

Police Committee Meeting Minutes

15 April 2021

Meeting was called to order at 6:03pm with the following members in attendance:

Mr. Foster, Ms. Trovei, Ms. Campbell, Ms. Randazzo, Ms. Mann, Chief Worden.

Committee Report

City Police Reform Recommendations

The Chief provided members of the committee with a copy of the summary breakdown of the recommendations made for the police reform to help guide the committee's work.

The Committee discussed the following recommendation:

"Recommendation #1: The creation of a Community Policing Advisory Committee (CPAC) that follows best practices and reflects the varied composition of city residents to serve as a citizen advisory board to the Police Department and Police Committee. Found on Page 15 of the report."

The committee discussed the need to fully research and obtain information from similar boards to determine how members of the board are appointed, determine board roles and responsibilities. Chief Worden to obtain information from the City of Middletown's Police Commission and report to the committee.

Hiring/Promotion and Selection Committee

The Chief updated the committee on five planned retirements. The department currently has a vacant patrol officer position (#18) and the following members are scheduled to retire from service between May and July 2021:

- Det Sgt Michael Myers- May 5th
- Sgt Kevin Reilly- May 26
- Sgt Michael Worden- June 5th
- PO Robert Krentz – DTB June
- Sgt Jeremy Eagan- DTB July
- 18th Officer Vacancy

The committee discussed developing a selection process involving community member input for the selection of police candidates and police promotions in accordance with recommendation #6 of the City Police Reform Plan.

"6. Exploring the option of adding community representation, perhaps through the proposed Community Policing Advisory Committee (CPAC), that will provide input to the city's police officer selection and promotion process. Found on Page 27 of the report."

As the department will be canvassing the Civil Service list over the next month to prepare for interviews of police candidates and promotions, the committee recommended adding up to two members of the current Port Jervis Police Reform Committee to provide community representation and assist the Police Committee and Police Administration in the selection and promotion process for recommendations to the Common Council. Request to be transmitted to Mayor Decker and to the City Attorney for review for potential appointment.

Crossing Guard Post Discussion Middle School

The committee discussed a current vacancy to the Middle School Crossing Guard Post. The current post operates during school days from 7am-7:30am and 2pm – 2:30pm paying one hour daily making it difficult to attract a candidate. The elementary posts each operate for one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon for a total of two hours daily. The committee suggested increasing the post report times for the Middle School from one hour daily to two hours daily. Costs to be further discussed with Finance Committee.

Dispatcher Vacancies

The department is working to fill vacant dispatch positions. Civil service applications are being reviewed and candidates will be submitted to the Common Council for consideration for hire.

Permanent Appointment – Police Officer Seth Mortenson

Chief Worden requested the Common Council of the City of Port Jervis formally appoint Officer Seth Mortenson to the permanent civil service rank of full-time police officer effective April 27, 2021. Officer Mortenson began serving our City as a part time officer with the department's school policing unit on March 14, 2019. On March 31, 2020, Officer Mortenson was provisionally hired as a full-time police officer and his status was converted to probationary on June 23, 2020 after completing his civil service physical agility examination. Officer Mortenson is a fine public servant who has completed all phases of training during his probationary period. Letter of request to be forwarded to Common Council for the April 26, 2021 general meeting.

Mental Health Pilot Project Update

Peer Specialist Richard Smith is completing ride-along patrols with officers on Friday the 16th of April. Officers and Staff have received training with Orange county Mental Health

and through a Lexipol Webinar covering responses for suicidal persons. Joint Response program commences on Monday April 19th. Mr. Smith is a peer mental health specialist with Independent Living Inc, who is assigned Monday-Friday between the hours of 9am-5pm in the Forensic Connections Program located in the basement level office complex in the Port Jervis Municipal Building. Mr. Smith will be available to provide a joint response to mental health related calls for service during business hours.

Taxi Appeal

Lt. Fitzpatrick is awaiting updated information regarding Mr. Joseph Durbin and will forward to the Committee when the information is received.

Sign request Ferry Street/River Road Flashing Light

Mr. Foster requested the committee investigate the potential of installing a flashing caution sign at the curve located at the junction of River Road and Ferry Street near the entrance of West End Beach. Chief to send request to DPW to review.

Marijuana Legalization

An update was provided for the committee regarding the legalization of marijuana in the state of New York.

Bell Game Escort

An emergency services escort of the PJHS Football and Cheerleader Squad is planned for Friday's Bell Game vs. Middletown on April 16th.

NYS LEAP Training –

The department is developing strategies to improve access to employee wellness programs through a partnership with the New York State Law Enforcement Employee Assistance Program.

An 8 hour training is scheduled for April 21, 22 and May 12 and 13th through NYS LEAP (Law Enforcement Assistance Program) to provide training and awareness for officer mental health and wellness.

The training program provided by trainers from NYLEAP will provide officers with information to recognize signs and symptoms that arise from stress, trauma exposure, PTSD, cumulative stress disorder, anxiety, depression, and suicide that can occur from the daily duties and traumatic stress exposure of being a Police Officer. Officers will further be provided with resources and methods to provide self-care or assist others if they are experiencing trauma.

