

Meeting called to order at 7:01 by Chair Salahudin Bin-Yusif.

In attendance: Salahudin Bin-Yusif, Emy Diaz, Michael Harpe, Jacqueline Burditt, Jelani Bryant, Billy Warrick, Debbie Harrington, Justin Faulkner, Wanda Dean, Jason Hunt, Joyce Kidd, Susan Mitchell, Yvette Santiago, Middletown Police Chief William Texter, and Police FOP Representative Michael Hilliard.

Moved by Yvette Santiago and seconded by Emy Diaz to approve moving the agenda forward. Moved 12-0.

Moved by Yvette Santiago and seconded by Joyce Kidd to approve the minutes from the June meeting. Moved 12-0.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: We had two in-person meetings until COVID-19 hit hard, when we went virtual, until this meeting, where we are doing a virtual format with several members in person and several members on Zoom and it seems to be working well, Bin-Yusif said. We have been working on a lot of topics via the three subcommittees. Bin-Yusif said the subcommittees have been doing great work.

The logo is under construction. There has been discussion of having a citizen police academy in the fall with only members of the MPAB. Members of the MPAB have been attending community meetings with citizens in various neighborhood meetings. He said the MPAB is starting to get input from the community regarding some incidents that have happened, and have been able to share those things with the police department. He said members of the board should continue to reach out to their communities to get information about things that are going on, concerns the communities have.

Some of the things we want to work toward, he said, include: PAL Center and getting a summer intern. The annual report of the MPAB will be presented to Mayor & Council at its August meeting.

Bin-Yusif said there have been some concerns raised by members that they are not getting enough time to speak at the meetings. He suggested implementing a Sgt.-At-Arms position for the board to help keep them on track during the meetings. Wanda Dean suggested that the current Parliamentarian handle these issues. Jelani Bryant said he believes there is a need for the Sgt.-At-Arms position. Debbie Harrington said she believes the two positions could be combined. Santiago agreed. Bin-Yusif said he will bring this up again later under new business.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Police Report Evaluation Committee:

Michael Harpe sent in the following report for review by the MPAB. He was not present at the meeting during this portion, so it was decided by the board to discuss this information at the next meeting, after it has been reviewed:

Executive Summary

Modern policing is informed by data. Data provides information on what is working well, and what needs improvement. The intent of the Middletown Police Advisory Board in collaboration

with the Middletown Police Department is to make more of its internal data available to the rest of the community, to inform discussions around law enforcement in the Middletown service area.

What's in this data?

Data will be drawn from preliminary reports, which may vary from official totals following investigations. Data will be provided for information.

Arrests

Arrest data will include all arrests each month to date made by the Middletown Police Department, all associated charges, and all available arrestee demographic information.

Events

Event data includes 911 calls for service and officer-initiated events to date that were responded to by the MPD.

Topics of Data Analysis

1. Reported Crimes

Reported Crimes data includes incidents that were reported to date to the MPD for which a police report was generated.

- Reasons for using force

MPD police use force to keep themselves and the community safe -- for example, from a crime suspect who resists arrest or attempts to escape custody.

- Police service types

Police respond to 911 calls, conduct investigations, and intervene when they observe criminal activity or traffic violations.

- Levels of force

The level of force used must be proportionate to the threat—both to the officer and to the community.

- Methods of force

Police use a variety of methods and tools to do the least amount of harm while keeping people safe -- including the people they arrest.

- Demographic data

Breakdown by sex, region, and race/ethnicity.

Police Activity

- What's in this data?

This data includes recorded police activity from 2018 to date for the MPD.

- What are event response levels?

Dispatch assigns response levels based on danger to the public.

- **Level 1 Emergency Response** - immediate threat to life

- **Level 2 Critical Response** - imminent threat to life, or high potential for situation to escalate

- **Level 3 Urgent Response** - crimes against persons or property crimes that are in progress or just happened

- **Level 4 General Response** no imminent threat, crime happened some time ago

- How are levels assigned?

MPD Communications Department uses Criteria-Based Dispatch—a way for 911 call takers and dispatchers to elicit relevant information and assign the appropriate level of response.

