



POLICING ADVISORY COMMISSION

Monday, December 12, 2022

6:30PM to 8:06PM

[Meeting Virtually](#)

Meeting Minutes

Commission members present: Kristy Daphnis, Christina DeLane, Ruhama Endishaw, Laurie Ekstrand, Robin Gaster, Jenn Lynn, Ty McKinney, Vernon Ricks, Eric Sterling [9 attendees]

Commission members absent: Cherri Branson (on leave of absence) [1 absent]

Ex-officio members present: Sgt. Cate Brewer (FOP), Capt. Jordan Satinsky (MCPD) [2 attendees]

Support staff: Logan Anbinder, Susan Farag, Nazeefa Hossain [3 staff]

Guests: Capt. Stacey Flynn (MCPD), Dale Phillips (no affiliation provided) [2 attendees]

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

I. Attendance and Administrative Items (6:30 PM)

- Ms. Farag took attendance and began recording the meeting. Mr. Sterling confirmed that seven PAC members were present, which represents a quorum. (Ms. Endishaw and Mr. Ricks joined shortly after this time.)
- Total attendees: 16
- **VOTE:** November minutes were approved unanimously.

II. Please welcome the newest Commissioner, Kristy Daphnis. (6:34 PM)

- Mr. Sterling welcomed Ms. Daphnis as the newest PAC Commissioner. Ms. Daphnis briefly introduced herself.

III. Commissioner Updates (6:38 PM)

- Vice Chair Ty McKinney: Virtual reality (VR) training options
 - Mr. McKinney discussed his review of four different VR systems alongside MCPD: Apex, Street Smart, InVeris, and Axon. He suggested that other commissioners could review

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these systems online. He further gave his opinion that these systems could help achieve the goals for MCPD outlined in the ELE4A report.

- Mr. McKinney will complete a writeup with his observations about whichever VR system is selected by MCPD. He indicated that the vendor of the system would also be invited to present to the PAC.
- Mr. McKinney took questions from the PAC.
 - Ms. Ekstrand commented that she would like to see more consideration of how to evaluate VR systems. Mr. McKinney responded that the police department is currently seeking feedback on these systems from experienced officers as a first step for evaluation, to be followed by a more thorough evaluation. Mr. Sterling echoed Ms. Ekstrand's interest in systematizing an evaluation of the effect of VR training on officers.
 - Ms. Lynn expressed a concern that the knowledge of the VR trainer is a limiting factor in setting up the experience for the trainee (e.g. a trainer without experience in working with individuals with autism may not be able to provide an authentic simulation of such an individual for a trainee). Mr. McKinney indicated that the system manufacturers are seeking diverse backgrounds to inform the development of the system.
 - Mr. Gaster asked about the extent to which the officer running the training has freedom to develop and implement the scenario versus following a script. Mr. McKinney responded that the officer has the ability to manipulate the training module, and react to the trainee's actions, as desired.
- Jenn Lynn: Emergency response for mental health/autism/IID calls
 - Ms. Lynn shared data on crisis response.
 - Calls for service to the crisis center hotline: 2019: 36,889; FY 2022: 45,981
 - Increase in MCOT responses: FY 2019: 490 calls; FY 2022: 930 calls
 - From Nov. 2021 to Nov. 2022, 520% increase in texting for help, 90% increase in chats
 - 30-40% of all responses are civilian responses. Goal is to get 65-80% to civilian responses.
 - Crisis Center satellite locations are open and running in Silver Spring and Germantown in addition to the primary location in Picard. Staff are building relationships in the community before emergent situations.
 - DHHS has crisis response teams of two therapists; working towards one therapist and one peer support specialist in light of difficulty of recruiting therapists (MC has a lower salary for therapists than many other locations).
 - Roughly 30 therapists working at crisis centers around the clock, which is an increase of 6 therapists from January 2021. Currently 4 vacancies for therapists with two additional vacancies at MCPD and Rockville PD.
 - Crisis Center is trying to provide more services while also training more individuals.
 - Proposed Seven Locks restoration center is being met with resistance from local community. Small satellite stabilization center exists.
 - Funding is currently being directed towards mental & behavioral health and not towards care for autistic individuals.

- New York City is discussing mandatory hospitalization for individuals with mental illness.
- Ms. Lynn took questions from the PAC.
 - Ms. Daphnis asked whether the numbers that Ms. Lynn provided are broken out by severity of case. Ms. Lynn does not have the numbers at that level of granularity but suspects that information exists. She indicated that the acuity of cases is very intense. She also indicated that an issue exists wherein crisis responders respond to a call and are not admitted to the location where the call originates.
 - Mr. Sterling asked whether another organization might have more information. Ms. Lynn is on various workgroups, including for the Crisis Center, so has gathered information from those meetings.
 - Mr. Ricks asked whether the numbers provided include individuals who are taken in for drug usage in a state of crisis. Ms. Lynn replied that these numbers cover any calls through the 911 system that are sent to the Crisis Center, plus direct calls to the Crisis Center.
 - Mr. McKinney asked about the median salary for therapists (e.g. nationally). Ms. Lynn could not provide this information but noted that a similar phenomenon existed with policing in MC.
- Mr. Sterling asked whether PAC members recommended the PAC take any action (e.g. generating a list of questions, etc.) Ms. Lynn replied that the gentleman who runs the workgroups that she participates on could present at a PAC meeting.
- Mr. Ricks made a motion to send a letter to the CE to voice concern about limited funding for therapists (Mr. McKinney seconded).
 - Mr. Gaster expressed support for this idea in general, but requested additional information regarding salaries prior to sending a letter.
 - Ms. Lynn expressed concern about the sustainability of these activities since many of them are based on grants.
 - Mr. Sterling proposed that the PAC table the motion pending development of a draft letter that would address these additional concerns. Mr. Ricks expressed that the development of the letter should be more timely in light of the fact that the budget process is currently ongoing; Mr. Sterling modified his proposal to suggest that a group headed by Ms. Lynn develop the letter.
 - **VOTE:** Mr. Sterling made a revised motion that he, Mr. McKinney, and Ms. Lynn put together a short communication to the CE and the Council reflecting concerns about therapist salaries in light of the urgency of the budget process and the need to gather better data. The motion carried unanimously.
 - **ACTION:** Mr. Sterling, Mr. McKinney, and Ms. Lynn will develop the letter as described above.
- Sergeant Cate Brewer: Police Training
 - Sgt. Brewer gave an overview of the various components of the Police Academy.
 - The academy trains roughly 1400 officers total including municipal police.
 - Academy also offers in-service training for other groups including animal services.

