



**City of Hyattsville
Police and Public Safety Citizens' Advisory Committee
Meeting
Minutes, Meeting of March 13, 2024**

I. Attendance

Position, Name	Ward	Present / Absent	Position, Name	Present / Absent
Chair, Julia Dezelski	1	✓	Chief of Police, Jarod Towers	✓
Vice Chair, Bob Kantor	2	✓	Deputy Chief of Police, Laura Lanham	✗
Secretary, Robert Riddle	2	✓	Council Member Ward 2, Emily Strab	✗
Member, Taylor Wilder	2	✓		
Member, Julio Gomez	2	✗		
Member, Jerome Brown	3	✗		
Member, Patricia Page	5	✓		

Public Attendance

Marc Culberson, Elizabeth Clemmons

7:10 Chair Dezelski called to Order, quorum affirmed
(start time was delayed due to technical difficulties - including participant names showing inaccurately, and Chair's limited volume)

II. Minutes

Motion made (Kantor moved, Riddle amended, Page seconded) and passed (all verbal aye minus Wilder, who had dropped by 7:14, subsequently rejoined) to defer approval of minutes from last meeting, after complete distribution, until the April meeting

III. Public Comment

Marc Culbertson - nothing (Elizabeth Clemmons joined after this)

IV. Agenda: General Discussion Topics

a. Objectives and Purpose of Committee

Chair requested member comments. None. Moved to second point on Agenda.

b. Recruitment Plans and Goals



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Kantor noted Ward 2 is represented by four members, and said we need reps from other Wards.

Chair noted Emily Strab had said she will raise the need for more volunteers with City Council members.

Riddle suggested the committee could attend a Council meeting and lobby for volunteers from other Wards, or write a letter to encourage Councilmembers to identify volunteers from their Ward. Kantor responded that Emily will do that.

Chair said she intended to ask her members of Council to help recruit and other members can ask directly of their representatives, too.

c. Subcommittees

Chair asked who would like to participate in each subcommittee.

Kantor asked for Patricia Page as Past Chair to give a description of each.

Page reported Emily Strab had been CoChair for Policy subcommittee and she had been CoChair for the Outreach Committee

Outreach: goal to strengthen community and members' relationship; they prepared and distributed fliers about the Committee and HPD, along with candies and hand sanitizer, while attending several events including Back to School, National Night Out, Blood Drive at a local church, et al

Emily stepped down as CoChair after election to City Council.

Kantor asked for a description of the Policy subcommittee. Page responded that Wilder and Brown were part of it.

Chair asked Wilder to give a brief description.

Wilder said they collected information on what other jurisdictions are doing in Policy and Procedures toward possibly updating in response to trends within the current political atmosphere. Kantor asked how the Police were involved. Wilder said Chief Towers was very helpful in launching their work. Line personnel had not been directly contacted for contributions but that could be a good idea to solicit their input in the new subcommittee's efforts. Chief Towers stated that when he asked the Committee to establish the subcommittee on Policy, it was to laser focus on policies. He's aware that Committee members hold down full time jobs and it's a huge lift to ask for the time it takes to focus on policy. They don't bring forward to the community policy standards like uniforms, etc but instead matters that may be influenced by the community's values, like use of force, weapons, etc. The aim is to ask officers and community members where they want HPD to focus, how far to go, to accomplish desired tasks.

Kantor asked Wilde and Chief Towers to speak on how the subcommittee can be most effective. He asked for information to understand in the moment how that work was going.

Chief Towers said he'd defer to the Chair on whether to give a report at this time.



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The chair asked if other Committee members want to serve on the subcommittee. Kantor responded that Jerome (Brown) is on the committee with Taylor (Wilder). The Chair noted Brown's term ends this month and she will reach out to ask if he will extend his term. She noted that as we improve recruitment for more volunteers, the greater number of Committee members can help populate the subcommittees, too.

d. Public Safety Concerns

1. Individual canvassing door to door seeking funds, information provided suggests it was a scam, concern that visits were later in the evening and elderly residents were particularly troubled

The Chair asked if the Chief had advice for the public. Chief Towers said HPD has several CIT (Crisis Intervention)-trained personnel on staff to help such individuals. Particularly when there may be concerns that an individual's actions could be tied to or lead to illegal activities, they would rather people call the Department, because officers may be able to help the person, and/or get it on record that an individual was in a given area when a crime is subsequently reported.

2. Resources for the unhoused, at City and County levels

Kantor said he had brought this to the agenda, after seeing two women living in the parking lot of the Rec Center under an umbrella. How can we try to engage other resources to help these individuals? Chief Towers said they can always call HPD, and people can also call Community Services. Particularly if there is no evident criminal element, they should feel free to call Community Services.

3. Youth Engagement

The Chair said...

V. Hyattsville Police Department (HPD) Updates

a. Update on Police Communications Center

Chief Towers reported they have hired the consultant Mission Critical Partners to develop specifications for 3505 Hamilton Road new HPD Headquarters. Meanwhile HPD is seeking funding avenues, including submitting a bail bond request to the State, looking for grant funds, and anything they can pursue that will not put the onus on the City. The program should be done by end of the year, and there is a lot to be done prior to the funding hurdles. The consultant's work includes integration of the City-wide camera system already underway, CAD, RMV, phone, servers, and all on a UPS (uninterrupted power supply) generator. The final Communications Center will support the City of Hyattsville and Mt. Rainier, which pays the City for use of its Command Center but cannot be a stakeholder in funding its costs.



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b. Update on efforts to curb drug trafficking

Chief Towers reported that we don't have full time undercover narcotics enforcement. If a complaint is received, they investigate and if deemed valid advise the Prince George's County Police and request they conduct an investigation.

VI. Walk-on and closing topics

- a. Page added that in addition to previous information supplied on the Policy Committee, she recalled they had discussed chokehold practices.
- b. The Chair noted the meeting Agenda had been covered well within an hour, and suggested future meetings could be one hour long, but would need a motion to change the timing. Page said the Committee meetings had previously begun at 7:30 but had been moved to 7:00 start time after several had run later than an hour. Chair asked if members have a preference for start time and said she is okay with 7:00 or 7:30. Riddle said he prefers 7:00 start time, because Committee service makes for a long work day. Kantor asked the Chief what he prefers. The Chief answered he is available for what the Committee decides. Riddle moved that the Committee establish its meetings as one hour long, with a start time of 7:00 p.m. Page seconded. Motion passed with aye from all members present.
- c. The Chair reminded participants that the next meeting will be April 10th, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. The Chief said that given some of the technical difficulties he will replace the Zoom calendar invitations , and each member of the committee should receive their own individual links to join next month.
- d. Kantor moved to adjourn, Riddle seconded and Wilder seconded. Motion passed with aye from all members present.