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## **Recommendations of President Obama's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing** Lynchburg Police Department (LPD) Response in Navy

**Pillar 1: Building Trust and Legitimacy:** Procedural justice should be the guiding principle for both citizen-police interactions as well as for internal policies and practices in police agencies (e.g., involving employees in organizational change and revisions to disciplinary procedures).

- Police should focus on a number of trust-building activities, including emphasizing non-enforcement activities in communities and schools and increasing transparency through information sharing. They should also consider the potential consequences of crime fighting strategies for resident trust.
  - The LPD has been involved in dozens of community activities for many years. The list below includes some examples of activities we are currently involved in and have participated in during previous years.
    - Neighborhood Watch
    - Citizens Police Academy
    - Criminology Class at E.C Glass High School
    - One Community One Voice
    - Community Code Compliance Team
    - Lynchburg Loss Prevention Association
    - Business/Residential Security Assessments
    - College Cadet Program
    - Ride Along Program
    - South West Virginia Prevention Association
    - Presentations (Personal Safety and Know Your Rights)
    - Unity in Our Community Books and Badges – SRO
    - Salvation Army Christmas Kettle Campaign
    - Badges for Baseball and Basketball with the Boys and Girls Club
    - Badges and Barbers
    - Rape Aggression Defense
    - Car Seat Safety Checks- Traffic
    - Mental Health Association of Central Virginia
    - Commonwealth Autism Board
    - YWCA Advisory Board
    - Horizon Behavioral Health Board
    - Drug Court Advisory Board
    - The Lynchburg Optimist Club
    - Bicycle Safety Programs
    - The Exchange Club of Lynchburg
    - Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program Board



- CASA Advisory Board
- Blue Ridge Regional Safety Board
- All Lynchburg City Schools middle and high schools have a School Resource Officer (SRO) assigned. These SROs are not just with students during the school day – they cheer them on at basketball games, graduations, and provide guidance to school administrators when needed, even if they're not working.
- The LPD is committed to transparency. When we make a mistake, we will own it and create policy and procedure to ensure it does not happen again. We have had our policies online since 2017. When residents file a complaint, they receive notification informing them of the outcome.
- Our Community Action Team is committed to building trust with our residents and addressing non-emergency needs, such as neighborhood issues with a vacant building that individuals are using for criminal activity.
- The LPD is dedicated to Intelligence-Led Policing, which is a proactive data-driven strategy for crime reduction in our community.
- Agencies should track the community's level of trust through annual community surveys.
  - This is an area in which the LPD is working to improve. We plan to conduct annual community surveys going forward.
- Agencies should strive to be as diverse as possible with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and sexual orientation.
  - This is a priority for the LPD, however, we are woefully behind in this area. Currently, the LPD is 85% white. We need the community's help so that our department better reflects the diverse fabric of our city.
  - We are instituting a diversity committee in the department to help inform decisions going forward.
- Agencies should use residency incentive programs to encourage officers to reside in public housing to improve citizen-police exchanges and public safety.
  - This topic has been discussed in the past but the City has not approved any incentives.
  - Other discussions included a take-home car incentive for those employees living in the City, however, funding is needed for both of these options.
- Agencies should work to build trust in immigrant communities and decouple immigration enforcement from local policing.
  - The LPD acknowledges this is an area we need to improve. We are working to better engage our immigrant communities and have started filming our community videos in both Spanish and English. We also are discussing this



internally to determine how we can ensure all our residents feel comfortable calling us for help when they need it.

- As a local law enforcement agency, the LPD cannot and does not enforce federal immigration laws.

**Pillar 2: Policy and Oversight:** Police departments should strive to reduce discrimination and disparity both within the organization as well as in the actions of officers.

