

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Salahudin Bin-Yusif, via ZOOM teleconference.

In attendance: Salahudin Bin-Yusif, John Carwell, Emy Diaz, Michael Harpe, 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 Susan Mitchell to approve moving the agenda forward. Moved 10-0.

Moved by Michael Harpe and seconded by Yvette Santiago to approve the minutes from the August meeting. Moved 10-0.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Chair Bin-Yusif said the Fall Festival on Sept. 11 was a success and he appreciated the support of the members of the committee who attended the event sponsored by State Rep. Moore. He said it was a nice event and saw nice support from the Middletown Police and Mayor & Council of Middletown along with fraternities and sororities and many organizations from throughout the community doing giveaways.

His favorite memory was of a young man hitting the siren continuously on the police car which gave the child a lot of smiles. He also liked seeing the K-9 on site with the children. He thanked John Carwell for creating the MPAB T-shirts and getting them done in time for the festival.

Michael Harpe agreed it was a great event and he looks forward to doing more events like this in the community with the MPAB.

**CITIZEN'S POLICE ACADEMY:** Bin-Yusif reported that five members were considering being part of the next citizen police academy. The MPD has postponed the academy due to lack of interest. He said perhaps the reason the attendance / sign-up was so low was due to the fact that several of the members have done the academy in the past.

He said the MPD asked if the group would be OK with opening up the academy to the community to bump up the numbers. He said he didn't mind having that happen, as the important thing was giving everyone the opportunity to be a part of it if they want to. He said the number of weeks might have been daunting as well. He asked if the group would like to have the academy broken down into four weeks (two nights per week at 3 hours each night) or keep the 8 week academy with one night per week.

Harpe, who attended the academy in the past, said he really encourages everyone to get in on this academy the next chance we have because it was most enlightening for him to see what police deal with on a day-to-day basis.

Debbie Harrington and Joyce Kidd said the MPD should open it up to the community and keep their regular timeframe set up and whoever can join in from the MPAB should do so.

**COMMUNITY ZOOM MEETINGS:**

Joyce Kidd said there is another community meeting set up for Willow Grove Mill for Sept. 29. She said the last Zoom meeting that was held was very interesting for everyone involved. Bin-Yusif said he really appreciates the MPD doing their part in the community to hold these Zoom

meetings – doing their part to really get out there in the community and see the issues out there. He said he has continued to be surprised with the types of issues happening in communities.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### ***Police Report Evaluation Committee:***

Subcommittee Chair Michael Harpe said he is going to meet with his committee this week and continue to discuss the data that has been given to the committee by the MPD. He will have a report next month on this.

### ***Community Connections Committee:***

Subcommittee Chair John Carwell said they had a meeting last Tuesday and in attendance were Cpl. Dakevis Howard, Bin-Yusif and Jacqueline Burditt and Carwell. He said it was a great opportunity to talk to Cpl. Howard and discuss his plans and goals for the community. He said they made plans to continue to connect with the MPD and their community efforts such as the Zoom calls and just getting out in the community at-large. He reiterated that the MPAB will do whatever we can to connect with the community and get their needs to the MPD.

He reported that the annual DEA drug disposal event is coming up and will feature other awareness programs this year like firearms safety.

### ***Research Committee:***

Subcommittee Chair Susan Mitchell had no report this month.

### **Police Report / Chief Bill Texter:**

Chief Texter read the report that was given to the Mayor & Council on Sept. 13. The MPAB had the following questions about the report:

Bin-Yusif asked about the hiring process.

Chief Texter said Kevin Rogers is our new recruit fresh out of the Delaware State Police Academy which graduated on Thursday. He said he will be on an administrative week at first, doing all of the paperwork we need him to do to get started and then he will be out on the streets doing his field training with another officer. He said he will be introducing him at the next Town Council meeting and will be glad to have him come to the next PAB meeting so everyone can meet him.

He said the MPD also hired four new police recruits who start the police academy in October and will finish late March / early April. He said the police department is very excited about this. The MPD is also going to look to hire some certified officers soon, possibly starting that process in the next week or so. The recruits in the academy are two males and two females – one certified officer and three new recruits.

Carwell asked how the department was able to recruit the officers, what were the best practices?

Texter said the department took a different strategy of positive engagement and not just at typical recruitment events. He said they are kicking around the idea of partnering with businesses and showing up at the farmer's market and doing giveaways for ice cream or other treats to do positive engagement.

He said we've found that when people have a positive engagement with us – a significant other or child tells the recruit – "Hey, you should check out the MPD because I've seen them out and I am impressed with what they are doing." That is what seemed to work well for us this time.

