



Worcester County Administration

One West Market St. Room 1103 | Snow Hill MD 21863 | (410) 632-1194 | www.co.worcester.md.us

To: Commissioners

From: Roscoe R. Leslie

Date: January 5, 2024

RE: Police Accountability Board Annual Report

Under State Law, the Worcester County Police Accountability Board (PAB) must submit a report to the county on any trends in the disciplinary process of police officers in the County and on any recommendations of changes to policy that would improve police accountability in the County.

The PAB has been meeting quarterly with all County law enforcement agencies and has been learning about the agencies' disciplinary processes. Attached are minutes from its meetings for your review.

To date, complaints regarding police behavior in Worcester County have been relatively low. Additionally, comprehensive police investigations combined with body camera footage have assisted in the resolution of these complaints. For 2023, no complaints resulted in requests for trial boards by officers.

The PAB recommends that the County continue to support its law enforcement agencies so that relations with the community remain strong. Also, as the PAB noted earlier in 2023, to the extent that the County can support agencies with the implementation of body cameras, the PAB continues to recommend that it do so.

Police Accountability Board Meeting

January 26, 2023

Members present:

Greg Tate, Chair
John Simms
Mary Burgess
Carol Frazier
Quincey Shockley
Jerred Johnson

Absent:

Joe Theobald, Vice-Chair

Staff:

Roscoe R. Leslie, County Attorney
Faith A. Coleman, Office Assistant IV

Law Enforcement:

Matt Crisafulli, Sheriff
Doug Dods, Sheriff's Office
Nate Passwaters, Sheriff's Office
Matt Owens, Fire Marshal
Matt Clark, Fire Marshal's Office
Arnold Downing, Chief, Berlin Police Department
Shakhan Toppin, Ocean Pines Police Department
Andy McGee, Chief, Snow Hill Police Department
Kris Heiser, State's Attorney
Frank Soccia, Ocean City Police Department
Mike Colbert, Ocean City Police Department
Dennis Eade, Ocean City Police Department
James Grady, Ocean City Police Department
Brian Craven, Pocomoke City Police Department
Arthur Hancock, Pocomoke City Police Department
Damien McGlotten, Pocomoke City Police Department

Chairman Tate called the meeting to order, took roll call and declared a quorum.

- Minutes from previous meeting were unanimously approved by motion and a second
- Agenda for today's meeting approved unanimously by a motion and a second

Chairman Tate advised that today's topic for discussion was the procedures for Body Cams by each department. Senate Bill 71 mandates that all police agencies have to use Body Cams by 2025.

Chief Arnold Downing began and advised that all of his officers were already equipped with the AXON Body Cameras. Chief Downing reviewed the challenges of numerous man hours it takes to review camera footage, the high costs of storage and keeping the cameras charged to 12-hour shifts. The cameras have the ability to see what the officer can't see. There are times when they do not activate their camera such as medical procedures, hospitals, court.

Ocean City Police Department showed the board the camera, gave a brief demonstration and advised all agencies use the AXON camera, however, each department could have a different storage agreement. The cameras can be set up to activate manually, such as when your lights siren are activated, or when you exit your vehicle. Ocean City has unlimited storage capacity for a 5-year contract at a cost of \$2.5 million. Since Memorial Day 58,000 videos have been recorded and stored. Permissions can be set as to who or what agency can have access to a video such as if multiple agencies are working a case. Storage is required not only for active cases in law enforcement but also for Public Information Act requests.

Snow Hill Chief Andy McGee advised they are paying around \$10k per year for storage and they have 8 body cameras in use. They also get numerous Public Information Act requests as well as getting requests from Carfax in the cases of vehicle accidents. Takes numerous manhours to review footage in addition to you have redact license plates and you have to protect the juveniles involved in cases.

Pocomoke Police Department advised his departments do not have their cameras on in instances of traffic detail like parades, community events etc. due to battery life. The camera has about a 4-hour battery life and if you want it to last the whole shift of the officer you need to manually activate the camera.

