



MINUTES

PUBLIC SAFETY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD - SPECIAL SESSION BLOOMINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY- COMMUNITY ROOM 1&2 WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2024, 6:00 PM

The Public Safety and Community Relations Board convened in special session. At 6:02 pm. Chairperson McFarland called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Tylian Smith	Board Vice-Chairperson	Present
Ashley Farmer	Board Member	Present
Arthur Taylor	Board Member	Present
Surena Fish	Board Member	Present
William Bennett	Board Member	Present
Rachel McFarland	Board Chairperson	Present
Sean Murphy	Board Member	Present

Public Comment

Individuals wishing to provide emailed public comment must email comments to publiccomment@cityblm.org at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. Individuals wishing to speak in-person may register at cityblm.org/register at least 5 minutes before the start of the meeting.

None.

Consent Agenda

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are approved with one motion; Items pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion are listed and voted on separately.

Regular Agenda

The following item was presented: Dialogue with Bloomington Police Department regarding Sonya Massey murder and police procedure. (Recommended Motion; None. Discussion Only.)

Chairperson McFarland opened the meeting explaining the purpose and activities of the Public Safety and Community Relations Board, emphasizing that the public is invited to attend. She further explained that the purpose of the meeting was to allow the public the opportunity to address police personnel on procedure used by local departments in situations similar to that of the Sonya Massey incident.

Present were leaders from the following departments: Chief Jamal Simington- Bloomington Police Department; Chief Steve Petrilli-Normal Police Department; Sheriff Matthew Lane-McLean County; Chief Aaron Woodruff-ISU Police Department.

Mr. Taylor: stated the necessity of the Board. Stated the board is a vehicle for the general public. Any community concerns regarding the police may be raised at these meetings for transparent general discussion.

Ms. Fish: Meeting being held based on the Sonya Massey incident. Chiefs will explain the training provided to our local officers, and the procedures they follow to prevent incidents as they occurred in the Sonya Massey case. She stated that the PSCRB acts as an impartial when reviewing a complaint and makes its determination on whether the police followed proper protocol.

Chairperson McFarland explained that on July 6, 2024, Sonya Massey called the Springfield Police Department asking for help as she thought there was a prowler near her home. The call resulted in her shooting death by a Springfield Police Officer.

Resident question: What efforts are made by your department, other than reference checks, to ensure that you are not hiring troubled officers from other departments?

Chief Simington: The police profession is a tough profession, and the hiring standard makes it a tough job to get. This is done purposely, so that the Bloomington Police Department selects the best of the best for a very stressful occupation. We vet their education, speak to relatives and people associated with the candidate. We also review the records of the Illinois Training and Standards Board. They have records of Police Officers who have served in Illinois.

Chief Petrilli: To ensure that the vetting process works for out of state candidates we had a background investigator at that out of state location speak to coworkers and supervisors and go into the neighborhood of candidates to speak to people who are not listed as references.

Sometimes they can be the best source of information regarding a candidate. We make sure we do our due diligence to make sure the candidate is an asset and not a liability. The process is a very difficult one to get through, but that's done purposely. Departments larger than ours are struggling to find qualified officers.

Sheriff Lane: Even after an officer is hired, they are still not full-fledged officers yet, and they are very closely watched throughout the 12-month probationary period. We monitor how they handle themselves when they are away from the training officer.

Chief Woodruff:

The vetting doesn't just end with the reference checks, we go two or three layers down getting to other people not listed as a reference. We also issue a psychological examination that examines a candidate's possible work attitude, ethics. One of the problems we have is that private employers refuse to disclose information other than work history and time employed which makes it difficult to make a decision for hire.

Dan Brady: (Former Member of the Illinois General Assembly), spoke about two comprehensive packages of legislation that deal with training by the training standards board. Training and background checks are two positives that have come to your departments, please elaborate on this benefit.

