

Oxford Police Community Relations and Review Commission Report

Thursday, August 20th, 2020

Pat Meade, Chair

Deirdre DeLong, Vice-Chair

Amber Franklin

Larry Nadler

Hannah Stohry

Aimin Wang

Egon Kraan

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.

August 15, 2019

Location: Oxford Courthouse

Pat Meade inquired about the nature of a "knock + talk call". Chief Jones indicated that it is an investigative tool used when officers lack probable cause but want to initiate a conversation which could lead to a search. It is a technique to gather information.

Amber Franklin noted that the PCRRC provides a forum to bring police officers and people of color together. As this collaboration has not occurred, she suggested that the PCRRC meet more frequently, consider using alternative venues/fora, and that ongoing discussions are needed. Chief Jones agreed that small group meetings could be beneficial and Doug Elliott suggested inviting Kelley Kimple (Director of the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion) to a future meeting.

In response to Chief Jones providing the 2018 Use of Force Report. Pat Meade asked whether he looks for patterns in the data set. Chief Jones responded that the statistics were comparable to prior years.

Amber Franklin asked what Obstructing Official Business involves and Chief Jones replied that it includes interference with a public official's duties.

Chief Jones provided a report which included the following topics: OPD held their annual Division meeting on August 7, 2019; the Police Explorer's Open House was scheduled for August 25, 2019; OPD added a School Resource Officer at Kramer Elementary School; the BSCO is updating their CAD and mobile systems; and the new Police Building Open House was slated for August 29, 2019.

Pat Meade encouraged PCRRC members to schedule a ride along and noted that PCRRC members would be serving ice cream at the Community Picnic. Hannah Stohry submitted an application to join PCRRC and she subsequently joined the committee.

November 14, 2019

Location: Oxford Police Department Training Room

New member Hannah Stohry introduced herself.

Ms. Stohry introduced Officer Wellness as the first topic of discussion, directing a question to Chief Jones as to what the PD was addressing Officer Wellness.

Chief Jones discussed a number of resources, curriculum, and procedures that address Officer Wellness, among them

- Employee Assistance Program provided by HR
- Continuing Professional Training
- Trauma Informed Policing
- Mental Health First Aid
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefings provided by FOP and the SW Team
- Lunch and Learns
- New Fitness Center

Chief Jones acknowledged that there was room for improvement. Ms. Stohry noted that she was concerned about the number of officers, and noted that having enough officers on staff contributed to Officer Wellness.

Ms. Stohry wanted to know what OPD was doing to educate the public about their rights. Chief Jones said he wants suspects to talk to them, and would not want to give them information that said they did not have to talk. Pat Meade said he has seen a paper in Ohio University dorms summarizing the Do's and Don'ts when interacting with

the police. Regarding international students, it was mentioned that the University should help educate them during orientation.

Amber Franklin discussed "The Talk", a conversation black families have with their children about staying safe during an interaction with police. Larry Nadler recommended *Talking to Strangers*, a book about the Sandra Bland case.

Amber Franklin asked about Welfare Checks, as a result of a Texas woman that was killed by police in her home during a welfare check. Ms. Franklin asked about procedures regarding such activities. Chief Jones indicated that it depends on the circumstances.

Chief Jones concluded the meeting by stating that OPD was gearing up for the winter break, and that during the break they stay busy patrolling the town and keeping an eye on vacant residences.

February 21, 2020

Location: Oxford Courthouse

A draft of the Know Your Rights document was shared by Chief Jones at the PCRRC meeting, with the expectations that PCRRC would provide feedback, and further consideration of whether it would be an OPD or PCRRC document. This document was compiled using Middletown PD's Know Your Rights pamphlet previously provided by Pat Meade; Chief Jones enlisted an intern to create this document.

OPD reported preparation for the 2019 Data Report coming up in May, presenting on 1st quarter 2020 data; OPD reported that it is collecting data both electronically and on paper. PCRRC continues to push for pedestrian/bike rider stop data.

Items moved to be put on future agendas include: revisiting Know Your Rights pamphlet (May); revise 2019 Data Report (May); Approve yearly report (Aug); have officers who have attended diversity training share with PCRRC their thoughts about diversity training (Aug); Lt. Robinson invited PCRRC members to attend some of the training officers receive; Officer Training, Body Worn Cameras, Officer Discretion, and update on Officer Wellness (Nov); potentially holding Nov. meeting at Bethel AME Church.

PCRRC was invited to attend the Sergeant's Interviews as well as Citizens Police Academy and ride-alongs. Chief Jones also asked PCRRC for help with recruitment for police officer positions. PCRRC

May 14, 2020

Location: Remote Zoom Meeting

The PCRRC held its' meeting virtually via Zoom on May 14th, 2020. This was the PCRRC's annual data meeting. Previous data meetings had taken place in February. However, the Commission decided to hold this year's data meeting in May to allow OPD time to create a complete 2019 data report.

