

DRAFT MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
GLYNN COUNTY POLICE ADVISORY PANEL
MARSHE'S OF GLYNN LIBRARY
208 GLOUCESTER STREET
BRUNSWICK, GEORGIA 31520
WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2020, AT 5:00PM

PRESENT: Carl Alexander, Panel Chair
Dominic McClinton, Panel Vice-Chair- Virtual
Teresa Hoyt, Panel Member
Charles Rinkevich, Panel Member
Rickey Walker, Panel Member
Ralph Basham
David O'Quinn, County Commissioner and Panel Member-
Virtual

ALSO PRESENT: Jay Wiggins, Interim Police Chief GCPD
Stephen Sarnoski, Office of Professional Standards GCPD
Rick Evans, Captain GCPD
Eugene Smith, Captain GCPD
Colin Scogin, GCPD
Matthew Kent, Public Communications Manager
Anna Trapp, Public Information Officer
Dana Pontello, Assistant to the County Manager

NOT PRESENT: Alan Ours, County Manager and Panel Member

Meeting Began 5:03PM

1. Call to Order, Chairman Alexander
2. Minutes approved from June 23, 2020 meeting. Charles Rinkevich made the motion; Ralph Basham seconded. Unanimously approved, Rickey Walker not present at time minutes were approved.
3. Axon presentation by Mr. Jeremy Deegan began on body camera system, taser system, and in car cameras.
4. Panel members on fact finding mission after meeting with GCPD uniform patrol division, two separate meetings. Teresa Hoyt begins going over her notes (no particular order of importance but just how the discussion went on):
 - a. Officers expressed great appreciation for the Panel members coming out and meeting with them.
 - b. Overall proud to be members of GCPD but have some concerns and morale problems
 - c. Officers expressed great support and liking of Chief Wiggins and would like to see him made Chief of Police. Their sense is that he does not have the authority to run the department.

- d. Merit pay and promotions are a source of frustration, some feel like they were hired under “false advertisement”. Officers would like clear explanation on this.
 - e. Dissatisfaction with what they were paid. GCPD Officer with more experience might get lower pay than new hire at the Sheriff’s office or new hire at GCPD.
 - f. Felt strongly the department should not be disbanded, but do want to see it accredited.
 - g. Unanimous opposition to Chief Powell. Some would strongly consider resigning if Powell was reinstated. Believe IA investigation was needed before his indictment
 - h. Training concerns, frustrated with their inability to train as they would like because the department is so understaffed. Would like to train inhouse so they could interact together and build morale while training.
 - i. Concern over policies, policies are unclear and “written on shifting sands”. Notification system on how the new policies are sent via email, “read and acknowledge” without proper training. Dissatisfied with issues relating to professional standards and internal affairs. Feel strongly that the person who is drafting policies for the department should be an experienced police officer themselves.
 - j. Department fires officers or subject’s officers to disciplinary actions without giving the officers due process.
 - k. There were a lot of concerns expressed about equipment in several areas; complaints about the unavailability of in-car cameras, vests are inadequate or not provided (back and muscle support vests), vehicle upgrades are needed, SWAT team needs armored vehicles, tasers are broken and not replaced, uniforms (poor quality and used uniforms), officers buy their own gear out of pocket and would like a uniform allowance. Do supervisor audit budget?
 - l. Officers would like to be allowed to take their patrol vehicles home.
 - m. Spillman system effectiveness; mobile app works better than computer base app. When updates are made it crashes something else. Very tedious for officers.
 - n. Feel ignored by County Commissioners.
5. Mr. Walker asked Chief Wiggins how long the 12-hour shifts have been going on? Two years. Chairman Alexander had Chief Wiggins and his staff prepare and give them some ideas if they can go to the 10-hour shifting, how would you accomplish it, and when can you do that? Chief Wiggins says September 13th. Motion made by Chairman to the County Commission to allow the Glynn County Police Department to go to 10-hour shifting on September 13th, seconded by Rickey Walker. Ralph Basham questions if that is not a decision that Chief Wiggins’ has the authority to make. He does. Therefore, it has been decided that after discussions with staff, 10-hour work shift will begin September 13th. Chief Wiggins says that it might involve some overtime in the beginning but overall, yes, the shifts can be manned. Commissioner O’Quinn confirmed that Chief Wiggins does have the authority to make that change but to present it to the Commissioners so they are aware and that if there is any overtime that might involve budget, they will have to address that. Chairman adds an additional request to allow patrol cars to go home with officers in surrounding counties. All voted to take the two recommendations to the Commissioners. Additionally pointed out that the 10-hour shift schedule helps with training needs and is a good recruiting tool with officers from other agencies.
6. Mr. Rinkevich wants to revisit the issue of making Chief Wiggins full time chief. Commissioner O’Quinn comments that there is a lot that goes into moving that process

