

Community Policing Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

August 8, 2016

I. Call to Order

Major Todd Swisher called to order the regular meeting of the Community Policing Advisory Board at 4:30 p.m. on August 8, 2016 at the GLTC Transfer Station.

II. Roll Call

Major Swisher conducted a roll call. The following persons were present: Kim McCabe, Nia Polley, Ramona Battle, Synda Maynard, Tim Chong, Rebecca Melton, Walter Fore, Bill McBratney, Jay Parker, Gloria Witt, Christine Kennedy, James Polk, Larry Taylor, Rhonnie Smith, Gerald Cheatham, Chief Raul Diaz, Sarah Quarantotto, Roberta Hargis, Pastor James Camm, Acting Major Ryan Zuidema, and Kevin Bryant.

III. New Business

Major Swisher presented the question "*How have recent incidents around the county involving the police impacted us here in Lynchburg?*" to the group. He related the tremendous support the LPD has seen in recent weeks from the community and what that says about our community here and the relationship that has been forged between the LPD and the community. Copies of the LPD Community Engagement Activities/Programs were distributed to the group. He advised that Lynchburg is a really good community, but like every community, it's imperfect. He provided some statistical information regarding the number of officers assaulted in 2016 here in Lynchburg and the significant increase (41.2%) we have seen this year compared to the previous 7-year average. Certainly a concern.

Comments/Discussion from the group:

- Some people turn to crime because they have lost their jobs, lost hope, and are dangerous. Need to get these people out of poverty (significant issue in our community)
- Police Officers have a heightened sense of awareness of being attacked
- Some white officers are unfamiliar with the community which leads to perceptions and misunderstandings - things are getting better with this with the CAT, but more community interaction is needed in addition to the CAT
- Split decisions are made every day – it's important that police officers have a relationship with the community they serve
- Social media can polarize right away. We need to ensure we know the facts before we draw a conclusion based on limited information

- We are dealing with a myriad of social issues here
- Systemic – court fines, fees, could take years for people to get out of this
- When we get people working it will solve some problems
- Workforce Development has \$480,000, (Ben Bowman and Treney Tweedy)
- Economic opportunities are needed
- Partnerships needed to reach out to see what we can do to help folks
- Nationwide, a small percentage of officers who utilize poor judgment reflects upon the entire law enforcement profession – that is the reality of it
- It seems that officers are not held accountable for their actions when they do wrong
- We need to take info into the community and move forward
- Does LPD ask officers why they want to be a police officer before hiring them and ask them why they are leaving?

Major Swisher addressed turnover at LPD as well as LPD re-organization planned for January 2017.

Acting Major Ryan Zuidema responded that the LPD does conduct exit interviews. He also confirmed that all LPD officers are receiving Implicit Bias training. Pastor Camm attended this training and upon completion gave his perspective to the class.

Chief Diaz informed the group of progress the LPD has made with the group's input:

- Body Worn Camera Policy
- Raids on Line – online platform
- LPD Policy and Procedures are online
- Consistent feedback

Major Swisher advised the group that LPD now has 174 sworn officers. He provided information related to Lynchburg Drug Court. Major Swisher also provided very limited information related to the arrest of a VSP Trooper at Buffalo Wild Wings in late June. Information was provided regarding the upcoming 1-day Citizen's Academy on November 5th, as well as, the possibility of the group experiencing the FATS firearms simulator in the near future – possibly the September 12th meeting.

IV. Adjournment

Major Swisher adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Vicky West

Minutes approved by: KTS