

# LR Public Safety Commission

## Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: April 18, 2024, 6pm

First order of business was Roll Call to bring the meeting to session. Commissioner Secretary Zeornee' Herts handled the roll call.

### I. **Roll Call**

- a. Members present included: Carolyn Hobbs (Ward 1), James (Jim) Doyle (Ward 4), Willie Davis (At-Large), Rev. Billy Burris (At-Large), Anna Morshedi (At-Large), Seth Ward III (Ward 3), William Farmer (Ward 7), Chair Johnny Gilbert, Jr. (Ward 5), Secretary Zeornee' Herts (At-Large), and Kambrei Charles (Ward 6).

Quorum was met.

(There are three remaining positions to be filled with applications currently being reviewed.)

Following Roll Call, Rev. Burris prayed.

### II. **Opening Comments**

- a. **Commission Chair** – Johnny Gilbert, Jr.
- b. **Staff Liaison** – Christopher Harvey, Senior Advisor to the Mayor (third) Updates for us - Walked through the change in officers. Commissioner Willie Davis declined the position of Chair, therefore Vice-Chair Gilbert, Jr. became Chair as provisioned in the bylaws. This left the Vice Chair position open. First few meetings will be providing education for us so we can be informed about our role and those departments that we are connected with. Still need Ward 2 and 2 at-large commissioners. Minutes, Agendas, and Bylaws will be posted to the website. Meeting room conflict for the May meeting so we may meet virtually.
- c. **Department Liaison** – Chief Heath Helton, LRPD Chief of Police (first) Excited about the opportunity to listen to the ideas of the commission. Looking forward to helping improve our community.
- d. **Department Liaison** – Reed Edwards, Deputy City Attorney (second) serving as the liaison tonight in the stead of Lynette Perez
- e. Commissioner Hobbs wanted to share a little about herself so we know her background.

### III. **Approval of Minutes from Prior Meeting**

- a. Adopt minutes from the Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting
- b. Chair moved to approve minutes from last meeting. Secretary seconded. All were in favor, none opposed.

#### IV. **Citizen Communication**

- a. Limited to three (3) minutes per person, with a maximum of 21 minutes allowed. None present.

#### V. **New Business**

- a. **Officer Elections** - Vice-Chair - Nomination for Rev. Billy Burris for Vice Chair - unanimous vote of yay.
  
- b. **LRPD Presentation** - Chief Helton presented information to help the commission better understand the Little Rock Police Department. This included a handout packet with the departments vision, mission and values statements, crime and other statistics, and the department organization chart. He briefly covered the CompStat (police management system) - 595 personnel capacity (67 vacancies) with 2 recruit classes going 15 will graduate (May 17th) and 12 will graduate (early August). Staffing challenges due to current climate, but there is hope with nearly 100 applications that came in during the last recruiting cycle. COP (Community-oriented police officers) - more officers in the community and can fulfill SRO obligations - more community engagement.

The LRPD operates under a nearly \$70mil budget - mostly for salaries. The department uses grants a lot. Amanda Jones (grant coordinator), Tye Terrell - now able to go after grants with these personnel working from the City side. Recently secured grants for mental health programming. Applied for an Opioid Grant \$3.2 for NARCAN to be used throughout the county.

Little Rock has a population of 210,000+ and growing. More people are moving toward the center of the country. Hopes are that the Mayor's sale tax initiative will be approved during the upcoming election to increase staffing for future growth.

Have utilized technology to help fill in some of the gaps – Real-time Crime Center prevention through community cameras. General Orders. Standard Operating Procedures — these are how we hold our officers accountable.

Vision Statement - CPR Bringing life back to something - knowing the city helps - **Communications** (internal and external communications) | **Professionalism** (deserved - treating people with respect and value) | **Relationships** (building a solid foundation - networking with faith-based, and community organizations). Thinks we are in a position to

bring everyone together. People are tired of seeing the violent crime and it puts us in a position for organization to work together instead of in competition.

He then reviewed Page 2 of the handout of information with the City-wide Comparison of calls and incidents in the city.

The department is data-driven. LRPD is currently preparing for the summer. The majority of homicides are acquaintances - most involve black males ages 13-24. GUN VIOLENCE (788) 6 per week. 113 firearms recovered with 96 arrests. Overall violent crime is down 10%. He'd like to see gun-buy back numbers increase.

Community Engagement Increasing - 21st Century Policing Agency - 6 Pillar's – (Building Trust and Legitimacy, Policy and Oversight, Technology and Social Media, Community Policing and Crime Reduction, Training and Education, and Officer Wellness and Safety). Many programs that are focused on building a healthy youth perception of the LRPD.

CROs (Community Resource Officers) - 3 one for each division. CRT (Community Response Team) - officers with ties to mental health calls and homelessness. Officers can spend 2-6 hours on average dealing with mental health cases. (4), 4 social workers hoping to grow it to 8 personnel. When people find themselves in crisis their first inclination is to call the police. Crisis Stabilization Unit (16 beds) – voluntary program. The police get them connected and will then work with the CSU and follow up with community liaisons. **There are three categories in our unhoused community - transitional, chronic, and opportunistic.** CRT builds relationships with them and can give them more assistance. When Little Rock Community Health shutdown it put a big strain on the system. Commissioner Burris provided an explanation of the bed situation formerly at the state hospital. The mental health system is really broken right now and it will take the legislature to make provisions to help fix the situation.

Accreditation for LRPD - Gold Standard 1998 - received 9th certification; Department and Training both accredited; dual accreditation. - State Chief Association - Tier 1.; Policies are reviewed at least 2 years. Victims Services Program - families data - people with children requested. A lot of incidents are becoming Social Media related.

What causes Chief to lose sleep? - being from LR, the concern of failure – “letting my community down, the officers, the partner agencies.” Many times wondering did we miss something, etc. His desire is to stay forward-thinking = more efficient and more effective.

The LRPD cannot solve all the problems by themselves. Cases solved = 70%, which is above the national average of 52%. Chief looks at it like making deposits in the community trust bank. It's all about relationship building.

- c. **National Gun Violence Awareness Day** - Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup> - Commissioner Morshedi - 10th annual - proclamation MDA moms demand action - June 8th - wear orange day - Awareness Center; Can we possibly wear name tags?
- d. Commissioner Doyle raised the question regarding setting up a public-facing gmail-style account for us to use for some business. Mr. Harvey commented that we will add an item on the next agenda discussing procedures for communication.
- e. Commissioner Ward – would like more information about the Juvenile Justice system - can judges come to a meeting to present information about Community Programs.
- f. **Adjournment** – Chair Johnny Gilbert, Jr. motioned/Commissioner Hobbs seconded. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned.

*Submitted: May 1, 2024. Zeornee' Herts, Commission Secretary*