

Minutes of the Park Police Advisory Council Meeting of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Date: November 12, 2019

Location: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Mary Merrill Headquarters, 2117 West River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55411

Present at Meeting:

Appointees Present:

- KC Harrison
- Alora Jones
- Carole Martinson
- Roxanne O'Brien
- Sheila Nezhad

Appointees Absent:

- Jae Hyun Shim
- Mahdi Abdi

MPRB Resource Staff:

- Al Bangoura, Superintendent
- Radius Guess, Community Outreach Department
- Jason Ohotto, Park Police Chief
- Cordell 'Corky' Wiseman, Community Outreach Department
- Latricia Vetaw, Citywide Commissioner- Absent
- Courtney Sullivan, Meeting Recorder

Guests:

- Mae Brooks, Human Resources Director

The regular meeting of the Park Police Advisory Council was called to order at 6:07PM on 11/12/2019 by Carole Martinson.

I. Open Time 6:00PM- 6:10PM

- a. None

II. Meeting Protocol

- a. C Martinson: Was selected at last meeting to be committee chair.

III. Approval of the Minutes and Meeting Agenda

- a. The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.
- b. The agenda for the meeting was distributed and approved.
 - i. R Guess: Suggested to flip the presentations so Mae Brooks could present first.

IV. Our Charge!

- a. See notes in section VI about potential projects

V. Presentations

- a. Hiring & Retaining Police Officers- HR Director Mae Brooks
- b. Powerpoint Presentation

- i. Mae Brooks gave the presentation below:



HR Hiring and
Retention .pptx

- c. Discussion from generated by presentation

- i. R O'Brien- Is the psych eval the same one as MPD uses?

1. M Brooks: No, we use a different test and vendor
2. R O'Brien: Can we get the information of how long MPD used the psych evaluator? He was unlicensed? That is a red flag.
3. C Martinson: Let's list this as follow-up item
4. R O'Brien: Who wrote the evals? We need more info on the vendor. What is the difference in the vendors?
5. M Brooks: Will work with the chief to see if there is information we can get.
6. R O'Brien: Park Board info should be available. If MPD info isn't available, then I will get it myself.

- ii. R O'Brien- So they (police officers) are right out of college?

1. J Ohotto: All the candidates are licensed police officers. Two-year degree is minimum requirement. Once they graduate from academy, they complete field training.
2. R O'Brien: Minimally need a two-year degree?
3. C Martinson: Two-year associate degree is a state requirement, then they need to pass skills testing.
4. R O'Brien: Am interested in learning more about the psych exams.
5. J Ohotto: MMPI is the primary testing tool.
6. R O'Brien: Would like to see the history of the test.

- iii. KC Harrison: You mentioned last time there is an intermediary position? What was that called?

1. J Ohotto: Police Cadet. We provide them wage, pay for training, then they become a police officer. The Pathways to Policing program is more extensive.
2. KC Harrison: Why does person who is responsible for public safety in the park need to be a police officer?
3. J Ohotto: Statutory authority. It depends on level of service needed. If making arrests, need to be a licensed officer. There is an extraordinary amount of screening and training for the role. We are doing all we can to screen for best person to uphold our values.
4. KC Harrison: The values of Park Police and MPD are very different as presented last time. Might Park Police Officers be acculturated into MPD through their academy.

5. J Ohotto: We rely on MPD for many things, such as technical training on how to use their systems that we don't have the capacity to provide. Do they become part of the culture of MPD? They are only there 4-5 months, then come here to do their field training. They learn much more about the culture through field training. However, I do take your point. On other note, HR supports us with employment investigations, wellness and employee assistance. Might be another topic of interest for future.
- iv. KC Harrison: Do you do an evaluation on why there are so few female applicants?
 1. M Brooks: We are on average, there is a deficient number of women in the field.
 2. J Ohotto: When I came on, there were more women in law enforcement than there are today. Number of female applicants has declined.
 3. M Brooks: Females in the work force has gone up in law, ministry.
 4. R O'Brien: Do you have any surveys from people of color or women? Survey that asks what is the hardest part of the job? Find out what's happening to make it a toxic place for women.
 5. M Brooks: We do exit interviews with all staff, including police. In the event that information is given that is negative, we would investigate.
 6. J Ohotto: People (referencing female officers) leave us because of retirement, they are not leaving after only 4-5 years.
 7. A Bangoura: We do not receive many grievances at all from police.
- d. Presentation on Closing the Gap- Investing in Youth
- e. Powerpoint Presentation
 - i. Superintendent Al Bangoura gave the presentation below:



Closing the Gap.pptx

- f. Discussion from generated by presentation
 - i. R O'Brien: What is the reason for the drop in part-time staffing beginning in 2006?
 1. A Bangoura: Start of the recession
 2. J Ohotto: Loss of local government aide (LGA), drop in property home values. It is starting to increase again now.
 - ii. A Bangoura: Does everyone know what Youthline is?
 1. C Martinson: No
 2. C Wiseman: I helped developed the Youthline program. It is a program that provides outreach and employment opportunities for youth.
 3. A Bangoura: We are currently revamping the Youthline program.
 4. KC Harrison: Youthline is funded through park board?

