

# Police and Public Safety Citizens' Advisory Committee

## Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 14, 2023 - 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Note taker: Mai Abdul Rahman

### Committee

Chairperson Patricia Page, Ward 5 (**Present**)  
Vice-Chair, Jerome Brown, Ward 5 (**Present**)  
Secretary – Mai Abdul Rahman, Ward 1 (**Present**)  
Committee Member- 1 vacancy  
Committee Member Taylor Wilder Ward 2 (**Present**)  
Committee Member, Julio Gomez, Ward 2 (**Present**)  
Committee Member, Robert R. Riddle, Ward 2 (**Present**)

### Council/Liaison

Chief of Police Jarod Towers (**Present**)  
Council Member Danny Schaible, Ward 2 (**Present**)  
Council Member Emily Strab, Ward 2 (**Present**)  
Council Member Rommel Sandino, Ward 5 (Absent)

1. Roll Call of attending Committee Members: **Quorum Met**
2. Approval of Agenda: **Approved**
3. Approval of May 10th, 2023, meeting minutes: **Approved**

### Discussion Items

#### 1. Chief Jarod Towers

- a. Updates on city budget, new Headquarters, and personnel:  
Staffing remains an issue. Hired 8 new officers, but several other officers are on administrative leave and out for other reasons, which is a wash (answer remains ambiguous). HPD is expanding outreach to overcome our proximity to other local police stations trying to recruit from same pool of applicants. HPD is currently recruiting in Pennsylvania. HPD has secured 3 potential police officers who passed written exams and physical exams, and another 3 have passed the written exam. Learning curve is steep, and many new recruits may not pass. HPD is still in need of new recruits. "Our active officer status is different than the actual number of officers on the field"
- b. Does the City of Hyattsville Police Department have a 'Duty to Intervene' Policy?  
From Maryland Code:

#### 300.2.1 DUTY TO INTERCEDE AND REPORT

Any officer present and observing another law enforcement officer or a member using force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional under the circumstances shall, when in a position to do so, intercede to prevent the use of unreasonable force, regardless of rank (Md. Code PS § 3-524).

Any officer who observes another law enforcement officer or a member use force that is potentially beyond that which is objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional under the circumstances shall report these observations to a supervisor as soon as feasible (Md. Code PS § 3-524).

Officers shall not be subject to discipline or retaliation for attempting to stop the use of force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional.

#### 300.2.1 DUTY TO INTERCEDE AND REPORT

Any officer present and observing another law enforcement officer or a member using force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional under the circumstances shall, when in a position to do so, intercede to prevent the use of unreasonable force, regardless of rank (Md. Code PS § 3-524).

Any officer who observes another law enforcement officer or a member using force that is potentially beyond that which is objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional under the circumstances shall report these observations to a supervisor as feasible (Md. Code PS § 3-524).

Officers shall not be subject to discipline or retaliation for attempting to stop the use of force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional.

#### 300.3 USE OF FORCE

Officers shall use only the force objectively Reasonable, Necessary, and Proportional to effectively bring an incident or person under control, while protecting the life and safety of all persons, or to achieve a law-enforcement objective.

The reasonableness of force will be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene at the time of the incident. Any evaluation of reasonableness must allow for the fact that officers are often forced to make split-second decisions about the amount of force that reasonably appears necessary in a particular situation, with limited information and in circumstances that are tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving.

Given that no policy can realistically predict every possible situation an officer might encounter, officers are entrusted to use well-reasoned discretion in determining the appropriate use of force in each incident.

- c. A 17-year old was arrested for two car jackings. Strategy for offenders for carjacking and robbery: HPD is deploying specific strategies to meet these crimes. Carjacking is a huge problem across the county. “We have officers that are focused on carjacking.” Hyattsville had a string of carjackings, one of which ended in homicide. This past weekend, robberies were committed in Hyattsville parking lots. HPD developed some of our own leads and were able to intercede in bank robbery in a parking lot, which resulted in the arrest of two suspects.
  - i. “Culture will eat policy for lunch.” We cannot push out policies without training. There is a lot to make sure that we are doing things for the right reasons, and take the lead for juvenile justice reform: all young adults are treated as young adults up to age 24. PG county chief Aziz has 20 commanders. HPD is without the proper force to take on additional responsibility for doing youth outreach.
  - ii. “Police cannot be short staffed”. The youth we are interested in reaching out to need services that are beyond HPD’s abilities, considering the many robberies and car jacking.
  - iii. Maybe HPD needs to partner with organizations that deal with young people and possibly partner with schools? Committee could apply for grants with the help of Allison Swift, a civilian working with HPD.
  - iv. (Responding to public comment in meeting’s Chat box) “Only 5% of crimes come from Hyattsville residents. 85% of crime is committed by young individuals between the under age 25.” HPD is trying to stay ahead of the crimes for now and not for three five years from now. Maybe some of us can look at the data and see some unusual patterns.
  - v. Keeping youth on track would seem to be something that contributes to overall community health and safety
  - vi. Are there any engagement activities aimed at the youth that we can be doing in partnership with surrounding agencies?
  - vii. Previous Chief Amal Awad, heavily invested in youth activities and had regular monthly reports to committee on crime and police response, which helped inform and comfort community.

