

Oxford Police Community Relations and Review Commission Report

Thursday, August 17, 2023

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 Division, 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 division 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 18, 2022

Location: Council Chambers

The first order of business for the commission was to approve the Yearly Report. Chief Jones provided an overview of the PCRRC for the benefit of the 4 returning and 3 new members. He also reported on the passing of a retired officer and multiple officers doing community service with members of Miami's football team. The hiring of a police social worker (Social Services Liaison) was discussed and it was agreed that Ashlea Weddle, the SSL, would be invited to the November, 2022 meeting to speak with the commission.

November 17, 2022

The possibility of pairing officers with commission members to promote better mutual understanding was considered prior to the meeting by LaTricia Hillman and Chief Jones and it was decided that this goal could be achieved best by activities such as attending roll calls, doing ride alongs, and attending the Citizens Police Academy.

Chief Jones reported on the Mutual Aid Agreement, which has existed since 2001 or 2002 and which facilitates cooperation with the Butler County Sheriff's Office. He noted that OPD also has an agreement with MUPD.

The main agenda item involved a presentation by and subsequent discussion with Ashlea Weddle, the Social Services Liaison to OPD. She started work in August, 2022 and has met with 28 different agencies to learn what resources are available.

Ms. Weddle shared a Social Services Referral Form she created for officers to use to promote effective coordination. Ms. Weddle's activities have been added to the Weekly Report. It was suggested that she seek funding from community-based organizations (e.g., Oxford Community Foundation, McCullough-Hyde Foundation) to have a small budget to provide on-the-spot assistance as needed for meals, lodging for the night, bus cards, etc.

In preparation for the May, 2023 data meeting, Chief Jones provided a list of data categories that are included in the annual data report. The ongoing issue of appropriate benchmark data was addressed.

February 16, 2023

Location: Council Chambers

The data categories for the Annual Data Report were reviewed. The commission discussed additional categories which might be added and LaTricia Hillman suggested that the report include a summary by the Social Services Liaison. Since the position is new and Ms. Weddle is determining the most effective reporting **structure** for depicting her activities, it was agreed that this report would be fairly general this year and that subsequent reporting would be more quantitatively-based.

While public participation is included as an agenda item for all Commission meetings, such participation is the primary agenda item for the February meeting. In recent years, many citizens have offered their concerns and viewpoints. This year, no citizens attended the meeting to provide input to the Commission.

May 18, 2023

Location: Council Chambers

Chief Jones offered updates regarding his completion of the FBI National Academy, the Citizens' Police Academy, and the hiring of a new police officer. (Aimin Wang attended the interviews on May 31 and June 2).

The main agenda item involved the Annual Data Report. Chief Jones provided information regarding charges by race, arrests by race, arrests by age, traffic citations, criminal charges (alone and by race), arrest trends, citation trends, use of force incidents, display of force, formal citizen complaints (2 in total, with

findings of “unfounded” and “exonerated”), commendations, on-line feedback, self-initiated stop data, traffic stops by zip code, and pedestrian stop data. A major issue in interpreting the data involves the identification and use of appropriate benchmarks. Limitations of using Census Data for benchmarking were acknowledged, but the absence of suitable benchmarks makes interpretation of the results difficult. The commission will discuss ways to gather and assess data more effectively beginning with the August, 2023 meeting.

Conclusion

The PCRRC has completed seven years of service to the City of Oxford and its citizens. This year was fairly quiet, but the commission is pleased with the addition of the Social Service Liaison and looks forward to both their contributions to OPD and documentation of those contributions. In the latter regard, the commission will continue to work to ensure useful data collection and interpretation of that data for the SSL and OPD overall. As always, we want to thank the city administration, city council, Chief Jones and OPD for their openness and cooperation. The PCRRC looks forward to serving the citizens of Oxford in the coming year.