The Sheriff's Office also expressed the high cost of storage and advised they were able to get a small grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Control to help with some of their costs. Their officers are fortunate to have a 2nd docking station at home so they can fully charge their camera before their next shift. When the cameras are docked is when all the information is transferred to the cloud. Sheriff's office is also able to set permissions for viewing as well as how and when they want their cameras activated.

State's Attorney Heiser advised that her office is required to review all footage for cases and has hired additional staff to handle the new mandate. There are times when they have to review footage from several agencies just for one case. Heiser also expressed concern regarding the high cost of storage and having enough staff to review the footage. The video footage is used in court every day.

Chairman Tate asked Roscoe to draft a letter to the County Commissioners to ask for consideration for additional funds to support the high costs of storage.

Ms. Frazier inquired as to the liability on the agencies if they decided that the cost of the cameras and storage was not feasible especially to the small municipalities and Mr. Leslie advised that all agencies are required to meet the minimum requirements of the law.

Chairman Tate inquired if all agencies were involved in Community Policing. Agencies are actually required to submit an annual report to the Maryland Police Training Commission on their Community Policing Activity. Agencies agreed to submit a copy of the report to the board on their Community policing activities. There is an app that can be downloaded that is a good tool to view Community Policing activities.

Sheriff Crisafulli thanked the board for their service and dedication to the Police Accountability Board and that he appreciates the support and interest that the Board has in understanding the policies and procedures of all the agencies.

Mr. Leslie advised a meeting was held with the County IT Director, Chairman Tate and himself regarding secure email addresses and IPADS or laptops for the Police Accountability Board and the Administrative Charging Committee. Staff will follow up with IT to address status of these requests.

Suggestions for future discussions

- Review community policing reports
- Complaint procedures and policies
- Emotional state of young people

Motion to adjourn was unanimous

Next meeting is April 21, 2023 at 1:00 P.M.

APPROVED

Police Accountability Board Meeting

April 21, 2023

Members Present:

Greg Tate, Chair
John Simms III
Mary Burgess
Carol Frazier
Quincy Shockley
Jerred Johnson
Joe Theobald, Vice Chair (Via Zoom)

Staff Present:

Roscoe Leslie, County Attorney
Faith Coleman, Office Assistant V

Law Enforcement:

Captain James Grady, OCPD
Matt Clark, WCFMO
Chief Andy McGee, SHPD
Lt. Frank Soscia, OCPD
Captain Michael Colbert, OCPD
Rob Korb, WCFMO
Sheriff Matt Crisafulli, WCSO
Captain Doug Dods, WCSO
Lt. Brian Cardamone, WCSO
Lt. Shakhan Toppin, OPPD
Chief Arnold Downing, WCSO
Kris Heiser, State's Attorney

- Chairman Tate called the meeting to order and took roll call.
- Agenda for today's meeting was approved by a motion and unanimous vote.
- Minutes from the January 26, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved.
- Chairman Tate advised that the Administrative Charging Committee has reviewed three cases to date.
- Dr. Mark Bowen gave a presentation on how the Administrative Charging Committee reviews complaints presented to them. He advised that the Committee uses the guidelines that they received in their training from the MD Police & Correctional Training Commission. The agency involved presents a report to the committee and any available camera footage. Dr. Bowen explained that they not only look for misconduct on the officer's part but also any misconduct that would reflect negatively on the involved agency and gave different scenarios as examples. After reviewing all of the evidence presented, the Board will draft an opinion on the matter and based on the evidence will issue either a reprimand, request additional training for the officer, find the charges unfounded and exonerate the officer. The Board has also determined at times

that an officer's actions did not rise to the level of misconduct, but could have possibly been handled in a better manner. Chairman Tate thanked Dr. Bowen for the presentation.