I. Reported Crimes

- What's in this data?

This data includes incidents that were reported to date to the MPD for which a police report will be generated.

- How is crime tracked?
The department divides crimes into Part 1 (more serious) and Part 2 (less serious) categories. For now, Part 1 crimes are included, with Part 2 crimes to be added later.
- How accurate is the location info?
When victims do not know or do not report where a crime occurred, the officer may record the address where the report was made. Often, that location may be a hospital or a police substation. It does not mean that the crime occurred at that address.
- How do I report a crime?
The public can report crime to MPD by calling 911, going in person to a police substation during lobby hours, or filing a report online.

II. Arrests

- What's in this data?
This data includes arrests from 2018 to date for the MPD.
- What is arrest "types"?
An arrest is made for one or more violations of local, state, or federal law. Arrest type refers to the category of the offense (misdemeanor, felony, etc.). While the arrest type sheet shows only the most serious offense charged, the charges sheet shows all charges. For example, if a person is charged with a misdemeanor and a felony, only the felony appears in the arrest type sheet, but both charges appear in the charges sheet.
- What are charges?
During an arrest, a person can be charged with multiple offenses. Each charge cites a specific law or regulation that the person is accused of violating.

III. Traffic Collisions

- What's in this data?
This data includes Middletown Crash Report incidents to date that took place in the City of Middletown.
- What is collision type?
Collision type refers to who and what was involved in the collision. For example, was it a single vehicle crash or a vehicle/pedestrian collision?

Community Connections Committee:

Subcommittee Chair John Carwell was not able to attend the meeting, but he submitted the following report that was read by Chair Bin-Yusif:

Meeting Summary - January 13, 2021

1. Updates: Jacqueline Burditt and M.Sgt. Saunders provided an update the Millbranch Neighborhood Forum
 - 40+ attendees via Zoom
 - Focus: shooting incident; police presence has increased since incident.
 - Chief Texter agreed to install a camera at the basketball court.
 - Rep. Moore and Sen. Hansen attended
 - Crime Stoppers attended
 - Jacqueline is spearheading a civic association.
 - Jacqueline is the moderator of the community's FB page.

2. Social Media Content
 - John sent draft logs for MPAB feedback
 - Goal: plan out themes for 6-12 months
 - Community Alerts - crime prevention (e.g. leaving cars unlocked and keys in cars)
 - Promote local business on MPAB Facebook and Instagram
 - New intern can post content
 - Post upcoming community forums/events
 - Introduce MPAB (purpose, etc.; post MPAB members bios (include personal interests, fun facts, etc.))
3. Community Forums/Events
 - Ideas from June 15 meeting
 - September - Gun Safety & Awareness Forum
 - Rules of Engagement Forum
 - Domestic Violence Forum
 - Mental Health and Law Enforcement
 - State Rep. Moore wants to collaborate on community events
 - Ideas from July 13 meeting
 - MPAB presence at community events
 - Bi-Annual Community meeting at Living Grace Worship Cathedral (Bishop Broughton); Follow up to initial NAACP meeting with panel (Mayor, Police Chief, Council Member)
 - Crime Prevention Tips – stop leaving keys and firearms in car
 - Crime Stoppers Forum – invited Attorney General’s Office, Consumer Protection Unit (e.g. gambling)
 - Greenlawn Apartments outreach
 - Monthly Newsletter – highlight new officers (“Meet an Officer”)
 - Union President – dialogue with union president (build trust, etc.)
 - Networking Ideas
 - Bring donuts to MPD Headquarters
 - Happy Hour (e.g. Crooked Hammock, Metro Pub, BBQ)
 - Police Recognition Awards
 - Purpose/Intent: Acknowledge good work, community leadership
 - Awards banquet
 - Recruit local business sponsors; promote on social media accounts
 - Get input from MPD senior leadership
 - Invite awardees and their family to MPAB meeting
4. MPD Community Relations Update – M.Sgt Saunders
 - Boys Youth Academy (Jul 19-23) – 25 boys
 - Girls Youth Academy (Aug 2-6) – 10 recruited (looking for more)
 - Programming
 - Tobacco and Marijuana prevention
 - Community Project at Senior Center
 - Firehouse tour (first aid)
 - Town Hall tour and meet the Mayor (local government)
 - Department of Corrections – one-way video Zoom Q&A with inmate
 - Outdoor Activity Day at Levels Road Park (DNREC, fishing, BBQ)