Dr. Carla Campbell-Jackson (NAACP): How often are the officers reminded of the 10 Shared Principles of Life. It's one thing to have it on the wall of the BPD or talk about it every six months, but how often is it covered with the officers in trainings, day-to-day, etc.?

Chief Simington: Training. It is an introduction to the police department. The new officers spend time with me, and I emphasize the importance of it by going through each shared principle with them in person. I check for their understanding and talk about scenarios and explain that we need this because it is a partnership with our community. Yes, it is a training on our walls, but we also send the training out on an annual basis. Everyone attests to the fact that they have read it, reviewed it, and they understand it. It is in the fabric of our mission and strategic plan. Our training consists of ethics, integrity and doing the right thing.

Concerned Citizen: Questioned why there is no residency requirement for Bloomington police officers. Claimed he is constantly harassed by BPD based on past criminal record and he is easily identified by the custom car that he drives. He states that some of the problems with police is that they don't live in the area, and they do not know the residents. He

stated that would have made a difference in the case of Sonya Massey, because police would have known she had mental health issues. Chief Simington stated that the BPD is in every community in the city and is in attendance at the majority of community functions getting to know the members of the community. This is true whether it is an African American event, Asian event, or event for the general public. We understand the importance of building trust with the community. The Chief also agreed to meet with the mother of this individual following the meeting.

Concerned Citizen: What are you as heads of your departments doing in terms of de-escalation and checking on the mental well-being of the officers in who we need to put our trust? Chief Simington stated that the city has made officer wellness at top priority in their strategic plan for all BPD employees, both sworn and civilian due to the high stress nature of their jobs. Chief Petrilli stated that officers are equipped with de-escalation tools and training. Much of the training they receive is crisis intervention training. Unfortunately not every situation can be de-escalated, but the officers are equipped with those skillsets to try and bring peaceful resolutions to stressful situations.

Linda Foster (NAACP): We want everyone to leave alive, when we encounter one another. If I call for need help and you expect to live through it. We have got to be able to understand each other and where we come from. There are a lot more African Americans that don't make it through these encounters. These meeting are helpful to help us all understand the way the other side is feeling, what they're fearing and who they are as people. Body cams were supposed to be our safeguard but what we're seeing on the footage is not justice. It is sad to keep seeing the incidents of TV. We hope you (the police) have things in place to keep that from happening here. The men who do a great job. But they have so many people under them that they have to be accountable for. Ask yourself are you willing to jeopardize your job for a subordinate who does not follow policy or protocol? Let's continue to collaborate and build great relationships.

Pastor Bennett (PSCRB): Are the police receiving diversity training that deals with bias and prejudice? What are some of the unacceptable actions on the part of officers that the department will not tolerate? Chief Simington stated that abuse of power is unacceptable. We investigate all allegations of misconduct, go through fact finding, and discipline according to policy. Chief Petrilli stated that anti-bias training and cultural competency,

implicit bias, racial and ethnic sensitivity, training are mandates of the Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board. Supervisors on a monthly basis pull random footage from the officers' body cams. Integrity is a huge issue. Lying is not tolerated, and officers have lost their jobs because of it.

Jeff Woodard: In terms of police misconduct if you see something, say something, but above all else, do something.

Camille Taylor: I've lived here since 1972 working in Unit 5 school district for 35 years. It was a challenge because the number of minority teachers never kept pace with the influx of minority students. For each of the chiefs, my question is what is the female and minority makeup of your force and how are you trying to increase that representation?

Bloomington PD: 10 African American Officers, 7 Hispanic Officers, 2 Hispanic Dispatchers and 10 female officers. We have no Asian or Indian officers. We are trying to target the ethnic groups where we have no representation.

Normal PD: We have had our first promotions of minority and female candidates into leadership position.

Adjournment

Board member Taylor made a motion, seconded by Board Member Fish to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 pm. Board Chairperson McFarland called roll: AYES: all. Motion passed.

Next Meeting: September 25, 2024



Board Chairperson



Staff Liaison