



**City of Hyattsville
Police and Public Safety Citizens (PPSC) Advisory
Committee Meeting
Minutes, Meeting of May 8, 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 / Recorder, Robert Riddle	2	✓	Council Member Ward 2, Emily Strab	✓
Member, Taylor Wilder	2	✓		
Member, Julio Gomez	2	✗		
Member, Jermome Brown	3	✓		
Member, Patricia Page	5	✓		
Member, Mark Culberson	3	✓		

Public Attendance

Benjamin Sevensky

7:10 Chair Dezelski called to Order, quorum affirmed
(start time was delayed due to technical difficulties)

II. [Agenda](#), and [Minutes](#)

Motion made (Riddle moved, Kantor seconded) and passed (all verbal aye minus Page who joined later) to approve [Agenda](#) (as drafted and pre-circulated by Kantor)

Motion made (Riddle moved, Wilder seconded) and passed (all verbal aye) to approve [meeting minutes for March 13, 2024](#)

III. Public Comment

Benjamin Sevensky - nothing to add

Councilmember Emily Strab reported resident questions about an increased number of City communications of missing child alerts. Why? Are there more incidents, or is it a better information process today?



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Chief Towers reported that they have seen an increase in the number of runaway rather than missing children; in most cases, the child has been at a friends' home for extended periods. Also, there has been an internal policy change: missing persons are classified by age, medical history, special needs, etc and previously, not all under age 16 were posted. The posts are removed after the child has been located.

Strab asked - if the problem is runaways, is there something we can do as a community?
(did not record a response)

IV. Agenda: General Discussion Topics

a. Possibility of holding some PPSCA meetings in person

Chair Dezelski proposed 1 meeting in person once a quarter, starting in June?
Brown enjoy in-person meeting, including recent station tour, is on the road a lot for work and still needs virtual access
Chief noted hybrid meetings at City building can be a challenge due to equipment
Culberson reported need for hybrid
Motion made (Riddle moved, X seconded) and passed (all verbal aye) for June meeting in person with hybrid (virtual) component, and trial quarterly thereafter

b. City Anniversary public outreach

This preceded the PPSC meeting, so no discussion

c. Recruitment Plans and Goals – Update on City Council community member outreach and introduction of new candidates

Mark Culberson is new, Councilmember Strab reported two other applicants are in process - 1 has attended a meeting, the other at interview stage; 1 is in Ward 2 the other she believes is in Ward 1
Bob Cantor noted a need for a Ward 4 representative

d. Status of the Subcommittees (Outreach and Policy) – who, what, how

Outreach - Patricia Page reported she and Mai Abdul-Rehman (resigned service in 2023) distributed supplies for underprivileged school children, attended National Night Out, and other efforts to increase awareness of the Committee and of its avenue for citizen concerns and communication



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Policy - Taylor Wilder and Jerome Brown

Taylor - reported finding Hyattsville Police Department (HPD) staff do policy but we can recommend new ones

Brown - reported major drafting of proposal to City

Taylor - suggested we review subcommittees for increased engagement opportunity

Dezelski - asked if any volunteers - Cantor and Dezelski will participate; asked Chief if he finds the subcommittees helpful

Chief - yes, every department should have some means of gaining community input for non-operational, forward-facing community interaction

Cantor to Chief - do you have a process in place to engage the community?

Chief - process is to bring up issues here in PPSC, then email the Committee members

Cantor - will reach to...

