

POLICE AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, 127 Walnut Avenue, Ardmore, PA 19003
November 28, 2016
6:30 p.m.

The Police and Community Relations Committee meeting was held on Monday, November 28, 2016, at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Ardmore.

In attendance:

<u>Committee and Police Staff:</u>	<u>Members of the public in attendance:</u>
Superintendent Michael McGrath Commissioner Steven Lindner Commissioner Scott Zelov Commissioner Brian Gordon Captain Frank Thomas Captain Gene Pasternak Christine Dixon-Anderson Rev. Carlos Bounds Rev. Albert G. Davis, Jr. Linda Jackson Rose Johnson Maryam Phillips Marie Thornton Robin Thomas	Crystal Blunt Adrian Seltzer Heidi Scheer

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Christine Dixon-Anderson. Christine went over the agenda and format for the meeting.

Minutes of the October 24, 2016 Meeting

The minutes from the October 24, 2016 meeting were approved, on motion by Rev. Davis and second by Marie Thornton. So moved.

Superintendent's Report

Police and Community Relations Consultant - Superintendent McGrath gave an update on the Community Policing Consultant. Major Ben's Consulting Agency will approach the project in phases. Major Ben has met with the Township Manager, Assistant Township Manager and Superintendent. The first phase will include two focus group meetings open to all township

residents. There will be 15 people in each group, and interested residents are asked to email the Township Manager by December 14th. If more than 15 people sign up for either focus group, a decision on who to include will be based on location of residence in the township and reasons for wishing to participate. PCRC members are welcome to join either focus group, more as observers than participants since Major Ben will have a separate meeting with the PCRC. The focus groups will be held in January at a location to be determined.

The second phase will include meeting with the PCRC, followed by a review of its purpose. Policy and procedures within both the PCRC and LMPD will also be examined.

During the third phase Major Ben will review all the materials and data collected to prepare a report for the LM Board of Commissioners. Work is expected to finish within six months.

Race for Peace Summit – Superintendent McGrath reported that the “Race for Peace” Summit, a region-wide police and community engagement forum, was held on October 29, 2016 at 48th Street Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, 5539 Vine Street, Philadelphia. The summit was well attended by the public and very well attended by area police department representatives. The agenda included opportunities for good discussion, and open forum, role play presentations and refreshments while smaller groups interacted with each other. Since the summit there has been a basketball game at the Darby Community Center. More summits will be held in other locations and the Upper Merion Police Department expressed interest in hosting the next one in Valley Forge. Adrian Seltzer agreed the role play was very well done and suggested the Department of Transportation should require something similar in Driver’s Ed courses. Captain Thomas mentioned LMPD is working with Lower Merion School District already to include LMPD in their Driver’s Ed courses.

Lower Merion Report It App – Supt. McGrath reminded everyone about the Township app and encouraged its use. Anonymous reports are possible.

Protest – Lower Merion received an anonymous tip regarding a protest that was held on Lancaster Avenue before the LM Board of Commissioners meeting, coordinated by two Bryn Mawr College students. Notices were posted on Facebook and a flyer was distributed. A counter-protest also developed, but the police handled the situation and kept the two groups apart and there was no disruption to traffic. Rev. Davis stated the PCRC would have liked to be given heads up as we were receiving calls about the protest and were initially unaware of it. The Supt. stated there were various reports on a few days’ notice and it was unclear how large the event would be and also suggested the PCRC keep LMPD informed of news we received.

Police Recruitment – LM received 290 applications. Two hundred thirty-three people showed up for the written test and 150 passed that portion. Fifty-four applicants passed the oral exam, and 46 ultimately participated in the physical agility test. Thirty-six people passed all levels of testing and will proceed to be considered for employment. Breakdown of applicants:

178 White (76%)
39 Black (17%) (up from last time)
10 Hispanic (4%) (down from last time)

2 Asian (1%) (down from last time)
4 Other (2%)

84% Male
16% Female (down from last time)

Lower Merion will hire five officers in January 2017. The total of thirty-six applicants passing all phases of the Civil Service controlled process was possible due to expanding the number of applicants selected at the written test stage. The written test includes questions designed to learn about the applicant's judgment as well as skill sets. The ultimate goal of the multi-phase testing process is to avoid hiring people who would have an adverse impact on the community due to unsuitable character traits and insufficient skill sets to be a positive addition to the police department.

Public Comment

Commissioner Gordon mentioned the Race For Peace was a very positive event, as was the basketball game. He also followed up with Captain Joseph Bologna of the 19th district of Philadelphia and learned his new recruits must walk the local beats before being assigned to a car.

Crystal Blunt requested that meeting announcements be emailed earlier. She received notice of the meeting today. The township will follow up to ensure the meeting announcements are sent out earlier.

Old Business – None.

New Business – Maryam Phillips asked how the results from the National Citizens Survey will be distributed as the data collected regarding local policing would be of interest to our committee. Commissioner Lindner said the results would be released in January 2017.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Monday, January 23, 2017, at 6:30 p.m., at Saints Memorial Baptist Church, 47 S. Warner Avenue, Bryn Mawr, PA (location to be confirmed).

There being no further business, this public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Members of the PCRC met in executive session to discuss ongoing issues in the area.

There being no further business, Linda Jackson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Superintendent McGrath. So moved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.