

HPCAC Public Meeting Minutes – 11 Jan 2022

Call to Order

Rollcall

- Place 1: Edwin Nunez – Mayoral Appointee **PRESENT**
- Place 2: David Little – Mayoral Appointee **PRESENT**
- Place 3: Bekah Schmidt – Mayoral Appointee **ABSENT**
- Place 4: Willie Love – District 1 Appointee **PRESENT**
- Place 5: Gregory J. Bentley – District 1 Appointee **ABSENT**
- Place 6: Akeem Davis- District 2 Appointee **ABSENT**
- Place 7: Jonathan Rossow – District 2 Appointee **PRESENT**
- Place 8: Vicki Guerrieri – District 3 Appointee **PRESENT**
- Place 9: John Olshefski – District 3 Appointee **ABSENT**
- Place 10: Pamela Caruso – District 4 Appointee **ABSENT**
- Place 11: Shelly McCulley – District 4 Appointee **ABSENT**
- Place 12: Wiley Day Jr. – District 5 Appointee **PRESENT**
- Place 13: John Reitzell – District 5 Appointee **PRESENT**

Reading of HPCAC Vision & Mission Statements

- **VISION** - *HPCAC is a bridge connecting police and the community*
- **MISSION** - *To promote trust between the community and the Huntsville Police Department through education and thoughtful dialogue that drives continuous improvement of public safety for all citizens*

Welcome

- COVID protocols – Masks preferred, social distancing, don't stay if you feel sick
- New meeting format to promote relationships, presentation of facts, discussion
 - Will post meeting minutes to our website
- Restroom locations

Old Business – Report on any on-going HPCAC work and member engagement w/community

- Nothing to report

Table Icebreaker

Discussion Topic – HPD Recruiting & HR Practices

- Capt. Jonathan Ware presenting via Zoom
- Small Group Breakout for discussion
 - Table Facilitator: HPCAC Member
 - At least 1 HPCAC member & HPD officer per table
 - Discuss what was presented, ask questions, provide recommendations

Questions for Follow-up by HPD

- When HPD recruits police officers from outside Huntsville (lateral transfers), how does HPD vet the candidate for toxic behaviors?
 - Do other police departments put a “don’t hire tag” on officers they fire?
 - Are lateral transfers subjected to the same vetting process as a new recruit?
 - What background information is acquired on officers transferring into HPD?
- Does HPD have or can it produce a graphic that shows the diversity make-up of HPD across gender, race/ethnicity, college graduates, years of police experience?
- Why is college education preferred but not required?
 - Is there a financial aid program available to help officers earn a college degree?
 - Are there non-financial incentives for officers to earn a college degree?
- Request greater understanding of HPD’s continuing education program.
 - How is it structured?
 - How are the 40 hours of continuing education standardized?
 - How is continuing education incentivized?
- The presentation mentioned that psychological testing is performed on prospective recruits by the State of Alabama.
 - Is testing administered by a third-party contractor?
 - Does the testing administrator / entity determine what questions are asked or does the State dictate what is asked?
 - What are the certification credentials of the testing administrator / entity?
- How do you assess for emotional intelligence? Is this a part of the psychological testing?
- Does HPD perform psychological testing during police academy training to assess changes in psychological states / mental fitness?
- What does HPD do to re-evaluate an officer’s mental health throughout their career?
 - What does HPD do to help officers combat stress and maintain good mental health?
- What does HPD do to encourage officers to interact with the precinct they serve?
- What does HPD do to retain high-quality officers?
- How does HPD’s training standards compare to major cities of similar size outside of Alabama?
- How is paid v. unpaid administrative leave determined with respect to officer discipline?
 - What standard or policy is applied based on severity of offense?
- How does HPD reinforce what was learned during academy training during the first few years on duty? How do you mitigate a “Training Day” (the movie) scenario?
- What training do HPD officers receive on U-VISAs (crime victim VISAs)? **[HPCAC Chair comment: This question is outside of the topic discussed for this meeting but is a good question.]**

Possible Recommendations to Carry Forward into Executive Meeting

- Place a HPCAC member on the officer panel interviewing new recruits and transfers. This gives the community a seat on the interview panel via the HPCAC.

- Develop police education curriculum in Spanish to attract Hispanic community to policing jobs.
- Fund full-time Spanish translators to be available on demand during the entire day (or during high-demand shifts). They would be quite helpful to handle situations where police and Hispanic people interact. Many of these people come from countries where the police take advantage of them. They think something similar will happen to them. That makes them quite nervous and confused. Police should understand the reasons why they act that way. These issues should be incorporated in the official training of new police officers.
- Citizens would like to get to know the officers that patrol their communities better. It would be of great help if some activity is held that allows the policemen and neighbors to mingle and get to know each other. This citizen proposed a barbecue cookout. Other types of activities should also be contemplated to enhance the contact between officers on patrol in the neighborhoods and the people living there. **[Comment: HPCAC understands the HPD hosts many events for this purpose. However, this comment might be reflective of a need to either increase publicity of such events or rethink how such events are held or both.]**
- One citizen indicated meeting like the HPCAC Public Forum usually examine problems between officers and the community. The citizen requested more attention paid to problems with higher-level leadership within HPD. **[Comment: HPCAC Chair addressed this comment by describing the interaction the committee has with HPD leadership outside of the public forums and that HPCAC reports quarterly to City Council as an independent body. Further, the review of June 2020 protests demonstrates HPCAC's independence in reviewing and evaluating HPD performance.]**

Public Meeting Feedback/Recommendations

- Provide Spanish translation of Press Releases, Meeting Minutes & Presentations
 - Note City of Huntsville webpage content can be converted to Spanish by clicking on the Google "Select Language" toggle in the upper right-hand corner; posted content (such as meeting minutes & presentations) still requires translation
 - **Recommend committee approval**

Final Notes

- Next Meeting: 8 Mar – District 2 – HPD Internal Affairs Demystified
- Stay tuned – HPCAC Webpage & Facebook
- Want to discuss a specific topic? Contact us! Are there any topic proposals tonight?
- Encouragement to citizens to participate in the Police Ride Along Program

Adjourn Meeting