

POLICE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

February 9, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: John Springett, Richard Hewitt, Brian Williams, Olga Boucher, Brent Hall

Others Present: Ron Lantz, Greg Jenkins, Sean Reeves, Diantha McKeel, Donna Price

Meeting called to order at 9:01am

John Springett made a motion to approve the December 8, 2020, meeting minutes and Brent Hall 2nd the motion. The December 8, 2020, meeting minutes have been approved.

Everyone welcomed Scottsville District Board of Supervisor Donna Price to the meeting this morning.

Matters from the Public:

In October's meeting it was asked "what is the best way for public comment or best way to reach the Chief of Police?" Since then the askthechief@albemarle.org email address has been added to the Citizens Advisory Committee website and it is also located on the Police Department's website at www.albemarle.org.

New Business:

Chief Lantz updated the committee on the hiring, staffing and morale of the department. When the police department did applicant testing in 2017 there were 229 applications submitted and when we did testing in 2020 there were 125 applications submitted. The department is currently authorized 152 sworn officers, which include 3 animal control officers, our current staffing is at 147 with 5 vacant positions. We are currently advertising for certified officers because they do not have to go through the academy as long as their certification is in Virginia, they attend Field Training for several weeks and then they are on the streets.

The department sent 4 recruits to the academy in January and 2 individuals have already resigned. Our ratio at this time is 1.38 officers per 1000, the state standard is over 1.5 and we are slowly getting there. A question was asked regarding attrition rate, was it 3-5 per year? The Chief stated that it was a little over that this year, but they try and put 3-5 recruits in the academy to match the attrition rate. We are hoping to have 6 recruits going into the academy in July 2021, and to be fully staffed at that same time. Ms. Price and Ms. McKeel are looking at re-evaluating the 1.5 and they are also considering additional staffing for the police department.

Morale over the last year has been low, but that is being seen across the states. The community in Albemarle County really supports the police department, they have brought in lunches and dinners for the officers, snacks and goodies bags, and a plethora of thank you cards which the officers treasure the most. The police Foundation has also done a great deal for the officers over the past year to help and make their time at work less stressful. The officers just want to feel appreciated for the work that they do and the citizens and Foundation have found ways to make this happens.

The Public Safety Pay Scale could not have come at a better time. This has also helped us retain employees who may otherwise been looking to go elsewhere.

Deputy Chief Sean Reeves discussed with the committee about Police Reform and Mental Health issues in Albemarle County and showed a power point presentation with information from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Major Reeves talked about CIT training (Crisis Intervention Training) and out of the 152 sworn employees 120 have been trained so far. The goal is to have all sworn trained at some point. The

training is open for 1 week (40 hours) and is done by the Thomas Jefferson Area Crisis Intervention Team, which teaches on a National level out of Region 10.

There are currently 9 facilities that are equipped to handle the mentally ill; 8 adult and 1 juvenile. Due to COVID-19 these facilities are already operating at limited capacity. A focus group has been established to help enhance and streamline the current process. The meet once a month to talk about “what could be”. Refer to the power point in regards to the Marcus Alert System and Next Steps (power point located on CAC website).

A question was asked about “who is normally calling in, those in crisis, a family member?” Yes, those and others individuals such as magistrates that are initiating an ECO, calls from assisted living facilities etc. This seems like an opportunity for CIT training beyond law enforcement, residents etc. It was discussed how the Next Steps that were developed is helpful to the CAC and that they are continuing to move along a path. The committee wanted to know if there were tangible items that they could do to help move this along. Major Reeves suggested that they just support the cause and be aware of the situation and help to decriminalize mental health issues.

Ms. McKeel wanted to know if this was part of the upcoming budget and Chief Lantz stated yes and there are some components of this in the 21st Century Policing Module. It was also noted that Mental Health of America should be added or kept in the loop.

John Springett made a motion to end the meeting and Brent Hall 2nd the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:08 am.