Chief - all Maryland Police departments are required by law to post their policies online - as we're navigating re-writing our policies they "General Orders" and now they're "Policies"

Strab - confirmed the second new volunteer in process lives in Ward 1; also -

Subcommittees can be ad hoc, a way to do business offline and bring it to the Committee. This can change based on interests and availability. Example - in the past an ad hoc subcommittee looked at chokeholds in response to timely incidents of national concern, because residents wanted to ensure transparency

Dezelski - happy to help Patricia on the Outreach subcommittee, especially with National Night Out

Strab - City's Education Committee will have a table at the Jam, and National Night Out, may be able to work together

Taylor - agreed

e. Public Safety Community concerns:

i. Hit and run accident following car theft on April 3rd at Queensbury Rd and 42nd Ave

Chief - carjackings were up nationally and have recently been going down again

HPD is adding 50 camera locations in the capital improvement plan

These require Memorandum of Understanding, coordination with Pepco, and take a lot of time to establish

City approved **RECOR**, a license plate technology – Maryland law requires storage of data in a state: every law enforcement agency must be audited, requires Chief of Police to conduct these audits, previously unable to sign off on cloud storage associated with the new technology but recently the General Assembly approved cloud storage



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Brown - what is the selection process (on camera placement) and can the community request cameras?

Chief - HPD has set up an internal committee, confirmed crimes from record management system, mapped everywhere we'd like to have a camera, and only have 50; focused on ingress and egress around City, camera coverage in every Ward but placed on a strategic basis and not divided by Ward; as HPD begins deploying cameras, he thinks there will be room for community input

ii. Recent attack of a woman by two men in Ward 5 (on bicycle trail)

Chief - Prince Georges Police Department (PGPD) press release indicated this was not within Hyattsville's corporate limits, so HPD has received little information (and especially true whenever there's a sexual assault component). What's known is the assault was at knifepoint, there was video of the suspects, the case has since been closed

Brown - neighbors have expressed concern whether the predators are still at large

Chief - there have been discussions between Maryland National Capital Parks & Planning Commission (MCPC) and Prince George's County (PGCo) on better lighting in the area; also, HPD

iii. Safety concerns with the Ager/Hamilton corridor

Brown - a lot of walkers, noticed increased vagrancy; what are the plans to increase safety in non-daylight hours?

Dezelski to Strab - there was a West Hyattsville development plan. Has it concluded or is it still in process?

Strab believes it's still underway. The City has been looking at putting money toward better lighting, beautification, reducing the blight such as the burned-out retail building

Brown - there have been discussions with Aldi and people hanging around its parking lot

Strab - there is a program in place, City Staff, called **Gare** - emphasis there and at University Town Center, focused on understanding why there is vagrancy and homeless in that location, looking at the root of the problem, ability of people to access resources; solutions can be slow when the aim is holistic

iv. Increased use of gas engine scooters on biking trails

Brown - DoorDash et al

Cantor - bikes trails, and has witnessed the increase

Chief - MCPC did a test of these and an evaluation on the Indian Creek Trail, decided to allow gas-engine vehicles on its trails; but bigger vehicles are still not allowed



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HPD pursuit policy prohibits officers from pursuit on trails, due to liability for pursuit
Dezelski - doesn't Hyattsville have bike police?

Chief - Yes, 10 new bikes; training pending for e-bikes; mountain bikes are not yet in use because of time constraints around using them for policing (in our urban-suburban setting)

V. Hyattsville Police Department (HPD) Updates

a. Update on Police Communications Project

Chief Towers reported Motorola proposal was received; expected \$2.3M and it came in at \$2.1M. Contract with MPC who negotiated price down, expecting to \$2.0M, expecting lock-in on price by end of week.

The goal is to have it ready for the May 20th Council agenda, for discussion

Robert - what support is needed/wanted from the Committee? Can the Committee pass motion to support the project?

Chief - good example of urgency for update: power outage last week took out HPD system

Cantor - what specific action is wanted before this meeting ends?

Robert - Can we schedule an executive session to discuss?

Chief - Committee Chair can call a special meeting; any recommendation is needed before May 20th

Cantor - can Chief draft and share?

Brown - will start a draft, please provide a problem statement

Strab - need to submit to the City beforehand to get on the Council Agenda, best if a Committee member reads the motion at the Council meeting

Discussion on scheduling the follow up meeting

Motion made (Riddle moved, Brown and Cantor seconded) and passed (four verbal aye) for the Committee to draft a letter of support, and meet 5/15/2024 at 8 p.m. to review, discuss, and vote on the draft

Meeting concluded after 8:15 p.m.