This year's data report also marked the first time the PCRRC received officer-initiated traffic stop data. On May 5th, 2016 and Feb 16th, 2017 the PCRRC suggested that OPD collect and present officer-initiated traffic stop data. However, Chief Jones noted that OPD's software was not configured to keep track of such data. On February 17th, 2017 the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board announced the establishment of the Bias Free Policing Standard. The standard required police departments to collect and report officer-initiated traffic stop data. In response to this standard, OPD agreed to begin collecting and reporting officer-initiated traffic stop data in order to maintain their certification with the Ohio Collaborative. Also new to this year's data report was the inclusion of at-fault and no-fault crash data by race. These reports are available on the PCRRC's city page.

Discussion related to the 2019 data report included the overrepresentation of Black motorists in officer-initiated traffic stops (4.5% of the population, 11% of stops), the possibility that some of those stops may involve people from out of town, the need to make the data reports publicly accessible on the PCRRC's web page, the possibility of identifying the race of the officer in use/display of force data reports, and the continued recommendation from the PCRRC that OPD begin collecting officer-initiated pedestrian stop data.

Chief Jones shared the two internal complaints about officer conduct and the results of the investigations. No formal citizen complaints against officers were lodged in 2019. The 2019 use of force reports (11) and display of force reports (14) were shared as were the genders, ages and races of the suspects involved in those contacts. No firearm, taser, or chemical discharges for 2019.

Calls for service have been significantly less with the Miami student population not being in residence.

Other topics discussed included concerns over the rise in domestic violence during the pandemic, officer response to racial intimidation of minorities by locals (e.g. being called the N-word), changes to OPD's assignments, hiring, and promotion process as a result of the pandemic, and a note of appreciation for OPD's continued service during the pandemic.

June 11, 2020

Location: Remote Zoom Meeting

The purpose of this meeting was to provide the public with an opportunity to discuss policing in America in light of the murder of George Floyd and subsequent protests and what steps would be appropriate in Oxford.

The meeting began with public input. A number of community members expressed their thoughts on policing in Oxford. A number of people commented on the need to re-envision the role of police in Oxford. Our police are asked to deal with problems in our society that might be better handled by other professionals leaving police time to do the job they are trained for. A few people brought up the issue of being profiled by police officers. How the OPD would respond to protest was asked. The role of the SROs in our schools was raised. The inadequacy of the complaint procedure was also raised. Fran Jackson of the NAACP called for a town hall meeting to discuss these issues.

Commission members, Chief Jones, and Doug Elliott responded to the public input. I encourage those who want details of this discussion to read the minutes to this meeting.

The next item on the agenda was the proposed Chokehold and Duty to Report Ordinance. After discussion among commission members, input from Chief Jones and Mr. Elliott, and public input, Amber Franklin moved to recommend supporting the spirit of the ordinance with the following statement: "We demonstrate support of the spirit of the proposed ordinance and that we recommend that the city council refine the wording to specify what a public servant is and also specify the use of chokeholds as a form of restraint"; Hannah Stohry seconded. Deirde DeLong abstained. The motion passed 5-0-1.

Commission Conclusions

Policing has become a very hot topic in our country and community. The PCRRC is in a position to help the City of Oxford, the OPD, and the community move forward on issues to continue to improve policing in Oxford. The commission received more community input this year than any year since its inception. The commission would like to accomplish the following in the upcoming year:

- 1) Increase communication with the African-American community and other demographic groups in the community about their perspectives on policing in Oxford.
- 2) Join the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE).

- 3) Strengthen the original ordinance regarding how the commission deals with complaints that are placed before it.
- 4) Improve the complaint process itself to remove barriers and enable anonymous submissions.
- 5) Obtain data regarding pedestrian and bicycle stops (field contacts), reasons for stops, and data broken down by officer.
- 6) Work with City Council on re-envisioning policing in Oxford.

Desired future meeting agenda topics: Continue discussion of bias free policing, crises intervention and de-escalation training, response to protest or demonstrations, issues surrounding domestic violence, follow up on Women Helping Women “You Have Options” campaign, screening of new officer candidates, officer wellness, body worn cameras, officer discretion, diversity training, use of force policy and data, and contract language. The PCRRC would also like to see Living Room Conversations as a way of improving police-community relations.

https://www.livingroomconversations.org/topics/police_community_relations/

The members of the commission want to thank the city administration and Chief Jones for their openness to working with the commission and the community. We would also like to thank community members who have offered their input to this very important work. We look forward to working with the City Council, the OPD, and the community to make our city a safe and welcoming place for all.