- forward, and there are things that he cannot speak on but that the Board of Commissioners fully support Chief Wiggins.
7. Charles Rinkevich makes the motion to make a recommendation to the Commissioners that they expedite the appointment of Chief Wiggins as the acting chief to full-time chief. Seconded by Rickey Walker, full Panel was in favor.
 8. 911 Director texted Mr. Alexander during the meeting and volunteered that he would go through the Spillman program with the GCPD and help make any necessary updates.
 9. Rickey Walker asks how has it been going with getting officers more involved with the community, and Chief Wiggins comments that it is going very well.
 10. Town Hall Meeting Update: Chief Wiggins explained they took questions before the meeting and during the meeting. He felt there was some disappointment from the community that he could not answer certain questions due to them being ongoing investigations but he tried to make that clear during the meeting. At one point over 1,000 viewers on the Virtual Town Hall Meeting. Next one will be August 5th. Recommended by a view during the first virtual Town Hall meeting for the GCPD to do a State of the Department address. There are a lot of good things to talk about. Working closely with NOBLEO (National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Officers) and they have volunteered to come to Glynn County and work with the department.
 11. Brief Update from Chief Wiggins on other things they have done: Recommended by the IACP initially, the office has been able to start an employee relations committee that consists of an officer from each patrol shift, and officer from each division, and a sergeant as the facilitator for the group. The group is tasked with ideas and solutions to make the agency better. They've had their first meeting that went well. They are working on a program called Cop Logic right now that will allow citizens to do reporting from their homes, if it is a minor incident they need to report they can go online and report that and then it will be reviewed by a police officer, and if necessary an officer will be sent out, but if it is just for documentation purposes they can do it online.
 - a. Chairman Alexander reminded that during his meetings with officers they expressed concerns about working minor accidents or incidents on private property.
 12. Mr. Rinkevich recommended a collaboration between local mental health so when a call comes into the 911 center the dispatcher can recognize that there is a mental health issue and someone trained in mental health and go with an officer to respond. Chief Wiggins thinks it is a great idea, to use to right tool for the right job.
 13. Chief Wiggins is still having one on one meetings with all the individual officers in the agency, he is about at 80% right now, and has heard a lot of the same concerns that the Panel heard during their meetings with the officers. Two county commissioners and Mr. Ours have come out to the GCPD one morning since the Panel met with the officers and they (the officers) appreciate everyone coming out and meeting with them. Officer Scogins is working diligently to fill the empty spaces at the GCPD. Up to a possible 25 new hires at time of meeting.
 - a. Mr. Basham asks about the grant that will allowed the GCPD to hire 8 new officers and pay their salaries for three years. This will take them from authorized staffing level from 122 officers to 130 officers when fully staffed. Officer Scogins explains that before DOJ will allow them to use the cops grant money, the GCPD must be fully staffed (at 122 officers).