- Chairman Tate called on each agency to give a brief presentation on how they handle their citizen complaints against their officers and the agencies.
- Each agency discussed their procedures and advised that all the agency typically mirror each other. In addition, the smaller agencies advised that at times they have relied on neighboring agencies to review their misconduct complaints. Each agency agreed that they are probably harder on reports of misconduct than the ACC as they do not want any complaints to reflect a negative image on the agency involved. All agencies agreed that policies are important and a necessary tool to maintain the public trust.
- Chairman Tate thanked each agency for their presentation and for their working relationship with the Board.
- The Board began discussion on the nominations for the Trial Board. Dr. Bowen reminded the Board that it is important that the Trial Board promotes an image of equality and maintain a lens of equity. The following individuals were nominated and unanimously approved to serve on the Trial Board:
 - David Speier
 - David Dalfonso
 - Steve Hannon
 - Larry Yates
 - Mona Margarita
- Board Member Carol Frazier thanked each of the agencies for their Community Policing Reports and stated that the level of their involvement with the community was exceptional.
- Chairman Tate reiterated that Worcester County is fortunate to have excellent police agencies who work well together and also work well with the Board.
- Meeting adjourned

APPROVED

Police Accountability Board

Meeting

July 20, 2023

1:00 P.M.

Members Present

Joe Theobald, Vice Chair
Carol Frazier
John Simms, III
Mary Burgess
Jerred Johnson

Staff

Roscoe Leslie (via zoom)
Faith Coleman, Office Assistant V

Law Enforcement

Ross Buzzuro, OCPD
Art Grady, OCPD
Mike Colbert, OCPD
Shawn Jones, OCPD
Doug Dods, WCSO
Andy McGee, SHPD
Rudell Brown, SHPD
Joe Bailey, OPPD
Rob Korb, WCFM
Damien McGlotten, PCPD
Kris Heiser, SAO

- Vice Chair Theobald called the meeting to order and took roll call.
- Minutes were approved with the correction of changing John Simms as Vice Chair to Joe Theobald as Vice Chair.
- Vice Chair Theobald asked each agency to share a brief review of their current crime stats.
- Ocean City Chief Buzzuro advised that overall their crime stats were down. June is always their busiest month and advised they had over 1,000 911 hang-up calls. In addition, they are transitioning over to a new reporting system.
- Doug Dods, Operations Commander, Sheriff's Office, stated that their crime stats have been steady since last year.
- Damien McGlotten, Pocomoke City Police Department advised that crime was down in general, however, they are seeing a slight increase in juvenile crime. They are partnering with various

community groups to try to promote various ways to curb crime and promoting community involvement.

- Joe Bailey, Ocean Pines Police Department advised that they are in the middle of transitioning to a new Chief and that their crime stats are holding steady as last year.
- Chief Andy McGee, Snow Hill Police Department advised that they have seen 20% reduction in crime, however, they have seen a slight increase in scams to the elderly population.
- Deputy Fire Marshal, Rob Korb, advised they are on track for the year. So far this year they have had 37 fire investigations. The investigative component of fire investigations has become more complex as a large percentage of homeowners have some type of security camera and it takes additional manhours to review camera footage.
- Kris Heiser, State's Attorney, advised that overall the County crime stats are good with the biggest challenge being juvenile law.
- Board Member Carol Frazier stated with the legalization of cannabis, she is concerned about the mental health of cannabis users and the challenges of the new laws on law enforcement agencies.
- Ocean City Chief Ruzzuro stated that he wished the effect of the new cannabis laws and enforcement thereof had been more thought out prior to July 1. Ocean City has been proactive in posting information on the new laws on social media. The Town of Ocean City has passed town ordinances prohibiting any smoking/vaping in any public area, no smoking cafes, and no dispensaries within the town limits. Chief Ruzzuro advised that they have not seen an influx in citizens trying to push limits on this ordinance. The new laws have had an effect on their probable cause searches for vehicles which often lead to illegal firearms. Ocean City has imposed various levels of fines for violating the smoking/vaping ordinance.
- Rob Korb, Fire Marshal, advised that his concern is more outside fires due to smoking/vaping at large parties and the careless disposal of smoking materials.
- Pocomoke City Officer Damien McGlotten advised that they get several complaints about the odor of cannabis being smoked/vaped and the smoke going through ventilation system duct work in apartments and townhouses. Landlords need to step up and add clauses to their leases addressing the issue. This has especially become an issue with young parents that are concerned about how the smoke/odor traveling through ventilation systems will affect their children.
- Snow Hill Chief Andy McGee advised that trying to determine if a driver is under the influence of cannabis vs. alcohol has been difficult at times. The process definitely adds hours to a traffic stop.
- Agencies responded to board member Mary Burgess question regarding the steps and equipment used to decide if they suspect a citizen is under the influence of cannabis usage. Moving forward, Ms. Burgess advised the agencies to reach out if there was anything they could do as a board to help them.
- Board member Carol Frazier, encouraged the agencies to continue to educate about the dangers of cannabis.
- Kris Heiser, State's Attorney advised that they are trying to get thorough the summer with the new laws and that it definitely helps when towns and municipalities set laws and ordinances regarding the public use of cannabis.