- Upcoming trainings
 - Scott to attend Law Enforcement Against Drugs training in FL (train the trainer)
 - Sept – Instructor for Mental Health First Aid
 - Temporary Duty – Starting in September, M.Sgt Saunders will be assigned to street duty for 60 days to cover vacant position. Cpl. Howard will be M.Sgt Saunders community relations assistant for 90 days; five officers applied; Could be an opportunity to train up another person to engage in community policing. MPAB’s position is to grow community relations function. Capt. Ron Davis is also active in the community.
 - Citizens Academy – Request tour of MPD headquarters; Request copy of organizational chart
5. Other Business
- Sample logos – subcommittee’s favor is #4; add hands shaking (officer and community member); add language (“Police & Community Working Together”)
6. Next Steps
- Launch social media accounts and develop themes for 6-12 months
 - Reach out to union president
 - Request copy of organizational chart
 - Request tour of MPD headquarters
 - MPAB platform/agenda – grow MPD’s community relations function

Research Committee:

Susan Mitchell, sole research committee member, reported that in her research of other Police Advisory Boards around the state and US, all of the previous items mentioned above by the other committees, are some of the most award-winning programs out there, so the MPAB is on the right track.

She said the biggest thing she saw is that our PAB is doing the work already, or has at least started discussions about, most of the things other PABs are doing as well. For example, doing community surveys and outreach to find out the needs of the community regarding the police department.

She said some of the more innovative survey techniques she saw included having officers hand out a postcard or survey at a traffic stop and ask the person stopped to mail it in to the station.

She reported that some departments have a citizens brigade that has volunteers drive police vehicles around the area and help with minor traffic incidents like flat tires and fender benders. This keeps the vehicles on the streets and cuts down on aggressive driving and speeding, because residents don’t know it’s not a real officer.

She also said she doesn’t have a good grasp on programs the MPD offers right now and she would be willing to do some research to make a list of the programs offered.

Chief Texter Report:

Chief ran through the report for the month of June that was approved by Mayor & Council at its July 12 meeting. The MPAB had the following questions about the report:

Although it wasn’t part of the June report, Joyce Kidd asked for an update on what happened at Willow Grove Mill development on Friday night, July 16?

Texter said there was a party in the neighborhood on Gloucester Blvd. where, as the party was breaking up, there were shots fired, several rounds. The police have no idea who the target was. He said the party was put out on social media and police believe it was outsiders who crashed the party who nobody knew who they were and gunfire came into play. Fortunately, no one was hurt, he said.

Again, this is a case where the police would welcome any and all information that may be out there in the community. Even the smallest bit of information could help the police.

Justin Faulkner asked about the polymer “ghost” gun reported in the police report. He asked if there have been a significant showing of these guns (they are polymer guns printed out by 3-D printers that are fully functional). Chief said there have been at least two reports of these types of guns.

Chief Texter reported that he shared the most recent organizational chart with Bin-Yusif, so he will send that out to the group shortly.

OLD BUSINESS:

PAL Center: Bin-Yusif asked, OK, where are we with a PAL Center? He said the idea was discussed at the last Mayor and Council meeting and Monique Chadband, the new Executive Director of Middletown Main Street, offered her help in any way she can.

^ Faulkner asked if Mayor & Council have been consulted about the concept and if they are willing to put any funding toward it? And, what is the general cost for it? Bin-Yusif said the discussion has not been had yet because it was suggested by New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer that the group should do its research first, and provide what is going to be needed for the ongoing maintenance of the PAL Center, not so much the initial costs.

^ Meyer told the group several meetings ago that there would probably be little problems getting the initial center started, but it’s the ongoing support that will be necessary to show.

^ Susan Mitchell suggested the group work toward getting a small, summer program started in one of the schools, to start slow.