- FLETC members have come out and started training with GCPD. Chief Wiggins thinks that will be a huge benefit. Some members have had virtual meetings with Soul RX regarding keeping children in the community safe. They have also completed oral interviews for Sargent promotions, the interview panel consists of supervisors from surrounding agencies to continue to show transparency.
14. Discuss media statement from PAP. Mr. Rinkevich added this to the agenda because he feels the public is unaware of the strides the GCPD is making. He would like for the county commission or the county executive is to prepare a news release that a) confirms role of panel but more importantly b) would be to point out and progress that is being made within. Critical that the public knows this with the possible vote coming up this fall. Motioned by Mr. Rinkevich and seconded by Mr. Walker. Public Information Officer, Anna Trapp lets the Panel know that they are in the middle of working on a newsletter right now that will include the highlights the GCPD is making. Panel unanimously votes for an additional news release.
 15. Chief Wiggins adds that they have met with Community First Planning, a local Glynn County group of African American Pastors that came to the GCPD for their second meeting and it was a great meeting involving recruitment, and increased diversity.
 16. Officer Scogins, 108 sworn officers are currently employed (can be 122), so 14 officers short. Once they hit 122 officers and the approval of the DOJ Cops Grant that would put the agency at a total of 22 officers short. He is currently talking to 25 candidates who are at various stages of the hiring process. Some are complete on GCPD end and just need to be completed with HR. Some are actively interviewing. Went to Savannah Tech Peace Officers academy, which is a new resource, and many of those graduates started applications. COVID is halting many things. Mr. Basham asks if the officers could bring their vehicles home, would that be a positive recruiting move? Officer Scogins says yes, as would the 10-hour shifts. Salary increases would also help, but that is something they will work on in the future.
 - a. Chairman Alexander added that Mr. Walker was very interested in the budget process and the audits that go along with it. Chairman Alexander is hopeful when they get that information they can do a comparative analysis and explain it to the other officers. Scogins adds that one thing he is dealing with is pay compression, when he puts out salaries that we might be able to hire someone at because of their experience and certifications, and they are coming in at a \$1 or 2 less than someone who has been in the GCPD for 10+ years has been something Scogins deals with internally as a morale killer.
 17. Updated on Georgia Certification by Chief Wiggins; They have made that application, and they must get the policy manual finished (48% complete).
 - a. Chairman asks if the Lexipol policies run hand in hand with the Georgia State Certification process policies? Stephen Sarnoski answers, the Georgia Certification system has 96 standards in its most current edition, which are built off the policies that implement them. Then the third part is proving compliance. Each standard may have 4 or 5 sub-divisions.
 - b. Mr. Rinkevich asks Mr. Sarnoski if there is a time estimate for when he will be 100% complete? While hard to gauge, six months is not an unfair estimate.
 - c. Mr. Basham asks how does he track it? Mr. Sarnoski says he is tracking it as a running total. As more get approved, he updates the number.

- d. Mrs. Hoyt asks Mr. Sarnoski to address the concern the officers have receiving the notification of the policies via email and the acknowledgment via email that training has been received when it has not. Mr. Sarnoski has confirmed no formal training has been given, but he has encouraged people coming to him. So far no one has come to him with questions. He would prefer formal training sessions, and believes they need to happen but with 12-hour shifts that has not been able to happen. Mr. Rinkevich and Mr. Walker recommend modifying the email acknowledgments to take the training portion out. Chairman encourages the training time that will come with the 10-hour shift change should be used to go over new policy training.
 - e. Mr. McClinton suggests changing verbiage in the email to just include I have received and read the updated policy
 - f. Mr. Sarnoski agrees he will discuss with Lexipol right away.
18. Mr. Basham asks Mr. Sarnoski what is the status of Internal Affairs (IA). Mr. Sarnoski confirms IA is still his responsibility. While he does have help doing investigations it is still one of his responsibilities.
- a. Chairman explained that the officers indicted to the panel during their meetings that officers indicted that the IA process is flawed when it comes to who gets an IA investigation and who does not and who gets due process and who does not. They were not aware that Mr. Sarnoski's police background.
 - b. Mr. Walker, added the officers have some concerns, it is not targeted at one person just that they have some concerns. Mr. Sarnoski mentioned there is a new policy when it comes to IA and he will send that out to them.
 - c. Mr. Walker asks what is the change of command for IA, Mr. Sarnoski says Professional Standards works directly for the chief. There is a newly assigned sergeant to professional standards division too.
19. Mr. Basham asks Chief Wiggins how he plans to handle the dangerously low morale. Chief Wiggins thinks the 10-hour shifting will be a step in the right direction. Promotions that are coming up will help build morale. Training (those with FLETC too) will also help build morale. More about the whole, the team, as opposed to individual officers. Staffing levels back up, 10-hour shifting, and continued training will all boost morale.
- a. Mr. Rinkevich asks if the Chief has completed meeting with all his officers. Chief Wiggins says no, he still has a few, he is about at 80% complete. Mr. Rinkevich thinks the Chief meeting with each officer one on one will also help improve morale.
 - b. Mr. Basham wanted to reiterate that the officers fully support Chief Wiggins, Mrs. Hoyt also added that she officers she met with did mention their meetings with Chief Wiggins and enjoyed them and they are all great well spoken, care about the overall department far over their own personal issues. Was not a gripe session.
 - c. Chairman asks for the Chief's permission in meeting with the officers.
20. Next meeting date: Thursday, August 27th at 5PM pending location

Adjourned: 7:15PM

Chairman, Carl Alexander

Attest:
