



BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF MEETING
TUESDAY, September 24th, 2019
Subject to approval

A meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners was held in the Burlington Police Department Community Room on Tuesday, September 24th, 2019. Chair Michele Asch called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

The following Commissioners were present: Chair Michele Asch, Vice Chair Shireen Hart, Commissioner Mark Hughes, Commissioner Nyree Mills, Commissioner Randall Harp, Commissioner Jabulani Gamache, Commissioner Yuol Herjok Yuol, and Youth Commissioner Landen Nipper. Also present: Chief del Pozo, Deputy Chief Jan Wright, Corporal Kratochvil, and Commission Clerk Laura Cheney.

Additions or Modifications to Agenda

- Motion by Hart, second by Hughes to add Officer Wellness Presentation by Sonny Provetto
- VOTING: Unanimous; motion passed.

Public Forum

- Richard Hilliard from Ward 1 spoke about traffic safety in his neighborhood. He is grateful to have DC Murad attend NPA meetings. He raised concerns around general traffic safety. He is requesting further dialogue around what we can do about identified safety issues.
- Trish Okane teaches environmental studies at UVM and brought her class to observe in order to understand how they can participate and engage in civic discourse. She asked for background and organizational structure of the commission, as well as how they communicate and respond to the Communities concerns.
 - Vice Chair Hart addressed these questions.

Chief's Report

- The Chief extended appreciation for keeping things running during his leave.
- In regard to staffing, the department currently has 95 sworn officers and are authorized for 105. Several departures recently – including a retiring Sergeant, a CUSI Officer going to work for the Feds, two officers who determined the city was not the right fit, as well as a recruit who recognized policing was not right for her at this time. We just hired a lateral officer from Atlanta. Compared to the nation, staffing at 5-10% under is better than most.
- The Chief reported on several recent incidences, including burglary, stabbing and an overdose.
 - If confirmed an opioid overdose, the city has had 13 overdoses in 2019, and a sign of continued improvement in reducing deaths (34 deaths in 2017).
- We have collaborated with the PRIDE center to develop a directive to address how officers handle incidents involving the LGBTQ community, modeled after a Philadelphia initiative. We will follow up with training.
- Thank you Councilor Paul for joining us. Last night a resolution passed acknowledging the work of and respect for the PD, brought forth by Councilor Wright.

Officer Wellness - Sonny Provetto

- Sonny Provetto discussed the wellness program and initiatives available to officers at the PD.
 - Commissioner Hughes asked if there are deficiencies.
 - Sonny noted schedules and training present a challenge in getting traction on certain initiatives.
 - Commissioner Hughes asked if there is support for families.
 - The Vermont Center for Responder Wellness is available to all officers and their families, offering workshops, yoga, therapy, etc.
 - Commissioner Harp inquired about the size of the peer support team.

- There are currently 12 on the team, and we work to bring new officers on throughout the year.
- Chair Asch inquired about what the program could use.
 - Sonny indicated more resources, a larger peer support team, and consistent training and wellness.

Task Force Update

- Commissioner Harp noted the committee will meet every other week. The meeting on 9/17 focused on developing a process and the committee’s priorities. We expect we’ll need an extension. The next meeting is 10/1, 5:45, in the Community Room at the BPD
- Vice Chair Asch encouraged Commissioners to attend.

Notifications from the BPD

- Chair Asch noted several avenues by which we intend to communicate and relay information to the public.
 - VT Alert for urgent matters; expect to see this rolled out in BTV in the coming weeks
 - Press releases are posted on the BPD website; notifications on FPF to visit website
 - Email Sign Up for regular updates; we hope to see this rolled out in the coming months.

Use of Technology in Assisting Investigations

- Commissioner Harp would like to understand any partnerships the department has, or plans to have in the future, in assisting investigations and if they are guided by any policy.
- The Chief advised the BPD does not have any contracts that utilize facial recognition, though we expect this will become a critical part of policing and commerce in the future. We would not utilize this technology without a formal process involving the commission and city council.

Commendations

- Several commendations were shared from the previous month.

Commissioners’ Updates/Comments

- Commissioner Nipper inquired about self-defense training for HS students, following recent lock down drills.
- The Chief expressed concern around liability.

Consent Minutes of August 27th Meeting

- Vice Chair Hart motioned to approve with minor edits, seconded by Commissioner Gamache
- VOTING: Unanimous, minutes approved

Next Meeting Date and Agenda Items

- Next meeting – October 22nd
- Items: Use of Force Data; Task Force Update

Executive Session

- Commissioner Harp motioned to move to Executive Session to address a personnel matter; second by Commissioner Gamache
- VOTING: Unanimous; move to executive session

Adjournment

- Commissioner Hughes motioned to adjourn the meeting, second by Chair Asch.
- Voting: Unanimous, motion carried.
Adjourned at 8:18pm.

Respectfully Submitted, 
 Laura Cheney, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Police, Clerk of the Police Commission

9/30/2019