He said is really proud of the department of what they have accomplished in this recruitment effort and the diversity of the recruits (one black male, one black female, one white female and one white male) is incredible. He said the academy is 17 people and we have 4 of those – so that shows how successful we were – really, it’s almost unheard of, Texter said. He said he just spoke to Newark PD and they ended up with 0, so that just shows how successful we were.

Carwell said the diversity sounds great and he thanked the Chief and Mike Hilliard for their efforts on this matter.

Harrington asked how many hires the department is trying to make right now.

Texter said there is no set number but we are going to continue to look at good hires. He said to be honest, the department can really only handle four recruits at a time for field training – it’s really pushing it to the maximum to have four at one time, he said. He said he needs to make sure the FTOs get the right amount of attention.

Joyce Kidd asked if there’s a “magic number” of police the department is trying to get to.

Chief Texter said he is going to continue to gauge the need of the community. He reminded the group of the crash in the economy in 2007. He said we were in a similar situation at that time where there seemed to be a push to hire more officers due to the growth of the town, but then the economy kind of slowed down for a bit and we were able to catch up. He said he’s watching the economy now and although the town is growing – we have to consider the kind of growth we have. He said, for example, it has been shown that 55 and over communities don’t need the police services as much. So, if our growth shows more of that type of growth, it will affect the other services in the town, but not the police.

He said the growth is going to ebb and flow and he believes they are on the right path.

Wanda Dean asked the next steps for the recruits. He said the MPD is prepping them for the academy that starts on Oct. 4 and they will be there for about 24 weeks. They’ll have classroom instruction, practical instruction and other training. Dean said she was asking if all of the background checks have been done and passed. Texter said yes, those are completed.

Carwell asked about how the department is doing with retention of current officers.

Texter said unfortunately, we are losing an officer to the Delaware State Police this week. He said generally, the DSP can offer some more opportunities for the officers to do different types of jobs. He said his goal is to get MPD to the point where there are more opportunities in our department.

Yvette Santiago asked about school resource officers – can our MPD get involved in the schools? Texter said not right now, mostly because we don’t have the staff to do it if we wanted to. He said he hopes to get involved with the proposed Community School at Redding Middle, part of the school district’s plans to open the school after its renovations.

Santiago asked if there are any rescue funds for the police funding. Texter said he is not aware of anything for police other than a body cam grant, which the police department did apply for.

Harrington asked why a bicycle was taken from a child at the Fall Festival. Texter said he didn’t have the information on this incident. He said he would look into it and report back next month.

Texter said the MPD plans to be in the schools in some capacity. Sgt. Saunders already does a lot of programs in the schools and they really enjoy it.

Dean asked how long the officer who is leaving worked at MPD. Texter said just under three years. She also asked if any incentives were given to the new recruits. Texter said only the certified officer qualified for the incentive. She asked what the incentive was. Texter said it’s \$5,000 for 0-5 years of experience and \$10,000 for 6-10 years. He said if officers don’t stay with MPD for 5 years, it would have to be paid back.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **911 CALL CENTER:**

Bin-Yusif said the PAB is working on gathering data with a comparison of existing call centers and see how well they are doing. Harrington added the group needs to gather information on Newark and Smyrna, two local call centers that operate on their own. Bin-Yusif said they will work to gather this information for a future meeting.

**WORKSHOP:** Bin-Yusif wants to hold a workshop with the PAB. He said let's think about next month to sit and discuss some topics and think about the direction the MPAB is moving towards in an atmosphere that is a little more relaxed. He said he will put out an email with some potential dates for this workshop.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **COMMUNITY MEETING:**

Bin-Yusif said the MPAB has been talking about having a community forum where people can come out and talk about everything police with various members of the community. He said he would really like to see another meeting like was held last year at Bishop Broughton's church to see how things have come along in the past year.

### **SURVEY:**

Joyce Kidd asked if the survey had been done at the Sept. 11 event. Bin-Yusif said it was not done yet, but it continues to stay on the MPAB's list of things to do once our social media platforms are up and running to get a pulse of the community.

Dean said a survey of the MPAB itself might want to be conducted so we can set a list of priorities so we can get on the right track on what to tackle next as a board.

Emy Diaz said she agrees with a poll on the board's priorities because there have been times that she has felt that the board's central focus was not being met, so perhaps it's a good time to survey the board.

**NEXT MEETING:** Next meeting will be held on Oct. 18, at 7 p.m.

Moved by Carwell and seconded by Dean to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.