^ Bin-Yusif asked the Chief to help the group be realistic on the possibility. “We’ve been having the discussions about the need for police to be hired and let’s be realistic, it’s the police who would be running a PAL Center.”

^ Texter agreed that right now is not the perfect time to start something new as there are already events stretching the police department with community events, the summer youth academy program for boys and girls, plus all of the cross-training and hiring processes.

^ He said to be successful, there should be a dedicated person to the center if it was implemented. He said his hope is that by next summer the department would be in a better position to do more programs. It will depend on how the hiring processes go in the next month or so.

Billy Warrick asked if we have been hiring certified officers. He said he spoke with officers in Wilmington who wanted to come work with Middletown. Texter said it was posted recently and we had three certified officers apply.

^ He said all departments are recruiting, even the Delaware State Police, who is offering \$72,000 to start. Warrick said he would like to see local officers make more money. Texter said he spoke to Mayor & Council about this and the next FOP contract is coming up in January and all of this information will come into play in the new contract.

^ Warrick asked if Texter will apply for grant money to cover hiring more officers? Texter said he has been given the go ahead by Mayor and Council to hire as many as we can, there’s no number of a “total.” It’s not about the funds, it’s about getting the qualified applicants.

^ Bin-Yusif said one thing the board has been mentioning from the beginning is their hope that we can recruit more officers who live in Middletown or want to live and serve in Middletown.

^ Mike Hilliard, who was born and raised in Middletown, said he actually moved out of town once he was an officer for a few years because he needed to have some peace of mind outside of work. “It’s kind of taxing, you need a separation from the residents and your home life. For me personally, it was too much to live and work in Town, I needed a separation,” he said.

^ Wanda Dean said she believes an officer who lives in the community is invested in the community and doesn’t just look at it as an 8-hour gig. Hilliard said he still cares deeply about the community and the best for the department. He added that all of the things and situations officers might see in any given day does add up, and it’s best for the officers and the community if they can choose their own homelife space where they can decompress.

^ Dean also pushed for a “total number” of officers that are budgeted to be hired. “You do have a budget, so what is the number of budgeted officers?” Texter reiterated that he hasn’t been given a number by Mayor & Council and that the goal is to hire as many good officers as we can right now.

^ Kidd said it was very enlightening to hear Officer Hilliard’s explanation of the difference between their working life and home life separation. “I never thought about that before,” she said.

NEW BUSINESS:

MPAB WORKSHOP: Bin-Yusif would like to hold a summer MPAB workshop to hash out some ideas. He said he would like to meet in a relaxed atmosphere outside of the board meeting.

Faulkner said it sounded like a good idea.

Harrington said with the group getting ready to head into the citizens police academy and the summer is practically over, perhaps we should wait until after the academy to do the workshop.

Faulkner agreed, saying it would be great to follow up with each other after the academy to discuss what they each got from it. It was decided the workshop would be brought up again at a future date.

911 CALL CENTER: Harrington said it has been brought up several times and several members believe it is time for Middletown to have its own 911 operator. She said the response times have been analyzed and several members believe the Middletown Police’s response times would be quicker if we had our own call center.

Santiago asked if the data is showing the response time is delayed because of the call center or because we don’t have the officers to respond?

Harrington said it is “our own gut feeling” that our own 911 call center will benefit the community greatly. That’s the data our group needs to collect to demonstrate the need and will better policing, she said.

Bin-Yusif asked the research chair, Mitchell, to research the data on this. He asked the Chief if he could help collect data from the call center.

Texter said he wasn’t sure if he could pull data like that. He was able to pull data regarding a specific incident, but not a complete data dump.

Texter said in New Castle County, only the City of Wilmington and the City of Newark have their own 911 centers.

Bin-Yusif said the board will continue this discussion after some research is done on the topic, including calling other municipalities to find out why they have their own or why they do not have their own center. And, Michael Harpe said once the members are part of the citizens police

academy and see the entire process the 911 Call Center goes through, in person, all of their minds will be changed about it. "You'll see what I mean," he said.

Moved by Faulkner and seconded by Bryant to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.