

POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS & REVIEW COMMISSION COMMUNITY MEETING

ITEM 1.

Call to order

The Oxford Police Community Relations & Review Commission meeting of September 17, 2020 was held virtually and called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. by Pat Meade. Members present were: Amber Franklin, Larry Nadler, Egon Kraan, Deirdre DeLong, and Hannah Stohry. Aimin Wang joined about 35 minutes into the meeting.

Doug Elliott, City Manager, and Lara Fening, Lieutenant, were in attendance for the City.

ITEM 2.

Approval of Agenda

Amber Franklin asked to amend the agenda to include a discussion on the second item in the BLM proposal.

Larry Nadler moved to approve the agenda as amended; Hannah Stohry seconded. The motion passed 6-0-0.

ITEM 3.

Approval of Minutes 8/20/2020

Larry Nadler moved to approve the minutes from the August 20, 2020 meeting; Hannah Stohry seconded. The motion passed 6-0-0.

Amber Franklin made a motion to make a recommendation to city council to require police officers, on all stops, to give civilians their name, badge number, reason for the stop and a business card with instructions for filing a complaint with the PCRRC; Larry Nadler seconded. The motion passed 6-0-0.

Pat Meade asked Doug Elliott for guidance on how to make the recommendation to city council, to which Doug said a letter to the mayor, copying the police chief and city manager, would be appropriate.

ITEM 4.

Black Lives Matter Proposal to City Council “Resolution to Research and Fund Alternatives to Traditional Policing”

Matt Hardin: as a labor management representative for the OPD patrol officers’ bargaining unit, he said that the police officers of the city of Oxford take a great deal of pride in providing an exceptional level of police service to all citizens of our community. He said they look forward to addressing city council in the future regarding the challenges facing law enforcement.

Justin Chandler: thanked the PCRRC for allowing BLM Oxford participation in the discussion. He believes that a lot of times the only stakeholders involved in the discussion are the police so he appreciates being allowed to be a voice in the discussion.

Sharon Custer: her Family Science and Social Work Department at Miami University has been working with BLM Oxford and she offered the opportunity to be a resource, whether in researching or collaborating.

Lt. Lara Fening: she noted she invested a lot of her time working with people in need as a street cop. She said that people call the police to handle their problems, including those involving social services. She stated the social service calls cannot be separated from the other calls police handle, as the social service aspect is embedded in the police calls.

Regarding the “stigma of a police uniform” concern, Lt. Fening said she believes the uniform actually complements the officer’s effectiveness, not lessen it. For many people, she believes the uniform is almost like a beacon, a trusted source where help can be found.

Lt. Fening reported that we recruit new officers who have an aptitude for social service minded skillsets. After hiring, we continue to emphasize education and training.

In recent years, we created our own overdose response time, committed to the One Mind Campaign, sent officers to Crisis Intervention Team training, and created a more robust connection with social service agencies.

Lt. Fening advised of the obstacles officers face, including when social services are needed by the police, most of the time social workers are not working. The availability and accessibility of social services in Oxford is particularly difficult because of our location within the county. Turnover and inconsistency in agency contacts is also an obstacle, as well as the unwillingness on the part of the mentally ill/homeless/addict to receive help. Even with collaboration, it won’t be foolproof.

Jessica Greene: provided a proposed timeline of the proposal.

BLM Oxford representative **Brandon Humphrey:** He shared the kinds of changes BLM Oxford envisions and why they envision them. He said they envision a CAHOOTS type program and

reviewed what the CAHOOTS program was about. He reported other cities have made the program work, both during the day and at night. He would like a resolution to create a taskforce to investigate a CAHOOTS type program. He reported Oxford is not perfect, noting there are problems such as substance misuse and homelessness. They do not believe policing is a cure-all and that the stigma of the uniform is there.

BLM Oxford representative **Shana Rosenberg**: She reported that she likes the timeline Jessica Greene shared. She said we should take the research done by the task force and what is already being done and meld that together and then see how the funding would work. She reiterated that not everyone finds comfort in a police officer with a gun.

Pat Meade: reviewed the document “Proposal to Research and Fund Alternatives to Policing Document” that was shared by Jessica Greene.

Deirdre DeLong said she objected to using the word “alternatives”. She suggested using the word “augmentation” which is more inclusive since that is what the commission is after. She wanted to know what research has already been completed on existing policies and current procedures, to which Shana Rosenberg said that Sharon Custer has done some research into what is currently available through county resources. Ms. Rosenberg said they have not done the work of a task force, which is why they are asking for a task force.

Sharon Custer: she said there is a lot that is already being done. She mentioned that the Oxford Coalition for a Healthy Community is doing great things for mental health and the Butler County Mental Health Board just received a grant that is designated for Oxford for substance abuse. She said the question is whether we are being strategic in collaborating with all of these people. She stated the goal would be to merge everyone’s voices together to do a more thorough needs assessment. She noted there is a lot out there but there was not the awareness so maybe this will be an awareness campaign.

Lt. Geoff Robinson: said he was previously a board member of the Family Resource Center. As a board member, he observed devolving of social services. He noted we pay taxes that support those resources county-wide. He would like to see political entities put pressure on social service agencies to come back to Oxford.