## 2. How many crimes are committed in Hyattsville?

CLASSIFICATION	2023	2022	ACTUAL CHANGE	% CHANGE
<b>CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS</b>				
HOMICIDE	1	1	0	0%
RAPE	1	4	-3	-75%
COMMERCIAL ROBBERY	4	1	3	300%
GUN	4	1	3	300%
KNIFE	0	0	0	0%
OTHER WEAPON	0	0	0	0%
STRONG ARM	0	0	0	0%
CITIZEN ROBBERY	19	11	8	73%
GUN	10	1	9	900%
KNIFE	2	2	0	0%
OTHER WEAPON	2	1	1	100%
STRONG ARM	5	7	-2	-28%
CARJACKING	4	1	3	300%
ASSAULT	30	22	8	36%
GUN	5	2	3	150%
KNIFE	3	1	2	200%
OTHER WEAPON	6	4	2	50%
NO WEAPON	16	15	1	7%
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY</b>				
B & E RESIDENTIAL	3	7	-4	-57%
HOMES	3	4	-1	-25%
OUTBUILDINGS	0	3	-3	-100%
B & E COMMERCIAL	5	11	-6	-55%
STOLEN VEHICLE	67	32	35	109%
THEFT	130	122	8	7%
ARSON	0	1	-1	-100%
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>18.50%</b>
<b>TOTAL CRIMES</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>23.94%</b>
<b>CALLS FOR SERVICE</b>	<b>7556</b>	<b>4679</b>	<b>2877</b>	<b>61.49%</b>

## 3. Patricia

The Letter written by the police department to the Hyattsville community on the death of Tyre Nichols stated that *"We hold one another accountable and intervene, when necessary, without hesitation."*

## 4. Jerome

What are we doing as far as programming / support for the homeless?

- i. Chief: Meeting the needs of people without homes is outside the scope of HPD. Community services are what they need. Homeless individuals tend to become a police issue when they are doing something illegal in public areas. Sometimes they intentionally want to be arrested. They don't have money to pay fines - and when HPD levies fines on this population, it is only going to commit them to life-long police issues and complex problems. Police should only be used when other resources to resolve problem have been exhausted. Council Joseph Solomon is talking about helping the homeless with showers and other services.

## 5. New Member Orientation Session (Patricia)

- a. Message from Laura Ream - We were a bit delayed in scheduling this springs orientation due to the election. Staff is planning an orientation session for this summer, likely in late June or early July. Please let the committee member know that we are still planning a session and we hope to have the date scheduled soon. They are also welcome to reach out to me directly if they have any immediate questions.
- b. We need to increase public participation. We should join neighborhood watch meetings.

**6. Ward 2 Neighborhood Watch**

- a. Councilmember Emily Strab is seeking a volunteer to lead the group

**7. Committee Stipend Program (Patricia)**

- a. There have been delays finalizing the payment process for those who signed up for the stipend program.

**8. Public comment**

- a. Bob Kantor: Lives on Queensbury and several times a day sees multiple police cars in rows speeding westbound. Are they usually heading to the (PG Plaza) Mall? Is the Mall a site for daily disturbances that require heavy police presence?
  - i. Chief: Because the Police department is in Ward 1, it is difficult for police to get to the rest of the city. There is a lot of response towards that area. It is the reason why we moved police department to Ward 5. In some situations, there may be as many as 15 police cars responding.
- b. Bob Kantor: Do you know what percentage of armed robberies in Hyattsville are conducted by Hyattsville residents?
  - i. Chief: Only 5% of crimes come from Hyattsville residents.
- c. Bob Kantor: What is involved in chairing the Ward 2 Neighborhood Watch?
  - i. The group is open to the entire neighborhood, but at this time its focus is the blocks bounded by Madison St on the north, 39<sup>th</sup> Ave on the west, Livingston on the south, and 40<sup>th</sup> Ave on the east. It meet once a month. There is an e-mail list. The neighborhood watch was on a website but it was removed. Its primary point is for neighbors to get to know one another.

**9. Adjournment at 8:29 p.m.**



This is the flyer that the communication team developed.