

City of Biddeford
Biddeford Police Advisory Committee

April 25, 2023 6:30 PM Biddeford Police Dept.

Meeting Notes

1. Call to Order: 6:30 pm

Attendees: Chief JoAnne Fisk (Interim), Carolyn Southwick, Fred Olson, Andrew Barrs, Kelly Seiler

2. Briefing on Selected Topical Areas

2.a. Staffing updates

- Chief Fisk announced the promotion of Officer Steven Gorton to Interim Deputy Chief of Police
- BPD continues to recruit for open positions, in addition to traditional advertising, BPD is:
 - posting on social media to encourage interest and spread awareness
 - sending Officers who recently graduated from law enforcement/criminal justice programs and colleges back to visit current students of those institutions and share information about opportunities
 - outreaching to recently retired officers who are interested in working limited hours

2.b. Discuss current status of the Chief / Deputy Chief positions

- With the timeline for formally hiring a Chief of Police somewhat unknown, JoAnne Fisk will continue to serve as Interim Chief for the foreseeable future.
- The promotion of Officer Steven Gorton to Interim Deputy Chief will allow for improved workload balance; until now, Chief Fisk has been performing both roles.
- Chief Fisk will move forward with several initiatives to benefit BPD operations as well as provide growth opportunities for current officers and attract new talent, these are:
 - Securing a specialized ventilation hood used in the testing for the presence of fentanyl – this will reduce reliance on testing currently conducted in Augusta which is backlogged approximately 1 year, and improve safety conditions for officers/BPD staff
 - Apply for a grant to fund the use of a K9 and train an officer as handler – some of the benefits of adding a K9 to the department were described by Chief Fisk as improving search and rescue operations, support drug detection, and engage in community activities

- Apply for a grant through the Department of Transportation (railroad) to fund the use of a drone – the DOT provides grants for drones under the condition that the BPD would commit at least 30% of the drones use to monitoring the railroad tracks, given the high rate of injury and death in the area due to railroad trespassing

2.c. Downtown cameras

- Group discussion regarding the origin of the request to add cameras in 2022 beginning with the former Chief and current City Manager, and the fact that due to a miscommunication, the decision regarding the use of funds for this installation did not follow the typically process; funds were not yet released as of the date of this meeting due to Chief Fisk is awaiting detailed billing information from the installer, Minuteman
- Cameras have been in use in Biddeford for many years, the request for additional cameras was due in part to the growing use of Main Street
- Group discussion at length regarding concepts of and tensions between privacy and surveillance, and how recorded data is stored and utilized by BPD
- Chief Fisk provided a handout for informational/discussion purposes: Title 17-A of the Maine Criminal Code, Part 2 of Chapter 21, section 511: Violation of Privacy

3. **Public Safety Committee Items**

- Report out on The Street Project screening (a file about the fight for safer streets held on 4/13/23 at Banded Brewing in Biddeford) – Chief Fisk and Carolyn Southwick attended the screening; both noted it was an interesting discussion and highlighted the need to design communities with more regard to non-vehicular transportation needs.
- Group discussion regarding private property and how it must be posted, out of concern that improper posting may result in an individual unwittingly trespassing and potentially being harmed. This matter was of particular concern in light of recent instances across the nation of citizens being shot and seriously injured or killed for actions such as turning around in someone’s driveway or ringing the doorbell of the wrong home.

4. **Other Business**

- Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 23, 2023 at 6pm, location: Biddeford Police Department

8. **Adjourn: 7:40pm**