



CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE

MEETING MINUTES
VALLEY AREA COMMAND COMMUNITY POLICING COUNCIL
Thursday, January 25, 2018
6:00 PM
WELLS PARK COMMUNITY CENTER
500 MOUNTAIN RD NW
ALBUQUERQUE, NM

In Attendance:

- Rowan Wymark
- Edwina Kiro
- Lava Sheets
- Commander McDonald, APD
- Officer Alberti, APD
- Lieutenant Velarde
- Deputy Chief Medina
- Commander Miller, APD
- Officer Sanchez, APD
- Chris Sylvan, CPC Manager
- Yvette Marentes, CPC Admin

Approximately 9 members of the public were in attendance.

6:00pm

Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Rowan Wymark at 5:59

She discussed the guidelines for the CPC and handed them out to the group.

Determination of a Quorum

Quorum of 3 was met at the start of the meeting

Approve Agenda

Approve November 16, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Motion was made and seconded to approve Agenda and Minutes. Agenda and Minutes were approved with no revisions.

6:05-6:10: Brief announcements

If you have signed in, please make sure that your emails are legible.

Question: A neighbor is on next door and there is a woman on the site that is upset. A man in her neighborhood was suspicious looking she has seen several times and she posted a description of the man on nextdoor.com; the post was removed as it was perceived racist. She wishes that we could make amends with her and let her back onto nextdoor.com

Rowan Wymark we are working very hard to make next-door more respectful. However it is a side conversation that should be had as we do not regulate nextdoor.com; APD can post on nextdoor.com but cannot see any of the posts that are on next-door.com

Deputy Chief Medina, Community policing is about three different things; Partnerships, problem solving and transforming the department to believing in the partnerships. We have to be careful not to confuse PR with community policing. Community policing is working with the community to find resources and develop resources. Our number one obstacle is crime, it is huge and is everyone's concern. We are going to keep working at it, and are working hard to make sure that all commanders are looking into true problem solving opportunities. We are trying to work with the community so that they trust us and know that we are here for the good of the community.

Commander Miller, traffic is horrible in this city but they are looking into it. Please let your area commander know of any problem areas.

Chris Sylvan introduced himself as the new CPC manager. He is looking forward to this new role and is up for the challenge.

Ed Harness, the director of the police oversight agency introduced himself as well and they fully support the CPC. They meet the 2nd Thursday every month at City Hall at 5pm and also have sub committees that you can join. We are very lucky to have Commander McDonald take over the Valley.

6:10-7:20: Officer Russell Alberti, Recruitment for APD Academy with Officer Anna Ericksen and Officer Larry Edmondson discussing entry criteria for APD Academy and adjustments needed for adding extra officers as outlined by Mayor Keller.

Officer Alberti, Ericksen, Edmondson presented a PowerPoint "The Process of Becoming a Police Officer." The presentation is attached to the final minutes, any questions or comments are below.

There have been two meetings with the mayor's people in the last two weeks, the new administration is getting actively involved which is very refreshing. The process is a difficult one, our standards are the highest in the country. Officer Alberti is the only recruiter for the largest agency in the state.

They have implemented a part time service aid program where the PSA's can still go to College and earn City Benefits while working part time.

Question: How long are PSA's, PSA's prior to becoming an APD Officer?
2 years however, they still must go through the recruitment process.

When did you get the online application?
About 3 years ago and it is constantly getting modified as well. There is a contract with the service biller

How many internet cards (applications) do you typically get?
About 1300

December will graduate the largest cadet class that they have had in years. The city also has to work on retaining the officers that it already has as well.

Out of 1400 applicants, how many typically graduate from the academy?
Approximately 40

How many cadet classes do you do per year?
2, they are 6.5 months long, they overlap a bit which puts pressure on the staff but they do a great job.

To help prep the younger generation with the process, they will go out to the PSA prep class and go over the website and material that is on the site. There is a lot of training material on the site and recruiters go out to other schools and help go over the process. They are trying to target recruits at a younger age so that they can learn about what they do as officers to hopefully to recruit the PSA program and then to the academy.

Can you recruit from other agencies?
Yes but we do not go to the agencies, however there are incentives offered.

How many do you have before the physical exam?
It depends on how many we test, last time we started we lost 8 at the physical test.

Psych Evaluation, they do not want people that are too passive or aggressive so on the scale of psych wellness, they look at a certain number as a lot of males sometimes test lower on maturity levels. It can take anywhere between 3.5 to 6 hours. They tell them give us who you are, not who we want you to be. These are evaluated by the behavioral sciences unit, licensed psychiatrists. This is a standardized test that is not just specific to APD. If you fail the psych test, you are automatically out for one year, you can appeal and apply with other agencies but still need to wait a year with APD. Usually it is due to maturity level.

When did this (recruitment) process get put into effect?
It has been the same process for over 30 years, the only thing that has really changed are the physical requirements. However, now the process is way more streamlined. Background checks can come back usually in about 2 months where a lot of other agencies can take 5 months to a year.

Are the applicants waiting for those 2 months?
No they continue to go through the process while waiting on background.

Who does the background checks?

We do them in house, we have background detectives.

Polygraph, if you do not get through polygraph it is discretionary on how long they want a recruit to sit out or if they sit out altogether.

No details are given as to why they did not pass.

Would you have already known if someone has a medical issue that will cause them not to pass due to the medical evaluation?

If the recruit discloses a medical issue, we will try and put them through the medical evaluation sooner so as not to waste their time.

After you have gone through the academy what is the training process?

It is at least 4 months but can go to over a year. They have to meet certain standards throughout the process. Some have a hard time getting out of on the job training (OJT.).

What is your greatest loss in this whole process?

Backgrounds, dishonesty that usually keeps them out, if they fail to disclose something.

Do you track the percentage of women in each class?

We have about 12% of women that are working as officers.

One of the problems about keeping officers here is that they are lost to other agencies that pay them more due to the fact that our officers are the best of the best.

Whose realm is it that can fix the pay issue?

The City determines the pay scale.

We are hoping that things are changing, there is a lot of hope with the new administration. We do need to make officers happier so that they can tell others about working as a police officer. We have to work on improving overall officer morale, not just money.

Do you realize that some officers have done things that make people think negatively?

Yes we understand, media also likes to focus on the negative. There are things that have happened that should have not happened. However we need to also focus on the positives too.

Chris Sylvan, Counselor Gibson did a recruiting job fair and one thing they did find is that the written test, people do not have the right skills. It is important that people do not give up if they do want to become an officer.

There are a number of different programs available as well, there is an internship program for high school and college students. The hope is that they will become officers in the future.

Ed Harness, he thinks that if we do some research on the history of the department, there was a time that the standards were lower that has caused problems for the department. If we are really going to have community policing, we need experienced and well trained officers. He doesn't think that the standards need to be lessened in anyway. We need to support and get Officer Alberti more help.

What kind of support do you get from APS?

A lot of support, they go to many of the APS schools.

Finally got the requirement passed that if you are 24 years old and have good job history and good credit, you will be able to test.

What do you think your capacity should be for cadets?

Basic staff is stretched pretty thin but they would like to see classes of 50 or more. Classroom space could be larger, the academy is pretty old but they could probably do a class of 60 at a time.

The next academy is in June, some are seated in the academy that have a job with the city to hold them over until the academy starts.

We need to look at retention as well, it is going to cost the city a lot less to keep somebody than to find someone new. We also need to really improve on the amount of people that actually show up for testing. Officer Alberti doesn't have the time to call everyone that applies online and let them know about the testing.

Who tracks retention?

HR but it is not really tracked. They are looking into a formal exit interview.

7:30: Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30