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Relevant excerpt “**City-of-Hyattsville-Handbook-for-Committees_FINAL**”:

COMMITTEE APPOINTED ROLES

Appointed roles in the Committee include the Chair and the Secretary. Committees may choose to have Co-Chairs or Vice Chairs at their discretion or at the direction of the Committee worksheet. The duties of these roles are described below.

- **Committee Chair:** The Chair is elected annually in January for a one (1) year term. The Chair provides leadership and direction to the Committee to facilitate the Body in pursuing its vision and mission. The Chair facilitates the meeting by calling the meeting to order and acts as the meeting Chairperson. The Chair develops the meeting agendas in partnership with Committee members and the staff liaison(s). The Chair also works with the staff liaison(s) to ensure meeting requirements are met for the posting of agendas and approval of minutes.
- **Secretary:** Elected annually in January for one (1) year term. Responsible for writing meeting minutes and submitting minutes for approval of the Body.

City page for Committees and Boards (as of 06.02.2024):

<https://www.hyattsville.org/878/Advisory-Committees-Boards-Commissions>

Committee-specific information on City website (as of 06.02.2024):

<https://hyattsville-md.granicus.com/boards/w/c116e25731a7ccb3/boards/11214>

Description

The City of Hyattsville Police and Public Safety Citizens’ Advisory Committee (PPSCAC) is established to promote civic participation and provide advisement and relevant feedback to the Mayor, City Council, and City Administration on issues related to community policing and public safety, including but not limited to policies and procedures, throughout the City.

Upcoming Meetings

- Jun 12, 2024 - 7:00pm - Police & Public Safety Citizens' Advisory Committee Regular Meeting

Vacancies

- 4 Current Vacancies
- 0 Terms Expired

Size 11 Members



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Term Length 2 Years

Term Limit N/A

- **Staff Liaison(s)**
Chief Towers
- **Council Liaison(s)**
Councilmember Strab Strab (Ward 2)
- **Committee Worksheet**
[PPSAC Committee Worksheet adopted edits Feb 4 2019.pdf](#)
- **2024 Meeting Calendar** [PPSCAC 2023 Calendar Adopted.pdf](#)

Tab for Member Roster (as of 06.02.2024):

1. [Patricia Page](#)

2nd Term

Oct 03, 2022 to Oct 30, 2024

Appointing Authority

City Council

Position

Member

City Ward

Ward 5

2. [Jerome Brown](#)

2nd Term

Oct 03, 2022 to Oct 30, 2024

Appointing Authority

City Council

Position

Member

City Ward

Ward 3

3. [Robert Riddle](#)

1st Term

Feb 21, 2023 to Feb 28, 2025

Appointing Authority



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Council

Position

Recorder

City Ward

Ward 2

4. [Taylor Wilder](#)

2nd Term

Apr 17, 2023 to Apr 30, 2025

Appointing Authority

City Council

Position

Member

City Ward

Ward 2

5. [Bob Kantor](#)

1st Term

Nov 20, 2023 to Nov 30, 2025

Appointing Authority

Council

Position

Co-Chair

City Ward

Ward 2

6. [Julia Dezelski](#)

1st Term

Nov 20, 2023 to Nov 30, 2025

Appointing Authority

Council

Position

Chair

City Ward

Ward 1

7. [Mark Culberson](#)

1st Term

May 07, 2024 to May 31, 2026

Appointing Authority



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Council
Position
Member
City Ward
Ward 3

Jun 12, 2024 07:00 PM

Jul 10, 2024 07:00 PM

Aug 14, 2024 07:00 PM

Sep 11, 2024 07:00 PM

Oct 9, 2024 07:00 PM

Nov 13, 2024 07:00 PM

Dec 11, 2024 07:00 PM