- Police organizations should have clear and consistent departmental policies guiding the use of force, and those policies need to be made public. These policies should also set clear parameters for the release of information to the public on these incidents.
  - LPD policies, including Use of Force, are on our website.
  - The LPD is working toward defining the release of this information with our Community Policing Advisory Group (CPAG).
- Police officers should be encouraged to use alternative tools in lieu of use of force when possible, and use of force training should include de-escalation techniques and alternatives to arrests or summons when appropriate.
  - The LPD has alternatives to arrest policy and train in many de-escalation procedures such as Crisis Intervention Team, tactical communications, and verbal judo.
  - However, we recognize this is an area for improvement and will have a standalone de-escalation training for all officers going forward.
- Agencies should refrain from using practices such as quotas for traffic or pedestrian stops, tickets, and summonses that are not directly related to improving public safety (such as for generating revenue).
  - The LPD does not and has never had quotas.
- Incidents involving suspect death or officer-involved shootings should be subject to both external and internal oversight. These oversight mechanisms include, but are not limited to, external review boards, serious incident review boards, and independent investigation and prosecution.
  - The Virginia State Police works every officer involved shooting/suspect death.
  - The LPD Internal Investigation team investigates every officer involved shooting/suspect death.
  - The LPD has reviewed each of these with CPAG, showed video, and provided information on where we needed to improve or we were wrong.
  - We are working with CPAG to develop an external review board that will supplement our current review process.



- Police departments should also implement non-punitive peer review in situations involving critical incidents, sometimes referred to as “near misses” or “sentinel events.” More generally, departments should include some form of civilian oversight, which should be defined both in form and structure by the needs of the community they serve.
  - Again, the LPD is working with CPAG to determine the best path forward for an external review board that will supplement our current review process.
  - We have a peer support system that officers can utilize when needed.
  - All critical incidents are debriefed with the involved officers to identify areas for improvement.
- Police departments should collect and maintain data on all incidents involving the use of force. Data like these can be analyzed and help provide context to police action.
  - The LPD collects Use of Force data and provides this information to the Virginia State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. We have reported Use of Force information to the FBI since 2019, and are one of only 40% of all departments across the country that voluntarily reports this information to the FBI.
  - We are exploring how best to provide this data on regular basis to our community going forward. We are currently working on a new website that will have a page dedicated to providing this information.
- Law enforcement agencies should create policies and procedures for policing mass demonstrations that employ a continuum of managed tactical resources that are designed to minimize the appearance of a military operation and avoid using provocative tactics and equipment that undermine civilian trust.
  - It is critical to balance appearance with officer safety. During the riots the week of May 31, three officers were injured and others were shot at both in a vehicle and near Miller Park.
  - Whenever safe and practical, demonstrations are managed by uniformed patrol officers deployed in their day-to-day uniform and related equipment (as demonstrated over the past several weeks, after the first two nights of violent activity).

**Pillar 3: Technology and Social Media:** The federal government should develop national standards and guidance to address best practices, constitutionality, and privacy concerns surrounding police technologies. Local police agencies should consider these national standards, as well as local needs, in technology adoption.

- The federal government should specifically expand the development and evaluation of less-lethal weapons for police.



- Less lethal options that the LPD currently uses include:
  - Taser
  - Pepper Spray (OC)
  - 40mm sponge rounds
  - Long Range Acoustical Device creates distance and time to avoid using weapons
- Over the past five years, the LPD has spent an increasing amount of time negotiating with individuals and using less-lethal force. Examples include:
  - McVeigh Road: 20+ hours
  - Jefferson Ridge Parkway: 10+ hours
  - Birchwood Apartments: 4+ hours
  - Jackson Street: 5+ hours
- Police should engage the public when developing policies for new technologies and evaluate technologies using input from the community and from personnel throughout their agencies. Additionally, police should adopt model policies and best practices for community engagement using technologies like social media and the internet.
  - The LPD created its Body-Worn Camera (BWC) Policy in consultation with CPAG. The Department of Justice gave this policy a perfect score after reviewing it and other agencies have used it as a model.
  - Last year, the LPD hired a Community Relations Coordinator to tell our story through several channels, including social media.
  - We are creating a new website that will be easy to navigate and will provide additional capabilities for our residents.
  - Other technology we have implemented includes a new in-car camera system that syncs with BWCs, automatic vehicle locators, GPS, and Taser deployments that track electronically when downloaded.
  - The LPD also has new internal affairs software and an early intervention system to better track potential issues with officers.
  - The LPD has been a nationally accredited law enforcement agency through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) since 1989. All LPD policies are reviewed and approved through this organization on a regular basis.
- Law enforcement agencies should review and consider the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) Body Worn Camera Toolkit to assist in implementing body-worn cameras (BWCs).
  - When the LPD implemented its BWC policy, we followed these guidelines.



