

POLICE AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Saints Memorial Baptist Church, 47 S. Warner Avenue, Bryn Mawr, PA
January 23, 2017
6:30 p.m.

The Police and Community Relations Committee meeting was held on Monday, January 23, 2017, at Saints Memorial Baptist Church, Bryn Mawr, PA.

In attendance:

<u>Committee and Police Staff:</u>	<u>Members of the public in attendance:</u>
Superintendent Michael McGrath Commissioner Scott Zelov Commissioner Brian Gordon Captain Frank Thomas Captain Gene Pasternak Christine Dixon-Anderson Linda Jackson Rose Johnson Tom McDaniel Maryam Phillips Marie Thornton Robin Thomas Officer Josephine Murray	Major Ben Brooks Dr. Barbara Collins Pam Pillsbury Michael Brown Art Levy Muneera Walker Crystal Blunt Pastor Michael Stitt Marifa Winfree

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 November 28, 2016 Meeting

The minutes from the November 28, 2016 meeting were approved, on motion by Rose Johnson and second by Linda Jackson. So moved.

Superintendent's Report

Police and Community Relations Consultant - Superintendent McGrath introduced the Community Policing Consultant, Major Benjamin Brooks and his team, consisting of Dr. Barbara Collins and Pam Pillsbury.

Major Brooks told those present that he is now on the second phase, which includes speaking to the members of the PCRC during the executive session of the meeting. He has already had three focus group sessions with the public. He is scheduled to meet with a group of police officers on January 25th. He stated that he will also meet with Township Commissioners on February 1st and February 8th.

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. He has also scheduled a meeting with the community focusing on the youth. The session is on January 31st at the Ardmore Avenue Community Center and is titled “Law and the Community.” He wants to get the word out via the committee and especially would like for parents and youth to be present.

Race for Peace Summit – Superintendent McGrath reported that the “Race for Peace” Committee will be having a meet and greet at the King of Prussia Mall in front of JC Penney Court on Saturday, January 28, 2017, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. There will be representatives from Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties.

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)

Of those who passed the entire process were 26 white males, four African American males, four white females, one African American female and one Hispanic male. Lower Merion hired two officers, one African-American and one white male who started the Police Academy on January 23rd. There will be hiring more officers in early February. These candidates are already academy certified.

Coffee With a Cop – Two Coffee with a Cop events will be held on the same day on January 26th. The first one will be at Saxby’s Coffee Shop from 9 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. The second will be held at the Ardmore House from 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Citizen’s Police Academy – Will be having another class beginning March 2 – April 20th.

Public Comment

Commissioner Gordon asked what can we do to try to diversify the Department. Supt. McGrath thanked the Board of Commissioners for hiring people and paying for them to attend the police academy. Most police departments require a person to already have their Act 120 certificate. Christine Anderson said that members of this committee have gone with officers of this department to job fairs, local college fairs (particularly colleges with high minority attendance) to help to recruit minorities. The department has done significant advertising through minority newspapers, social media and websites like monster.com, google, the Township's website, etc. Officer Murray said that she and other officers have been to many college and job fairs. She said that when they connect with some people who are interested and do not have 60 college credits, they encourage the people to stay in school to get their 60 credits and tell people to market and self-sponsor themselves.

Crystal Blunt asked for a breakdown of minority officers. Superintendent McGrath said that they did not have the breakdown available for tonight's meeting; however, there is one female Sergeant and there is one African-American Detective. Mrs. Blunt also asked if cultural training is done only one time or is it ongoing. Captain Thomas said that it is ongoing. Last year, the entire department, including civilians, attended a one-day sensitivity training course.

Michael Brown commended the Superintendent and the department for the fine job they did on getting the duty manual online. He asked when will the entire manual be done? Superintendent McGrath stated that the Department is working on it.

Commissioner Gordon stated that he went to an NAACP meeting in Philadelphia and the speaker was excellent and perhaps the committee could have him speak at one of their meetings.

Christine Anderson stated that the Civil Service Commission has three active members, one of which is an African-American male. They have two alternates and she is one of the alternates. Superintendent McGrath said that when a position opens, people can feel free to apply. The position is for a six-year period.

Muneera Walker said that it would be helpful, when the Police Department is having something pertaining to the community, if they would let the School District know so they could advertise it through all of their schools. She said that she would volunteer to make sure that happens.

Art Levy asked where the signs that say "We Support Our Police" come from. Superintendent McGrath said it was done through Community Watch and, if people are interested, they can contact that organization. Neither the township nor the police department funds this community based effort.

Crystal Blunt asked how does the police department know that the officers are using what they are taught through training? Superintendent McGrath said that each platoon has three Sergeants/Supervisors who are responsible for them and, weekly, the Sergeants will randomly

pick a camera stop video and analyze them. He also said that the police department thoroughly investigates complaints and they receive many thank you letters from citizens as well.

Old Business – None.

New Business – Maryam Phillips spoke about a study entitled “Behind the Badge,” which just released this month by the Pew Research Center and surveyed 7,900 law enforcement officers to learn their views on their jobs in general and specifically with respect to recent fatal encounters. She thought that the PCRC could pull out some interesting questions or survey results to use them as potential discussion starters for community forums.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Monday, February 27, 2017 at 6:30 PM at Bethel A.M.E. in Ardmore, located at 163 Sheldon Lane. The public is invited.

There being no further business, this public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Members of the PCRC met in executive session to discuss ongoing issues in the area. Major Brooks and his team, consisting of Dr. Barbara Collins and Pam Pillsbury led a focus group discussion of the goals and mission of the PCRC committee as part of his police community relations project for the township.

There being no further business, this portion of the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.