

Oxford Police Community Relations and Review Commission Report
Thursday, August 15th, 2019

Pat Meade, Chair
Deirdre DeLong, Vice-Chair

Amber Franklin
Jonathan Joseph
Egon Kraan

Larry Nadler
Aimin Wang

The PCRRC was established in December of 2015. The goals of the commission are as follows: 1) Improve communication between the community and the Oxford Police Department, 2) Increase police accountability and credibility with the public, 3) Create a fair and impartial complaint process, and 4) Advise the Chief of Police, City Manager, and City Council about department policies and procedures regarding matters that affect the public, and public perception, of the OPD.

This report is a summary of the meetings held by the PCRRC over the past year.

Meetings and topics August 2018 - April 2019

Date: August 16th, 2018 7pm

Location: Oxford Municipal Building

Two new members, Larry Nadler and Egon Kraan, were introduced and welcomed onto the PCRRC. Mr. Nadler, a retired professor, has a background in conflict resolution and was Chair of Miami University Disciplinary Board for 9 years. Mr. Kraan conducts predictive analytics for Care Source. The Commission discussed and approved its 2017/2018 annual report to City Council. Chief Jones informed the Commission of OPD's move its new location on 101 E High Street. Other topics presented by Chief Jones included the addition of a School Resource Officer at the Talawanda High School (in addition to the SRO at the middle school); the institution of the Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) system, to address meter feeding and encourage parking turnover; plans to use a pay to park app; and the purchase of 3 new cruisers by OPD.

PCRRC members also discussed the arrival of Lime/Byrd scooters to Oxford and on Miami's campus; topics of interest for future PCRRC meetings; the possibility of inviting Sara Williams, Miami's director of community/off campus relations, to a Commission meeting; and improving outreach with students of color.

Date: November 15th, 2018 7pm

Location: Oxford Courthouse

Lt. Robinson of the Oxford Police Department presented an update on traffic stop data collection. The Bias-Free Policing standard of the Ohio Collaborative certification process mandates officers collect data of the gender and race of self-initiated traffic

stops from trusted sources, but should not be required to request the information from the contact. In preparation for the 2020 requirement for departments with fewer than 35 sworn officers, OPD sent 5 officers to training. The challenges of collecting, validating and comparing that information were discussed, as was the importance of perception by the officers.

A possible re-organization of the commission was discussed, but the decision was to delay the selection of Chair and Vice-Chair until after the 2019 appointments to the Commission. As their terms are expiring in 2019, Aimin Wang, Deirdre DeLong, Pat Meade, and Jonathan Joseph must either re-apply to the Commission or attempt to find a replacement. It was also decided that all members should assist in the completion of the annual report.

No one was present for public participation

Dates were set for the 2019 quarterly meetings in February, May, August and November.

Date: February 21, 2019, 7 p.m.

Location: Oxford Courthouse

Pat Meade reported that he was approached by two black males who believed they were stopped by police simply because they were black. Furthermore, the two young men explained to Mr. Meade that they did not feel comfortable filing a complaint. Chief Jones said that Oxford probably conducts more pedestrian stops than other cities. He cited, among other examples, the rash of vehicle break-ins as a reason to stop pedestrians who are out walking after 2 a.m. Chief Jones encouraged citizens who feel they have been wrongfully stopped, to contact the PD to speak to a supervisor.

The idea of documenting and tracking pedestrian stop for the purpose of exploring the presence of bias was brought up, but clearly defining what constitutes a “pedestrian stop” is difficult to define in CAD, and while the call type exists, it is not always used consistently. Pat Meade noted the value in tracking pedestrian stops as a way to uncover the presence or absence of bias.

Pat Meade wanted to review the training officers have received for the benefit of new commission members. This review was tabled for another meeting due to the absence of one of the new members. Chief Jones agreed to the postponement, but noted that the Implicit Bias training was state mandated and is now part of basic training.

