

CITY OF FORT PIERCE
POLICE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Regular Meeting - Thursday, August 14, 2025 - 3:30 p.m.

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

Present: Melvin Jones, Sr.; Bob Burdge; (unexpired term of J. Edwards) Quincy Barr

Absent: Betty Bradwell

Staff Present: Acting Chief of Police Robert Ridle
Acting Deputy Chief Caleb Gillette
Deputy City Clerk Lisa Gittens

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

4. 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

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

AYE: Bob Burdge, Melvin Jones, Sr., (unexpired term of J. Edwards) Quincy Barr

Passed

- a. Approval of the Minutes from the July 10th, 2025 Police Community Advisory Committee Meeting

6. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Selection of members to fill the roles of Chair & Vice Chair.

No volunteers, this item is to be revisited.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Department Update

Unity in the Community Event was held last month with an estimated attendance of 1,100 visitors, most of which were children from local day camps together with over 55 community partners. The event aimed to connect community members—both adults and children—with local resources and services. There was positive feedback from both partners and attendees. The main challenge faced is the outdoor heat and there is consideration of moving the event to the Fenn Center. There is also discussion about potentially combining Unity in the Community with National Night Out to maximize turnout and better utilize resources. This decision is expected to fall under the responsibility of the next police chief.

- b. Upcoming Events

Tunnel of Hope Initiative is an ongoing initiative which involves law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other community members greeting students at local schools to foster positive relationships and show support for educators.

St. Lucie Elementary was completed earlier this week, with Fairlawn Elementary scheduled for Monday and Seamore Elementary scheduled for Monday, August 25th. This initiative helps break down barriers between officers and youth and promotes a positive image of law enforcement.

8. STAFF COMMENTS

There are ongoing union contract negotiations. Both unions have submitted salary proposals and the city provided a counterproposal. No agreement has been reached, and the process is likely to move to impasse. The City's best and final offer is expected on Monday.

Fort Pierce continues to face challenges due to financial constraints limiting the city's flexibility and officer retention is a growing issue. The department's current vacancies include two Captains, two Sergeants and approximately

twenty Officer positions open. Despite challenges, Fort Pierce remains a dynamic and rewarding environment for policing. The Police Chaplain Program was also discussed, and currently the department has three active chaplains and is seeking to expand to ten. Members advised careful selection to ensure chaplains have proper intent. Discussion on emotional strain in policing and the need for mental health resources. The department uses the CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) program, which provides confidential peer and clinical support with no command staff involvement.

9. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Bob Burge shared and offered brochures and guides from the U.S. Department of Justice and Committee members were encouraged to take and review the materials to help understand their roles and community dynamics better.

Concerns were raised over non-functioning streetlights, especially in high-traffic and residential areas. Emphasis was placed on the importance of functional lighting for safety, crime prevention, and accurate suspect descriptions.

Crime prevention through environmental design; planning and community design to deter crime (e.g., street closures, lighting improvements). Some past initiatives in Fort Pierce includes street closures to reduce traffic flow in certain areas (e.g., 17th Street, Raymond Avenue) and conducting streetlight surveys to identify outages, which enhances public safety.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 PM