

DRAFT

CITY OF FORT PIERCE

POLICE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Regular Meeting - Thursday, August 8, 2019 - 4:30 p.m.

Fort Pierce City Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 100 N US Highway 1, Fort Pierce, FL

Present: Melvin Jones, Sr.; Charles Hayek; Henry Duhart; James Edwards; Dr.
Pinkie Hendley

Staff Present: Chief of Police Diane Hobleby-Burney
Sergeant Jason Braun

1. CALL TO ORDER

4:30 pm.

2. OPENING PRAYER

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. ROLL CALL

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTE

- a. Approval of the Meeting Minutes of the June 13, 2019 Regular Meeting.

Motion was made by Henry Duhart, seconded by Melvin Jones, Sr. to approve the meeting minutes of the June 13, 2019 meeting.

AYE: Charles Hayek, Henry Duhart, James Edwards, Melvin Jones, Sr., Dr.
Pinkie Hendley

Passed

6. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Any person who wishes to comment on any subject on this Agenda may be heard at this time. Please sign the sign-up sheet in order to speak. Please limit your comments to no more than three (3) minutes, as this section of the Agenda is limited to thirty minutes. The Police Community Advisory Board will not be able to take any official action under “Comments from the Public” section.

None.

7. OLD BUSINESS

- a. None.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Review of First Amendment Rights from the City Attorney Office.

City Attorney Peter Sweeney briefed Committee Members on the First Amendment during commission meetings specifically, what can be expected, what can happen or what is allowed at a public meeting and where lines can be drawn. Free Speech covers spoken words, demonstrations, acts, hand movements, volume and motion. Fort Pierce City Ordinance Section 2-26 thru 2-35 address decorum during commission meetings; governs public comments, sets time limits, states expectations of individual making comments, i.e. comments should be directed to panel, not an individual on the panel, they shall maintain decorum and avoid obscenity, vulgarity, profanity and fighting words. Public is charged with knowing what they’re supposed to do. The presiding officer can issue a warning to maintain the decorum of the meeting, can ask for the individual to step away from the podium, they can also be asked to leave the meeting if disruptive behavior continues.

Rules for slander and liable are different in the private sector than for government employees or government as a whole. Government doesn’t have the right to file a liable or slander lawsuit.

- b. Discussion of the Department’s role during commission meetings.

Staff expressed that there are procedures that govern if and when Police can take action, in response to comments and questions as to why Officers did not act at commission meeting. The public’s first amendment right have to be taken into account, as well as waiting for the presiding officer of the commission to issue a warning. Staff stated some citizens voiced concerns about safety at commission meetings, and security is being addressed. Staff reassured Members that if a person requires removal, there is a procedure for that.

Member Hendley inquired about metal detectors due to escalating violence on many fronts and Member Hayek stated his concern about the example that was set and if others will follow suit. Staff stated specific security measures are not

discussed in an open forum, but steps are being taken to ensure public safety and the safety of commissioners. Member Hendley inquired whether profanity in a public forum was a violation, Staff response was decorum and structure of commission meetings are being discussed, keeping First Amendment (free speech) rights in mind. Member Duhart asked about a temporary ban, if something physical has to happen, Staff answered that a ban was not an option currently, but if something physical did happen, Officers would not need a gavel to take action.

Member Hendley asked about verbal or physically threatening gesture, whether that is now in the criminal realm. Per Staff, there may be a criminal infraction present, but there still can be a civil first amendment violation. Officers have to be aware and cautious of being baited as well.

c. Review of Unity in the Community and plans for future events.

There were over one thousand attendees, fifty five vendors and a number of volunteers. There were a number of free resources available to citizens. Member Duhart expressed how good it was to see the number of children in attendance, and to see the interaction between the children and the Police Officers. Staff stated they were exploring holding Unity in different areas to make it more accessible to more citizens, and also the possibility of doing two per year. Also explained the reasoning behind "Prize Central", to get out the concept that youth had to earn prizes, and not expect a hand-out. Also, getting the youth interested in things outside of their norms, away from the media, such as the raft race, being outside of their box can be a tangible solution. Youth that are inspired can write about their experiences in Fort Pierce and inspire other youths to find interests, outside of the streets. Also finding things to keep adults and young adults engaged, and in not only making their community better but in changing the image of the community.

Upcoming events will be the opening of the RICH (Resources In Community Hope) House, at 2304 Avenue I, where Courageous Kids program will be expanded to include indoors activities/after school programs and all day programs when school is out and exploring options for creating a fun learning environment where community agencies and partners can be a part of the programs. There will also be programs for adults and seniors. There is also another program in the works that will give Officers a new tool for helping youths, instead of arresting them, part of which involves a shelter for if there are problems at home. This will help relations between the youth and Officers, it will show that Officers do more than just arrest people.

Member Hendley stated a better job needs to be done letting the youth know there are other jobs/opportunity than just being rappers or football/basketball players. Member Hedley pointed out the impact of stitches to riches, a free sewing class that has now turned into a fellowship within the community. They are hoping for the youth to take part, to see there are other opportunities. There also need to be vocational opportunities, to engage the youth while they are young, that we have

to take back our community to make the changes we want to see. And also to find out what the youth are interested in, i.e. photography, art, and build on that.

d. **Introduction of Community Advisory Committee at Commission**

Staff spoke of introduction of Committee Members at Commission, this is not normally done. However, the Police Department will be doing a quarterly report and Members are invited to be a part of it, and be made aware to the public. Member Hendley inquired as to whether the Committee wanted to have a forum can it be planned with the Police Department. Staff answered in the affirmative. Ideas to be sent to Member Hayek and Sergeant Braun so the planning process can be started. Staff proposed Members can get polo shirts that identifies them as Citizen Advisory Group.

9. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Any person who wishes to comment on any subject may be heard at this time. Please limit your comments to three (3) minutes or less, as directed by the Chairperson, as this section of the Agenda is limited to thirty minutes. The Police Community Advisory Committee will not be able to take any official actions under Comments from the Public.

None.

10. **STAFF COMMENTS**

None.

11. **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

- a. Henry Duhart informed panel he has taken a new job that requires training out of town and may not be present at the next meeting, but will advise if he will be in attendance. Has been working on decriminalization and would like to bring it to the committee to get the different viewpoints of Members and Staff. Would also like to speak about other commissions he works with and get input, on best way to handle for people in the community.
- b. Pinky Hendley attended Police Roll Call at Pam's Breakfast, it was well attended. Spoke of new group, offshoot of Parents of Murdered Children, Survivors of Murdered Victims Support Group, was recently installed by the Mayor. They have partnered with Lawnwood Trauma Center and Treasure Coast Hospice. Will be a meeting on 24th (August) from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm to speak of victim rights and resources. Asked if the Police Department as any kind of public service announcement video, Staff will confer with PIO to see what is available. Member Hendley asked about the procedure/policy for when a Member exited, and was reminded that Legal stated the committee would draft their own and it would be reviewed by Legal.

Member Hendley also inquired about what the community can do about the “red flags”, how they can look for them and what to do. Stated that Crime Stopper is getting more tips, that people are more comfortable calling in when Officers are not showing up at their house. Also would like for Officers to be at the Concerned Citizens meeting, and was advised that Officers do attend.

- c. James Edwards commented on today’s discussion regarding the lack of moral leadership, and the quietness of the evangelicals from pointing it out. That we have to do what we can locally to make sure we stand up and be counted.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Henry Duhart, seconded by Melvin Jones, Sr. to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 pm.

AYE: Charles Hayek, Henry Duhart, James Edwards, Melvin Jones, Sr., Dr.
Pinkie Hendley

Passed