Amber Franklin: said she does not see the proposal as something to counter to what OPD is already doing. She sees it as complementary in many ways. She was looking at the Ohio Collaborative standards. She read out loud the purpose of the standard for Community Engagement, which is “It is the shared responsibility of law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve to work together to build relationships based upon trust and mutual respect. A strong relationship between law enforcement agencies and the community will improve public safety and allow communities to thrive and prosper”. She sees this as a way for all parts of Oxford to come together to solve problems in a systems sort of way.

Amber Franklin asked Lt. Robinson what he learned during the Groundwater training held by the Montgomery County Alcohol Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services ADAMHS, to which Lt. Robinson described how what he learned was applied in the police world. Amber Franklin added more about the training and said the Groundwater metaphor is designed to help practitioners at all levels internalize the reality that we live in a racially structured society, and that *that* is what causes racial inequity. Lt. Robinson was trying to tie that back to the police world. Dr. Franklin stated that the officers have attended a lot of diversity training and that when she looks at the task force, she sees that the inclusion of Oxford police officers would be good because the knowledge they gained from their training could help support the mission of the task force.

Regarding the “stigma of the uniform”, Amber Franklin mentioned the presentation Chief Jones shared about Use of Force and noted he explained that just the mere presence of an officer in uniform is a level of force.

Egon Kraan: said he wants to understand or quantify the issues that are being talked about. If there is a problem, we can work on it. If there is not, why fix what is not broken. He questioned whether we are being underserved or is the need just not there. He recognized we need to push for representation in Oxford. To him, it sounds like the goal of this proposal is to have city funded social services. He feels like OPD is taking the right steps. Before forming task force, he wants to know what the scope of the problem in town is.

Amber Franklin said the data is something the task force can help with.

Shana Rosenberg: said she wants representation of the community on the task force. She wants everyone who wants to be involved in the task force to be involved.

Brandon Humphrey: said he very much values quantitative data. At the same time, he said we must be concerned with what our data sources are and whether those sources are complete. He noted there can be prejudices or incompleteness in the data. Data should also be collected by the community members.

Hannah Stohry: said there are issues that were mentioned today that will not show up in the data.

Hannah Stohry said she believes by the time the minutes for this meeting come out, we are already going to see that we have identified there are not enough services available after hours as Lt. Fening said and that there are needs that have been identified that need to be met. She believes having a task force is essential. She said we need to address what is happening here. She stated if, at the end of the day, it happens to be an awareness campaign, this is a good thing for what Oxford needs. Ms. Stohry also questioned if we can also do this by recognizing that there are larger systems at work that influence Oxford. There are larger conversations that are happening about mental health, substance abuse, about policing that have nothing to do with individual actions taken. What is the sustainability of whatever we are trying to accomplish. She said needs will change over time. We

will have to do this again in a couple of years. She would like to normalize that. Related to sustainability is accountability. All of us have a responsibility to make sure the needs of our community are met and if we do not, that is on us. The mere existence of a task force should not feel threatening. It shows we are invested in our community.

Larry Nadler: he said he likes the idea of collaboration and having members of the community involved and having interested, concerned citizens working with the police force and others who are in a position to weigh in meaningfully on Oxford's situation. We have a good town; that does not mean it is perfect. Allowing open communication probably solves some of the problems. He sees this as a group that gives voice to those that want to have it. He supports the notion.

Egon Kraan: he proposes we get the scope of the problem and actually identify there is a problem that could be solved this way.

Aimin Wang: he said he understands both sides and doesn't have a strong feeling towards either side.

Deirdre DeLong: she said we are focusing a lot of attention on the social services element that is not the primary focus of law enforcement. Besides making recommendations, she said the commission should be advocates for the police department. She is not against having a task force, but its mission should be clear. If its desire is to revamp access to social services, she thinks that may be beyond their purview.

Jill Hamilton: she recommended studying critical race theory before there is a vote on this. She is not in favor of a task force.

Jason Bracken: he said he agrees social/mental issues are out of the purview of the police. Evidence suggests it reduces resources and improves community relations when someone with a gun is not responding.

Deirdre DeLong started to question how you know when a gun is needed, to which Pat Meade interrupted and redirected the discussion to the topic at hand.

Chantel Raghu: she said she agrees with Deirdre DeLong that social services are not the purview of the police. She said the focus should be on what can be done to fix the root cause of the issues. She recognized there is a need for police in dangerous situations and detective work, but there needs to be a separation of duties.

Vanessa Cummings: she said she agrees with forming a task force and likes the police being a part of it. She said having a task force allows transparency to occur and it should be a community task force.

Amber Franklin motioned to make a recommendation to city council, that city council establishes a task force designed to research, engage in and/or fund complements and alternatives to policing in Oxford. And this task force should involve input from the designers of the proposal including other stakeholders in the community. Larry Nadler seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-2.

ITEM 5.

Business Items

Next Meeting – November 19, 2020. We will have a discussion about ordinance itself and a continued discussion on the Know Your Rights pamphlet.

Adjournment – Amber Franklin made a motion to adjourn; Larry Nadler seconded. The motion passed 7-0-0. The meeting lasted approximately 2 hours and 3 minutes.