- Vice Chair Joe Theobald asked Deputy Operations Commander Doug Dods, to convey congratulations from the board to Sheriff Crisafulli on being named WMDT's First Responder of the Year.
- The board decided to make future meetings at 1:00 P.M. The next meeting will be October 19, 2023 at 1:00 P.M.
- Meeting was unanimously adjourned.

APPROVED

Police Accountability Board Meeting

October 19, 2023

Members present:

Greg Tate, Chair
Joe Theobald, Vice-Chair
John Simms, III,
Mary Burgess
Quincy Shockley
Carol Frazier
Quincey Shockley

Staff:

Roscoe R. Leslie, County Attorney
Faith Coleman, Office Assistant V

Law Enforcement:

Brian Craven, PPD
Matt Clark, WCFM
Andy McGee, SHPD
Frank Soscio, OCPD
Joe Bailey, OPPD
Brian Cardmone, WCSO
Michael Colbert, OCPD

- Chairman Tate called the meeting to order, took roll call and declared a quorum.
- Minutes from the previous meeting of July 20, 2023, were approved unanimously.
- The agenda for today was approved unanimously.
- Mary Burgess gave a brief overview of the Board's accomplishments for the year.
 - County Attorney reviewed House Bill 670 which established the Police Accountability Board, Administrative Charging Committee and to nominate a Trial Board.
 - All board members complied with the County Ethics Law.
 - Each agency provided the Board with how citizen complaints were handled.
 - The Board received the body worn camera polices from each agency, as well as the costs associated with purchasing the cameras and the storage. The board presented a letter to the County Commissioners encouraging them to financially support the cameras through grants and through the budget process.
 - Dr. Mark Bowen gave a presentation on how the training of the Administrative Charging Committee and the tools they used to review complaints.
 - Reviewed the outcomes of the complaints considered by the Administrative Charging Committee.
 - Received and reviewed the Community Policing Reports and crime stats from agencies.

- Chairman Tate advised that the Administrative Charging Committee had received 7 complains for the year. 6 complaints were unfounded and the 7th complaint we just received and have not held a meeting yet.
- Chairman Tate reviewed various techniques that could be used to improve police accountability and stated that Worcester County was fortunate that our agencies already have policies in place that make communications with citizens and officer accountability outstanding. Board members concurred.
- Law enforcement advised that they are having no major issues with the new cannabis laws and that the Ocean's Calling weekend went smoothly.
- In response to Ms. Burgess's question, law enforcement advised they are having no issues with sovereign citizens at this time.
- Concerns regarding the Israel/Hamas conflict were discussed, and Chairman Tate suggested that due to intel from colleagues that all agencies remain vigilant.
- John Simms III relayed a concern of Administrative Charging Board member, John Trumpower, the policy as to when body cams were activated. Snow Hill Chief Andy McGee advised that all agencies should activate their camera anytime a complaint is citizen generated. There are some exceptions such as interviews with domestic violence victims and adolescents.
- The board agreed on a tentative meeting schedule for 2024.

January 18

April 18

July 18

October 17

The meeting was unanimously adjourned.