

A Police Advisory Board meeting was held on the above date via Zoom conference call, with the following members in attendance: Salahudin Bin-Yusif, Sue Mitchell, Michael Harpe, Linda LaRue, Jerry Kissel, Joyce Kidd, Charles Warrick, Jason Hunt, and Wanda Dean. Police Chief William Texter was also in attendance. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairman Bin-Yusif.

Chair's Report:

Chairman Bin-Yusif said seven (7) members of the board will have their terms ending at the end of this month. The members may choose to stay on the board if they like. He said his concern at this time is to make sure the board continues doing good work in the community. He said there are 15 total members on the board right now. He said he would like to suggest to Mayor & Council that perhaps the board can be shrunk down to seven (7) members to make sure: that we have a quorum; and if we can't fill the board next month, it's easier to fill seven seats rather than 15. **APPLICATION:** Another note Bin-Yusif said he may mention to the Mayor & Council is to have an application process for the board. He said if folks take an effort to fill out an application, it means they are willing to be a part of the board. He said groups, organizations in the community can submit names of potential members of the board and then they could go through the application process. He said he's just trying to make this process as fair as possible.

QUARTERLY REPORT: Bin-Yusif said the quarterly report was submitted to Mayor & Council after it was shopped around to Police Chief Texter and Cpl. Mike Hilliard to get their comments on the report. He said board members can continue to make comments on the report, as another one will be due in about three months.

Wanda Dean asked Bin-Yusif what actions he would like the board to take from the items he listed in his report. He said the two things he would like to see considered would be to amend the bylaws to change the number of members on the board and the way they are considered. However, there is no quorum tonight, so it will have to wait until next month to consider them, he said.

Bin-Yusif said he spoke to the Mayor & Council about reducing the size and they didn't seem to think it's a problem, but he would like to have the opinions of the board itself on the record.

Dean said since there isn't a quorum, has anything been done to address the lack of participation of the people who are not attending the meetings. Bin-Yusif said this does need to be addressed and moving forward, he believes it will be, based on whatever number of members is decided upon. Dean said something must be done about the members who haven't been attending because they are holding the rest of the board back from making decisions.

Billy Warrick said the board needs to move on and get down to business. He said the board is spending too much time trying to throw members off of the board. Yes, quorums are important, he said, but it seems like the board is spending 15 minutes each meeting discussing the same problems.

Jason Hunt said the excessive absences have to be addressed because if individuals are not attending, they are not making a change and sometimes we need to “cut the fat off the steak.” He said there’s no offense to be taken, but we do need to clean up the roster to have more participation.

Bin-Yusif said the reason he is bringing this up now is because the board is in a transition period where people will be leaving and it is a good time to clean up the roster. He said there are several members who haven’t been on the calls for many months and have not called to let him know either way. “I hear what everyone is saying and I would like to move forward on this,” he said.

Billy Warrick asked who the members are who are being considered to be removed. Bin-Yusif said he didn’t have the list in front of him. He said he has a couple of names in his mind of members who have not attended, however, he didn’t want to call out one or two members and miss others. He said he will address the members as individuals later.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Police Report Evaluation Committee

Bin-Yusif said the spreadsheet documenting police reports continues to be updated, so trends can be seen throughout the years. He said over time, he hopes this is something helpful for the police chief and MPD.

B. Community Connections Committee

Bin-Yusif reminded members to get on the Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages and share them with the community. It’s a way to keep communication flowing, he said. Jason Hunt reminded the board that the address to all of the social media platforms is “MiddletownPAB.” He also asked the committee to keep sending information to him to put out on all of the sites to get news out to the public.

C. Research Committee

Sue Mitchell announced that she has to step down from the PAB because she is moving out of town and is getting ready to sell her home in Middletown. She said she didn’t want to be disingenuous and continue on the committee when she will be moving soon. The rest of the PAB board thanked Sue for her service and wished her well.

Wanda Dean recommended the PAB go to www.delawareonline.com and search for an article about police departments and how many officers serve each community in Delaware. She said it’s a very long article, but it’s a very interesting article. She said it is associated with the amount of officers that “should be serving the community per capita.”

D. Strategic Planning Committee

Jerry Kissel agreed to be the chairman of this committee. He said he would like to have some suggestions on what items should be included to be analyzed by the committee. He said the first thing he believes should be on there is what needs the police department has that we can help address. Bin-Yusif said he would be remiss if he didn’t add recruitment to the top of the list. Kissel agreed to put that to the top and Bin-Yusif and Kissel will discuss further items as the committee moves forward.

Police Chief Report

Chief Texter gave the Police Report for the month of August, 2022, that was issued at the September 12 Mayor & Council meeting.

Chief Texter also reported that MSgt. Miller has brain cancer and the MPD will be doing a fundraiser to help his family. He said he will be forwarding the information about the fundraiser to the MPAB following the meeting. He also reported that the MPD is starting another hiring process for officers, both non-certified and certified. The following questions were asked about the police report:

Wanda Dean asked how many officers are in the department right now. Chief said the department currently has 39 officers and one officer entering the academy on Oct. 2.

CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY: Bin-Yusif said the Citizens Police Academy starts up this month and several members will be attending the academy and will be sure to bring back information to the whole group as they happen.

BRAINSTORMING: Bin-Yusif said it's very important to emphasize that members get out there are let the community know about the MPAB. He said all of the members meet with so many community members every day and should let them know about the PAB and that it is a resource for the community.

Bin-Yusif thanked everyone for attending and said he looks forward to seeing who attends next month and moving forward with the board and its work.

NEXT MEETING: October 17, 2022