

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
POLICE CHIEF'S ADVISORY BOARD**

February 17th, 2022

7:00 P.M.

Chairman Dan Henderson brought the meeting to order with the following present: Police Chief Marshall Craft, H. William Mulvaney, Jeff James, Kimberly McGill, Debbie Hall, and Tesha Miller.

Chairman Henderson then called for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 18th, 2021, meeting. Mr. James made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 18th, 2021 meeting. Ms. Miller seconded the motion; the motion so passed with all those present voting in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Henderson presented New Business Item #1: Community Engagement Opportunities.

Chief Craft began a discussion on a project of interest involving community engagement using the new electric motorcycles and the hauling trailer. He explained his ideas for creating a community program that involves bringing the pull-behind trailer to different locations in the City and offering activities for the community to participate in, alongside the officers. He expressed interest in a theme, or logo for the trailer that would help create familiarity for community members and asked the committee members if they had any suggestions on a theme or design for the wrap of the trailer.

Mrs. McGill suggested involving local youth in the theme and design, allowing them to feel involved and have some ownership in the creation of the program.

Mrs. Hall agreed and suggested the Boys & Girls Club could help create a youth activity to help come up with a theme.

Mrs. Miller added that it might be good to expand beyond the Boys & Girls Club so the youth of all ages can participate in the processes. She noted the importance of pushing the program message to all age groups.

Mrs. Hall then suggested reaching out to the art programs at the local middle or high schools; Chief Craft noted this was something the School Resource Officer could look to initiate.

Chief Craft noted the time constraints for this project and explained the proposal would need to be completed by April. He went on to explain proposed pop-up events throughout the city, which would have a focus on drug prevention.

The group discussed a possible theme, tagline, and design for the outreach program overall.

Chairman Henderson presented New Business Item #2: Traffic safety Concerns.

Chief Craft explained the Pedestrian Safety Ordinance that is set to go in front of the Council at the next meeting on February 22nd. This would be the second reading and subsequent adoption if approved.

He noted the importance of this ordinance, especially considering the increase in vehicle crashes due to interruptions in the flow of traffic. These factors also create an increased risk of bodily harm for pedestrians. Chief Craft explained the Police Departments' prior efforts to rehabilitate those in the homeless community, specifically those using panhandling as a resource. He noted their disinterest in seeking help through community resources, forcing the department to implement these kinds of ordinances.

Those present went on to discuss other concerns throughout the city regarding speed and traffic enforcement, including traffic concerns on Virginia Avenue, the intersection of Herring Run Road, and the exit lane from Wawa onto Tharp Road.

Chief Craft also noted the Police Department's need for investment in speed enforcement technology for areas like Virginia Avenue, and Stein Highway near the newly constructed Amazon Distribution Facility.

With no other questions or comments, Chairman Henderson presented New Business Item #3: Delaware State CNRR (Center for Neighborhood Revitalization & Research) Recruitment/Retention Partnership "Pilot Program".

Chief Craft explained this partnership with Delaware State University is important in the efforts to increase diversity with the police force and to collect useful information to establish a program for recruitment and retention of officers. He noted the cost associated with training new officers and the effects of officer retirement or recruitment to other forces. He also noted that the department has recently hired three certified police officers from other departments. This trend is uncommon and could be due to the Seaford Police Department's opportunities for advancement and training, along with policy changes and advancements in technology. Those factors also help initiate positive changes in the Seaford community.

OLD BUSINESS

Chief Craft Presented Old Business Item #1: Diversion Program Update. He announced to the committee that the City has reached the final stage of approval for the Diversion Program which will be signed this evening by himself and witnessed by Chairman Henderson. This program through the State of Delaware assists with substance abuse education and counseling to divert offenders away from the criminal justice process.

Chairman Henderson noted the committee had touched on the other old business items in prior discussions and asked if there was anything else Chief Craft would like to add. Chief Craft gave an update on the timeframe for electric motorcycle training.

Chairman Henderson noted Ms. Miller had brought up concerns regarding police perception at the last meeting and asked if she had any comments or questions, she would like to discuss for Old Business Item #2: Discussion of Perception Change. Ms. Miller stated her concern is not solely with the police department but the overall perception of the City of Seaford. She expressed her concern with outside residents feeling the city is an unsafe area, and how the media drastically affects perception. Ms. Miller noted that while positive changes are happening, it is a slow process and a lot to combat after so many years of that negative perception.

Chairman Henderson added how often news outlets report crime near the area and outside Seaford city limits, without giving thought to how that can affect the perception of the city itself. He suggested if anyone has a relationship with someone in the local media to suggest increased specifics on the location of criminal activity and encourage positive reporting on the City.

Chief Craft explained the difficulties the department has in promoting positive change in the community. The department is compelled to report criminal activity and follow up on that activity for community safety purposes. However, there isn't an assigned person responsible for a continued presence on social media or to reach out for positive press opportunities.

REMINDER OF MEETINGS

1. Next Police Chief's Advisory Board, Thursday, May 19, 2022, at City Hall starting at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Henderson called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Mulvaney made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. James seconded the motion; the motion so passed with all those present voting in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.