

Minutes of Hyattsville Police and Public Safety Citizens' Advisory Committee meeting on March 9th, 2022

[In attendance on the Zoom meeting](#)

[Agenda and Notes](#)

[Approval of Agenda and Minutes](#)

[Director of Public Works, Lesley Riddle to address questions about trash overflow](#)

[Updates from Chief Towers](#)

[Staffing](#)

[Budget update](#)

[Proposal to form subcommittees](#)

[Closing](#)

Chairperson Patricia Page called the meeting to begin at 19:45

In attendance on the Zoom meeting

- Committee
 - Chairperson Patricia Page, Ward 5
 - Secretary Joel Chan, Ward 1
 - Committee Member Bette Dickerson, Ward 2
 - Committee Member Emily Strab Ward 2
 - Committee Member Taylor Wilder Ward 2
 - Committee Member Mai Abdul Rahman, Ward 1
 - Committee Member Mariel Alper, Ward 1
- Council / Liasion
 - Chief of Police Jarod Towers
 - Council Member Danny Schaible, Ward 2
 - Council Member Rommel Sandino, Ward 5
 - Interim Mayor Robert Croslin, Ward 2

Agenda and Notes

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- Committee Member Strab motioned that the agenda be accepted
 - Committee Member Wilder seconded the motion
 - The motion passed unanimously
- Committee member Strab motioned that the minutes from January meeting be accepted
 - Committee Member Dickerson seconded
 - The motion passed unanimously

Director of Public Works, Lesley Riddle to address questions about trash overflow

- Ms. Riddle noted that the city offers additional trash totes for those who call in; it would be hard operationally and fiscally to offer to all residents w/o specific request - hard to determine who to take it to who would need it. So additional totes are typically requested by phone from residents.
- Ms. Riddle is aware of rodent issues in various wards. The issue is really about security of trash bins, for commercial businesses and multi-family homes. Code compliance is working diligently to reach out to residents and businesses to ensure that people are informed about how to control rodents.
- The city will have a “clean and safe team” back and up and running soon. They have been out as of this monday, and will be targeting areas for trash and litter on the streets.
- Q from Chairperson Page: how are residents informed? She didn't see anything in the reporter.
 - Ms. Riddle: call 301-985-5032 (dpw general number) to request
- Q from Committee Member Abdul Rahman: can you share outcomes of study?
 - Ms. Riddle: the focus was on trying to divert waste streams through compost program - will offer lockable lids for yard waste as well as for compost
 - Clean and safe team will also focus on areas of concern. Want to make sure it is accessible and equitable
- Q from Committee Member Alper: any word on pickup on private property (e.g., townhomes)?
 - Ms. Riddle: unfortunately no jurisdiction, due to covenants
- Q from Abdul Rahman: public works seems to be the biggest budget item for the city - can you elaborate on where the money is going? is it to hardware?
 - Ms. Riddle: we own some trucks, we lease some. purchasing now is difficult due to supply chain issues
 - HR is biggest, with benefits, etc. raising salaries (with salary study). We want to pay them what they are worth.

Updates from Chief Towers

Staffing

- One in academy finishing in July, one lateral in March, and another lateral in process
- Budgeted for 48, 43 on staff, 5 openings, including deputy chief, hope to have that out by end of the week
- 2 civilian vacancies: community and media affairs specialist (e.g., social media and community engagement and code red) and animal control liaison
- Also looking for a fleet and mobile technology manager

Budget update

- Looking to upgrade equipment that is severely outdated and in disrepair. also looking into grant funding to help cover some of this. state legislative bond initiative
- Q from Chairperson Page: did you request additional FTEs?
 - Chief: yes: asked for 6 additional FTEs over 3 years (2 each year). 1 full-time training sergeant; other look into training programs that incorporate implicit bias, cross-training with mental health programs, build on ICAT. 1 detective, help with investigations for uptick in violent crime and carjacking.
 - Citizen robberies YTD up 85% in PGC, nonfatal shootings up
 - Shortstaffed, down to 3 due to medical and family leave, etc., had to move one patrol officer over
- Q from Committee Member Abdul Rahman: how to make sure what we have is what we need?
 - Chief: need to be hands-on to serve our diverse community, not just citizens. this takes time. Want to invest more into proactively understanding the situation behind what is going on. and that takes time. can't do this if you're running from call to call constantly.
- Q from Committee Member Wilder: in future if there is opportunity to add more detectives, is there a shortlist of qualified candidates?
 - Chief: we are working on that now. internal process a hiring process that is competitive: once ranked by supervisor, then list goes to chief. Same as other teams.
- Q from Committee Member Wilder: has HPD considered increasing surveillance to help with staffing?
 - Chief: yes. working crime plan now.
- Comment from Interim Mayor Croslin: emphasize what chief said re: needs of HPD. Also keep in mind that city is growing. need to cover the area. We've been short officers for some time before we started growing.
- Q from Chairperson Page: you did workload analysis and staff gap analysis. when does this start?
 - Chief: takes 1 year to get an officer on the ground from start to finish. This is why we are starting now.

- All of this is also announced and shared with the public before it goes to council for voting
- Comment from Committee Member Strab: important to think about retention too, esp. considering stress. need to think about what we want HPD to look like, what function do they serve, esp. if we want them to do more than the typical (e.g., cross-training with mental health)
- Comment from Committee Member Abdul Rahman: 2-3 yrs ago ran numbers re: investment in police force, seems larger compared to other cities of similar sizes.
 - Chief: emphasize that 2.4 number from FBI (to estimate staffing needs) should be contextualized against what we want to do in terms of increasing our ability to handle extra training, duties, to incorporate core values into our everyday culture, increase our capacity to respond appropriately to mental health issues

Proposal to form subcommittees

- Committee Member Dickerson raised a process issue: we need to find a way to handle this information outside of one hour once a month meeting so we have space for other business also. Maybe a special task force?
- Interim Mayor Croslin: whatever we decide to do is what we need to do, just make sure we're compliant with open meetings act. Special task force can meet w/ chief separately in-depth and then report back learnings.
- Chief recommended we establish subcommittees and subcommittee chairs. Can work together throughout the month and report back.
- Committee Member Wilder: maybe should also start setting time limits on each agenda item
- Q from citizen (marshall): want what we work on outside of the monthly meeting to be accountable
- The committee decided to devote an agenda item next meeting to structuring subcommittees for work
- Committee members will think about which subcommittee we want to work on beforehand

Closing

- Committee Member Dickerson moved to adjourn,
- Committee Member Strab seconded the motion.
- Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 21:04.