5. C Wiseman: Yes, originally it was grant funded then became part of park board's budget.
 6. R O'Brien: What is the referendum we voted on to do with the parks?
 7. J Ohotto: There has not been one since I have been here.
 8. S Nezhad: Is there still opportunity for money to be put into Parks in budget this year?
 9. A Bangoura: No, but I am working with the Mayor. We have funding for current service level, nothing beyond what we are doing now. Didn't get priority #2 and #3, investment in youth and environmental. Working on next year's budget cycle, looking to invest like we did with NPP20. Get people to understand we are uniquely positioned to affect lives of youth. Find any duplications of services, asking mayor to support. Spend time with city council members.
 10. R O'Brien: Which are the strongest of the six pillars of programming?
 11. A Bangoura: As a priority?
 12. R O'Brien: Which of these things to fill the gap are we leaning on?
 13. A Bangoura: Currently youth enrichment. Creating an opportunity that It is more than just maintenance and trash pick-up. Building out a farming project in which youth will help grow flower beds.
 14. J Ohotto: This is being done despite not getting the funding from the City.
 15. A Bangoura: Presented proposed increase to BET and Mayor. It will cost \$1.3 million to do these things. This was 2nd priority. We as an organization sat down and found the dollars to do these things. Trimmed budget to make sure we are committed to our youth. Each department cut money from the budget. That will be the fund for the program. Found a way within our own budget to make it work.
 16. R O'Brien: Can we take a tour to see things in action?
 17. A Bangoura: This is new initiative for 2020. Budgeted for 2020. Made our own funding. My work now is to show the Mayor what we are doing is unique and ask him to support us with a tax.
 18. R O'Brien: Is Park Board 501c3?
 19. J Ohotto: No, we are a "unique department" of the City of Minneapolis.
 20. R O'Brien: How do you get grant funding?
 21. A Bangoura: Hard to get as a local government. Looking to foundations to help. Working with them to make it happen.
 22. C Martinson: Will do whatever we can to help.
- iii. R O'Brien: When did Park Police begin?
1. A Bangoura: est in 1887
 2. R O'Brien: Programs and initiatives keep crime at a minimum. Should be super simplified, not that hard. There are others with financial interests. Wonderful ideas for solutions.

3. A Bangoura: Changing dynamics and environment, an example is Peavey Park. Being present important, all about the people. As employees we know we have support from our officers, they know the programs and the kids.
4. R O'Brien: Wish police didn't have to be police. More youth in community programming. Other things they could be trained on, other activities. My people don't see difference between park police and MPD, see person with a gun, outfits bring trauma. Wish we would go deeper, when are we going to do some change?
5. C Martinson: That is what we are doing today. Discussing priorities to work on with committee members.
6. R O'Brien: What's missing is empathy, experience. Community they don't understand, taught we are the enemy.
7. C Martinson: How do we leverage that? How do we take knowledge that the Park Board has?
8. R O'Brien: Community pushed the process and the system. Wouldn't have changed without. Know a lot of people, a great organizer.
9. S Nezhad: Based on your conversations, what are the top priorities?
10. C Martinson: Connecting social services
11. R O'Brien: What are we tasked to do?
12. C Martinson: These presentations are providing basic knowledge of Park Board, what programs make sense, how can we help as citizens. Expand social services, improve recruiting are ideas, what should we do as advisory committee?
13. KC Harrison: What about different uniforms? Since Park Police is different?
14. J Ohotto: Purpose of uniform is that you are immediately recognized by the public and public knows you have authority to take legal action.
15. R O'Brien: That's why I'm confused, only brings fear.
16. J Ohotto: I have arrested people in both in uniform and under cover. Out of uniform it is much harder, more resistance. With uniform you are recognized in public as having the formal authority to do the work.
17. R O'Brien: Need to dig deeper.
18. KC Harrison: Would there be a difference if wore different uniform? Like park ranger?
19. R O'Brien: It is a different feeling if in regular clothes. A more relaxed feeling.
20. C Martinson: The uniform piece we can talk about in future.
21. R O'Brien: Safety issue for the cops, if want to build community don't wear uniform. Why couldn't we pay cops to show up without the badge, uniform and gun to talk to the community?

- 22. C Martinson: We can talk about uniform issue later. Also like the idea of connecting social service resources. Needing different trainings. Helpful to know data and look at data to make decisions. Look at raw data so we get a flavor for calls coming in. Alora is willing to help with this.
- 23. A Jones: Before we start deciding what to work on, what are gaps and problems?
- 24. R O'Brien: Can we go to parks, ask officers what are challenges?
- 25. A Jones: A survey?
- 26. R O'Brien: Surveys that are very simplified. Ask the kids and staff.
- 27. J Ohotto: Survey results were in presentation last meeting.
- 28. R O'Brien: A survey for officers and kids is part of the recommendation.

VI. Looking Ahead to Next Meeting

- a. C Martinson: Meetings will be the second Tuesday of the month.
- b. C Martinson: Potential projects and assignments for next meeting
 - i. Impact of uniform/ de-militarization- Sheila
 - ii. Social services connections to Park Police- KC
 - iii. Data review- Alora
 - iv. Survey- Roxanne
 - v. Recruiting- Carol
- c. C Martinson: Some park board committee members will be attending academy graduation during the next scheduled meeting in December. We can meet as a committee or re-schedule to a different date?
 - i. C Martinson: Agreed to meet on the 10th.
 - ii. S Nezhad: Can we set a deadline next time?
 - iii. J Ohotto: Tasked with making a general report to the Board. We can re-visit the task of the committee.
 - iv. C Martinson: Potentially on the January agenda to get in front of Board.

VII. Agenda and Time of Next Meeting

- a. The next meeting will be held at Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Mary Merrill Headquarters on December 10, 2019 at 6:00PM
- b. The agenda for the next meeting is as follows:
 - i. Committee to meet to work on Our Charge! and priorities

VIII. Meeting Adjourned

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00PM by Carole Martinson

Minutes Submitted by: Courtney Sullivan

Minutes Approved on: _____

Additional Requested Documents:

1. Park Police Overview – Police Chief Jason Ohotto – Presented on: 10/8/2019



MPRB Park Police
Overview.pdf