



CECIL COUNTY POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD (PAB)

Cecil County Administration Building
200 Chesapeake Boulevard, Suite 2100
Elkton, Maryland 21921

Open Meeting Minutes

July 30, 2024

Attendance:

Present:

PAB Members: Stephen Miller (Chair), Robert McKnight,
and Cindy Emmerich

Office of Law: Lawrence Scott (County Attorney),
Kevin Jensen (Assistant County Attorney),
Kayla Maldeis (Legal Administrator),
and Caitlyn Reeves (Paralegal)

Absent:

PAB Members: John Thompson and Jamila Mettee

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM.

Roll call - 3 members present, representing a quorum.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Stephen Miller.

Agenda Approval:

Robert McKnight motioned to add a section D to the agenda discuss a way to view the investigatory files digitally, seconded by Cindy Emmerich. The motion was approved unanimously.

Cindy Emmerich motioned to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Robert McKnight. The motion was approved unanimously.

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes:

Robert McKnight motioned to approve the minutes of the June 25, 2024, meeting,

seconded by Cindy Emmerich. The motion was approved unanimously.

New Business:

Announcement from Chair Stephen Miller:

This month will be Mr. Miller's last meeting serving on the PAB & ACC. He thanked everyone for their involvement with getting the PAB up and running and stated he is proud of what has been accomplished. Mr. Miller introduced the incoming PAB chair, Mr. John Gainey.

Presentation by Chief Robert Nitz of the Perryville Police Department:

Chief Nitz stated that Perryville Police Department ("PVPD") is slated for 14 officers, and currently has 12 active officers and 2 in the academy who are scheduled graduate August 15th.

Chief Nitz identified Great Wolf Lodge as a challenge for PVPD. Chief Nitz stated that Great Wolf Lodge has become one of the top calls for service locations for PVPD, with 423 calls YTD. Chief Nitz estimates that approximately 1/3 of those calls have been alcohol related. Thirty seven of those 423 calls have been for reportable crimes. Chief Nitz stated that the increasing popularity of Great Wolf Lodge, whose geographic draw has grown to include Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia, Baltimore City, Prince George's County, Philadelphia, Wilmington, and parts of New York and New Jersey, has resulted in unintended consequences, including an increase in calls for service at Hollywood Casino.

Chief Nitz identified the proliferation of disrespectful and defiant behavior from citizens as a growing challenge for PVPD.

Chief Nitz stated that legislation passed over the last few years has resulted in additional challenges for PVPD. The removal of grounds for search based on the odor of marijuana has resulted in a significant decrease in drug and handgun arrests by PVPD. Chief Nitz stated that while PVPD is not encountering challenges of the magnitude faced by other jurisdictions because of Maryland's Juvenile Justice Reform, it has still resulted in a growing inability of the PVPD to address juvenile crime.

Chief Nitz stated that while Perryville does not have much violent crime, PVPD is still noticing a northern migration of violent crime from southern jurisdictions.

Chief Nitz identified the retention of officers as another challenge faced by PVPD, and largely attributes that challenge to PVPD's lack of a traditional retirement plan or pension.

Chief Nitz noted that the transition of PVPD to Lexipol policy and procedure management has been a positive change, as it provides periodic updates to address changes in law and enables PVPD to easily ensure and document that all officers are properly trained.

Review of Complaint summary:

The Office of Law provided the PAB with a summary of all PAB complaints submitted since the last PAB meeting.

Request for ACC recommendation regarding software to enable remote viewing of investigatory files.

Robert McKnight made a motion that the PAB ask the ACC to make a recommendation to the PAB regarding the County's acquisition of software to enable ACC members to safely and confidentially review investigatory files remotely, and that if the ACC makes such a recommendation, the PAB will forward a request for it to the County Executive. The motion was seconded by Ms. Emmerich and approved unanimously.

Next meeting:

The next PAB meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 27, 2024, at 10:00 AM in the Elk Room of the Cecil County Administration Building located at 200 Chesapeake Boulevard, Elkton, MD.

Adjourn:

On motion made by Robert McKnight, seconded by Cindy Emmerich, and approved by all, the meeting was adjourned at 10:38 AM.