**Pillar 4: Community Policing and Crime Reduction:** Collaborating with multiple individuals and organizations to “co-produce” public safety.

- Infusing community policing throughout the police organization.
  - Community Policing has always been the backbone of our department. From bike patrols to our Community Action Team, understanding the needs of our community is what drives the LPD.
  - Our officers are encouraged to get out into the community to know the residents on their beats when they are not on calls.
  - LPD members are involved with a number of organizations in the community as board members, coaches, and mentors.
  
- Ensuring all members of society—particularly those who are vulnerable—are treated with dignity and respect;
  - We train and re-train our officers in Fair and Impartial Policing and expect dignity and respect in all interactions with the community.
  - Out of 300,000 documented interactions over the past five years, the LPD has just 205 complaints. Of those 205 complaints, 54 were generated internally. This means that only .05% of all interactions with our residents resulted in someone outside the LPD filing a complaint against an officer.
  - Officers use force in less than 0.1% of all interactions.
  - We currently have about 100 employees trained through our Crisis Intervention Team and will send additional staff through training when it resumes.
  - The LPD worked with Horizon Behavioral Health to apply for a federal grant that would embed a mental health professional with an officer to answer calls for service that involve an individual in mental health crisis. We will hear back about this grant in the fall.
  
- Reducing the marginalization of at-risk youth and ensuring youth have a voice in community processes.
  - The LPD is involved with many organizations that address this item, including:
    - Boys and Girls Club
    - Jubilee
    - Big Brothers Big Sisters
    - SRO program
    - YOVASO (Heritage High)
  - Additionally, we participated in student and community meetings at E.C. Glass earlier this year to hear from our youth.



- Reducing law enforcement involvement in school discipline and enhancing school, community, and youth-led responses.
  - The LPD instituted a Memorandum of Understanding with Lynchburg City Schools several years ago to address this need.

**Pillar 5: Training and Education:** Include more community input and engagement into police training and integrate leadership training throughout officers' careers.

- Integrate new training into existing curricula, including modules on crisis intervention and responding to mentally ill individuals; implicit bias and improving social interactions; addiction; policing in a democratic society; and responding to diverse communities, in particular minority, LGBTQ, Muslim, and immigrant communities.
  - Each of these topics are covered in trainings such as Crisis Intervention Team, Fair and Impartial Policing as well as during the basic academy and once every two years for the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).
  - The LPD is committed to implementing a co-responder method involving a mental health professional when appropriate funding is available.
  - We had planned to have a recruiting booth at Hill City Pride event that was cancelled.
  - We are preparing a standalone LGBTQ policy using best practices and guidance from other departments.
- Incentivize and encourage higher education for officers.
  - The City had this incentive many years ago, but discontinued it in the 1990s.
  - The LPD does allow education points for promotion to certain ranks. Higher education is required for promotion at certain ranks.
  - The City does offer tuition assistance. We have also considered a repayment program of student loans within the LPD, but funding is an issue.

**Pillar 6: Officer Wellness and Safety:** Law enforcement agencies should promote wellness and safety at all levels of the organization, as well as regularly collect and analyze data on officer deaths, injuries, “near misses,” and other measures of health and wellness that supports this goal.

- Shift lengths should be scientifically supported to reduce fatigue and stress that can negatively impact performance.
  - Based on many years of trials in the department, 12-hour rotating shifts have proven the most desirable for work and family life.
  - Moving to 8- or 10-hour shifts requires significantly more personnel to staff.



- Law enforcement agencies should promote well-established safety measures such as wearing ballistic vests and seat belts, having easy access to tactical first aid kits and first aid training, and using vehicle collision prevention measures.
  - The LPD has these safety measures in place:
    - Mandatory vest policy based on assignment
    - Mandatory seat belt policy
    - All officers have tourniquets
    - DCJS requires all officers receive first aid training/CPR
    - A policy on vehicle pursuits that stresses both citizen and officer safety
    - The LPD has implemented a wellness program that includes physical wellness, emotional wellness, and financial wellness. Additionally, all officers are required to complete annual mental health assessments.