A commitment to improved resources dedicated to officer wellness will have positive impacts on the health and safety of our officers and greatly impact both their personal and professional lives.

This training is further in support of Recommendation #17 - The continued financial, programmatic support of programs and methods that advance officer wellness found on page 46 of the report.

ABLE Training Update- Georgetown University

The department has obtained letters of support from the Salvation Army and Operation PJ Pride for officers to attend the Active By-Stander Training through Georgetown University. A letter of support from Mayor Decker and from the Chief of Police is required for the final submission to request admission into this evidence-based training program.

This training is free of charge and provided through Georgetown's Innovative Policing Program in partnership with the law firm Sheppard Mullin, to provide an academic and researched based training to officers to successfully intervene to prevent harm and to create a law enforcement culture that supports peer intervention with the goals of preventing misconduct, avoiding police mistakes, and promoting officer health and wellness.

The benefits of a culture that supports meaningful active bystandership training for police officers further include improved police/community relations, improved officer job satisfaction, reduced litigation, and improved overall citizen satisfaction with their law enforcement service.

An agency interested in participating in this training must commit to the program principals governing training accountability, officer wellness, participation in pre-implementation and post implementation surveys, follow-through and assisting other agencies with the training.

This program provides evidence-based training that fosters an organizational culture that embraces de-escalation, improved community interactions and improved wellness for officers.

Reference: Port Jervis Police Reform Recommendation #2. Continued advancement of de-escalation training through use of the existing simulator, the ABLE Program and other similar available training and equipment. Found on Page 21 of the report.

Traffic Safety Grants:

The Department is drafting grant applications to the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee to apply for funding for traffic safety programs through the Police Traffic Services Grant and Buckle Up New York and the Child Passenger Safety Grant.

Buckle Up New York:

The department will be participating in BUNY enforcement details during May and June 2021 in partnership with the Orange County Sheriff's Office funded through the 2020-21 GTSC Grant.

Public Comment:

No public comment received.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

William J. Worden

Chief of Police

Attachment:

PORT JERVIS POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION

COLLABORATIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The creation of a Community Policing Advisory Committee (CPAC) that follows best practices and reflects the varied composition of city residents to serve as a citizen advisory board to the Police Department and Police Committee. Found on Page 15 of the report.
2. Continued advancement of de-escalation training through use of the existing simulator, the ABLE Program and other similar available training and equipment. Found on Page 21 of the report.
3. Addition of the proposed Community Policing Advisory Committee (CPAC) as another avenue to receive community complaints (or compliments). Found on Page 23 of the report.
4. The purchase and use of police body worn cameras by the PJP. Found on Page 24 of the report.
5. The PJP, and the City government take steps to ensure a broad field of qualified candidates through outreach and/or increasing the 15-mile residency radius. Found on Page 25 of the report.

6. Exploring the option of adding community representation, perhaps through the proposed Community Policing Advisory Committee (CPAC), that will provide input to the city's police officer selection and promotion process. Found on Page 27 of the report.
7. The location and use of applications that cost effectively provide the aspects necessary to standardize inputs and provide the analytical reports that are necessary for administration and oversight committees to determine department effectiveness. Page 31 of the Report.
8. The development and implementation of a statistical dashboard of police activities be added to the city's website and that key measurements and time update increments be decided by the Police Committee and recommended Community Policing Advisory Committee (CPAC). Found on Page 31 of the report.
9. The exploration of developing a Community Engagement Team consisting of trained community-based peers and community leaders that would provide an effective avenue for officers to refer complex quality-of-life complaints to build community-based solutions to solve them. Page 33 of the report.
10. To increase the required educational level of an incoming officer beyond that of a 2-year degree, and/or, to current officers, offer tuition reimbursement for training in social services, mediation, conflict resolution, mental health first aid and so forth. Page 33 of the report.
11. The PJPd continue to seek community partnerships that may be formalized over time that will support its ongoing service mission, support proactive intervention and diversionary programs for youth utilizing a network of youth and family services providers, and increase the knowledge and training of PJPd officers and staff and continue to improve public safety. Page 40 of the report.
12. That the City provide and expand opportunities for positive interactions and programs between youth, the PJPd and other City departments such as Recreation and Parks and responsible qualified community leaders whenever possible. To expand the reach and depth of programming for youth, formal and information partnerships with community organizations is also encouraged. Page 43 of the report.
13. The City regularly provide the funding to hire communication agencies experienced in multi-platform social media communications for coordinated PJPd and City public outreach. Page 43 of the report.
14. The PJPd continues and expands where possible, its face-to-face interactions with the public from youth to seniors, residents, businesses owners and visitors. Page 43 of the report.
15. The development and active implementation of formal training and informal interactions that will increase personal contact between department staff, officers, and the community. Page 44 of the report.

16. That the City and Department continue to seek and expand resources for equipment, training and programs from community, county, state, and federal levels. Consider partnering with not-for-profits and research foundations and grant funding entities for funding. Page 44 of the report.

17. The continued financial, programmatic support of programs and methods that advance officer wellness. Page 46 of the report.