Items from Chief Jones

- Chief Jones shared copies of two letters sent to complainants after an internal investigation to give transparency to the extent of the investigation process.
- Summarized HR activity
 - o Hired 1 full time Officer

- Hired 1 part-time Officer
- Hired 1 part-time Public Safety Assistant
- Hired 1 part-time Dispatcher/Clerk
- In process of hiring 1 full-time Dispatcher/Clerk
- Two open part-time Officer positions
- Biggest thing taking up PD time includes the renovation of the Police Department office
- Chief Jones shared two papers he wrote while he attended Certified Law Enforcement Executive (CLEE) Training. The topics of the papers were on the Department's effort in collecting traffic stop data, and on Change Management.

Date: May 9, 2019

Location: Oxford Courthouse

Police Chief John Jones provided a power point presentation of updated statistics regarding Citations and Stop data by Race and Gender in 2018. The report included breakdowns for arrests and charges by race (Asian, Black, White, and Other), and age. In addition, data were included which showed the number of traffic citations by category (driver's license, moving violations, non-moving violations, OMVi, and speeding). The traffic data were also delineated in terms of race. Criminal citations (felony, juvenile, misdemeanors, and minor misdemeanors) were reported overall and by race. Finally, Chief Jones reported that there were 5 formal complaints filed in 2018—4 against police officers and 1 against a dispatcher/clerk. 2 police officer complaints (an internal personnel complaint involving off duty conduct and a mistaken identity situation during a warrant arrest lead to a 1 day and a 2 day suspension, respectively). The dispatcher/clerk complaint involving a procedural error on vacant house checks lead to a written reprimand/counseling.

Dr. Sarah Siff from Miami University made a short presentation to the Commission about defining and measuring cannabis preparations in Ohio. Her concern was sparked by the arrest and Felony 2 charges against an 18-year-old Talawanda High School student involving hashish in brownies which the student was distributing on school grounds. Her concern involved the fact that Ohio law measures the full weight of contraband in setting drug charges; as the brownie's weight was largely attributable to baking items but the entire weight is utilized by law in setting charges, she expressed concern that the student was being unfairly and overly charged for the alleged crime (as the student was an adult and the criminal events occurred on school grounds, the severity of the charges reflected those factors as well). Dr. Siff explained how THC is derived from THC-A and how marijuana (THC) is different from (and similar to) hashish. In this latter regard, she asked Chief Jones how the determination was made to bring charges for hashish and he indicated that the decision was based on lab results. Dr. Siff noted that 97% of such drug arrests is for marijuana/THC and expressed concern about the determination to bring hashish charges. Chief Jones and Commission members indicated that the legislature is an appropriate venue for addressing concerns about these types of charges. The issue of discretion arose and Chief Jones agreed to help the Commission address the broader issue of discretion in charging at a later meeting.

Amber Franklin provided a description of a Miami University course on Truth and Reconciliation this past semester. She indicated that an event to memorialize 2 African Americans who were lynched in Oxford in 1877 and 1892 would be held on Monday, May 13, 2019 in Martin Luther King, Jr. Park in uptown Oxford (3 members of the Commission attended the 45 minute ceremony, which included placing dirt taken earlier that day from the site of the lynchings, placing them in glass jars provided by the nationwide initiative to remember these victims, and then sending them to the museum site in Birmingham, Alabama. 2 graduate students from the class described their involvement in the project and its importance in terms of addressing racial injustice, peace education, and coalition building.

The terms of Pat Meade, Aimin Wong, Jonathan Joseph, and Deirdre DeLong were expiring. Jonathan has moved to Boston and a replacement is needed; the other 3 members announced their intention to continue on the committee.

The open carry event on Miami University's campus was discussed briefly. The event was uneventful.

Commission Conclusions

The commission would like to increase its outreach and communicate more with demographic groups in the community about their perspectives on policing in Oxford. The commission would also like to join the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE).

Desired future meeting agenda topics: Continue discussion of the Ohio Collaborative policy on bias free policing, crises intervention and de-escalation training, issues surrounding domestic violence, follow up on Women Helping Women "You Have Options" campaign, and more information on screening and psychological testing of new officer candidates that would determine appropriate temperament and lack of harmful biases.

In conclusion, commission members continue to be impressed with the transparency of Chief Jones and the Oxford Police Department in regard to their training, policies and procedures.