- Academy also offers 325 more hours of training than required for accreditation (28 weeks of training total followed by an additional three weeks of training).
 - Sgt. Brewer took questions from the PAC.
 - Mr. Gaster asked how much de-escalation training officers get over the course of their initial training and how much they get in their annual refresher. Sgt. Brewer replied that it is difficult to quantify since almost all scenarios have an element of de-escalation.
 - Mr. McKinney asked about what elements besides salary might incentivize an officer to join MCPD. Sgt. Brewer replied that smaller departments (such as municipal ones) have fewer opportunities for officers whereas the larger MCPD has more opportunities for officers. Ms. Daphnis asked whether there is an employee satisfaction or engagement survey of officers; Sgt. Brewer replied that there is no consistent survey. Mr. Sterling suggested that the PAC could take up that issue at another time.
 - Mr. Ricks commented that MCPD has taken trainees to the African-American History Museum. Sgt. Brewer added that trainees also visit the Holocaust Museum.
- Captain Jordan Satinsky: Status report on any outstanding information requests, and/or any other police-related issues of interest to the PAC.
 - Capt. Satinsky discussed the PAC's request for criminal arrests for marijuana. He shared that the data collection in this area is not consistent, so after talking to the data analysis unit, he determined that the data would not be verifiable or viable. He expressed hope that the move to the new report management system would offer a better way to capture this data. He also shared that data collection is a national issue.
 - Mr. Sterling asked how long the implementation of the records management system would take; Capt. Satinsky estimated roughly two years.
 - Mr. Gaster asked whether MCPD would consider sharing more information about its requirements of a records management system. Capt. Satinsky indicated that MCPD is not at that point yet but he made a note to discuss that with Chief Jones.
- Capt. Satinsky was also prepared to present regarding the PAC's questions about the MOU between the County and the FOP that allows for a "reverse MPIA" in response to requests for officer information via Anton's Law. Mr. Sterling requested that Capt. Satinsky postpone this report due to time concerns.
- Ruhama Endishaw: Youth observations and concerns
 - Ms. Endishaw moved to set up an informal subcommittee to seek more comprehensive comments from young people. Mr. Gaster seconded.
 - Ms. Endishaw defined "youth" as age 25 or younger.
 - **VOTE:** This motion passed 8-0-1 (Mr. Ricks abstaining).
 - **ACTION:** Ms. Endishaw will convene the informal subcommittee as mentioned previously.

IV. Public Hearing Development Discussion (7:55)

- Ms. Ekstrand moved that the subject of the public hearing could be a discussion of Mr. Gaster's traffic enforcement report adopted by the PAC last December. The session would solicit public feedback on the report, which would then be conveyed to the CE. Mr. McKinney seconded the motion.
 - Mr. Ricks asked whether younger voices could be included at the forum instead of in the aforementioned subcommittee. Ms. Ekstrand answered that youth voices could be heard in both venues; Mr. Gaster suggested that young people would want to provide input on other issues in addition to traffic enforcement.
 - Ms. Ricks asked about the age of the data; Mr. Sterling responded that the data is accurate to its point in time and Ms. Ekstrand suggested that the issues are significant enough that they would stand the test of time.
 - **ACTION:** Ms. Farag will check and confirm that the hearing will be held at the next scheduled PAC meeting time on January 9th.
 - Mr. Ricks suggested that the forum be held virtually due to concerns about increase in COVID transmission; Mr. Sterling said that the staff and PAC would coordinate on this point and ensure a fully adequate virtual component if there is any in-person component.
 - **VOTE:** The motion to hold the hearing on this topic as made in the first bullet point of this section passed unanimously.

V. New Business (8:01 PM)

- Mr. Gaster proposed sending a letter to MCPD asking for salary data for MCPD police officers and any salary data on hand for comparable jurisdictions. Ms. Ekstrand seconded.
 - Sgt. Brewer suggested that additional data (e.g. bonuses) should be provided as well.
 - **ACTION:** Ms. Farag will forward last year's data from the budget discussion and ask MCPD to transmit the current salary information.
 - **VOTE:** The motion to make this request as indicated in the first bullet point of this section passed unanimously.
 - **ACTION:** The PAC will send a letter on this topic.

VI. Meeting Adjourned at 8:06 PM.