened.

He said immediately following the meeting, he and the Captain will review all of the complaints Joyce brought to their attention (via texts and emails from her neighbors) and they would find out for her how they were handled so she can report back to her community.

Harrington asked if it was true that there was a shooting in Bayberry? Chief said he was on vacation last week, but he was not made aware of a shooting.

Jason Hunt said he believes there were shots fired during a domestic dispute in the Hyetts Corner area.

Chief Texter also announced that the Citizens Police Academy will be held starting on Wednesday, Oct. 18, commencing for 10 weeks.

NEXT MEETING: Sept. 18, 2023