

Biddeford Police Advisory Committee meeting
February 28, 2023

6:02 – meetings called to order by Chairwoman Carolyn Southwick

Present: Chairwoman Carolyn Southwick
 Chad Barrs, Vice Chair
 Kelly Seiler
 Fred Olson
 George Sutherland
 JoAnne Fisk- Staff
 Steven Gorton-Staff

- Open forum: Any newly raised concerns from the community?
 - No items to discuss
- Discuss use of social media
 - BPD disclosure of blotters/arrests
 - Decision to post daily blotters and ‘significant’ arrests to get ahead of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests by the media, which requires significant administrative resources that are better used serving the community
 - Certain information cannot be released due to restrictions/laws around privacy
 - Goal is to diversify postings to avoid only sharing enforcement activity and highlight staff in order to better acquaint the community with officers and other staff, including education, skills and expertise, and well as educational postings about safety (e.g.: avoiding scams, etc.)
 - BPAC presence on Social Media
 - Discussed posting a highlight of BPAC members on Facebook to raise awareness of the group and encourage communication
 - The BPAC’s presence on Facebook lead to a conversation about the purpose of the BPAC and how best to interact with the community
 - Group discussed the experience of the Ward meetings, whether they will reoccur (currently unknown), and other avenues to inform the community of the existence and purpose of the BPAC
 - Discussed other awareness opportunities including have a ‘booth’ or table at public events
 - National Night Out in August, Memorial Day Parade, others TBD as they are planned
 - Heart of Biddeford – involved in numerous community events
 - Memorial Day Parade
 - Article in Biddeford Beat
 - Idea to have t-shirts made or something that can identify BPAC members in public
- Discuss recent national events and BPD use of ‘specialty units’

- BPD does not currently have 'street crimes' unit such as those recently highlighted in Memphis, TN
- Goal of BPD is community engagement through relationship building and establishing an positive rapport as much as possible with community members
- When incidents of excessive force and abuse of power occur nationally, it may trigger training, informal discussion among staff which is encouraged by leadership; anecdotally officers tend to take initiative to understand how to prevent such occurrences locally
- Recruitment and retention
 - BPD has several retirements coming up and is recruiting new officers, but struggling to find candidates – also noted as a national issue as people are less interested in law enforcement roles
 - The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement (CALEA) does require certain employment criteria be met and this does present a barrier to hiring but ultimately helps ensure a higher quality of officer
 - Other accredited communities facing staffing challenges have used increased salary to attract applicants – this is not sustainable long term and Biddeford city leadership have indicated a lack of support for this approach for BPD
 - Discussed the impacts of staffing levels on public safety and response times, and how the growth of Biddeford as a destination will increase the need for public safety resources (officer, administrative staff)
 - As of BPAC is to brainstorm ideas for promoting opportunities at BPD and bring concerns to city leadership
- For next meeting – discuss status of the search for Chief

Adjourn 7:07pm