



Hampton Police Division

Office of the Chief of Police

CITIZENS POLICE ADVISORY GROUP

April 11, 2019

SUBJECT: Citizens Police Advisory Group Meeting – 6:00pm
held at HPD's Townsend Community Rm, 5th Fl.

MEMBERS & HPD PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Robert Boester, Chairman
Chief Terry Sult
Steve Bond, Assistant City Manager
Anne Andrews
James Bailey
Ann Cherry
John Gately
Jimmy Gray, Vice Mayor
Brandi Law, Deputy City Attorney

Rev. Andre McCloud
Bishop Lamont Moss
Charles Powell
Angelo Sugg, Jr.

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:

Capt. J. C. Wilkinson, 633rd SFS
(attended for Lt. Col. L. Martin)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

William Beach
Jonathan Welters

OPENING:

- Chairman, Robert Boester, opened the meeting.
- Minutes from the February 7th meeting – Chairman Boester asked for a motion to approve the minutes.
 - Motion made from the floor and seconded.
 - All approved.
 - Minutes from the February 7, 2019 meeting were approved.

DISCUSSION:

- Chief began discussing Crime Stats and community perception.
- Years ago, we did not have internet, social media, etc. that splashes information across multiple platforms; we do today which has created some misconceptions by our community on crime in Hampton.
- We are constantly dealing with information posted to social media, that isn't always accurate and trying to quell misconceptions.
- Chief called his Commanders together after recent murders to look at how to combat these problems.
- Chief discussed 5-year trends in crime for 2017 and 2018, in particular the violent crime and property crimes.
 - Violent crime for 2018 v. 2017 was down by 18.25%; most incidents were driven by robberies.
 - Overall in 1 year (2018 v. 2017), property crime was down 13%.
 - Firearm, aggravated assaults 2018 v. 2017 – down about 8.86%
- January has proven over last 5 years to be a high crime month - why?
 - Not sure why, maybe holidays, winter month, etc. unable to pinpoint exactly why this month higher each year; there are many factors that drive crime up (i.e. community involvement, peer pressure, community expectation on behavior, self-accountability, economics, weather trends, school holidays, etc.)
 - This spike in January seems to be unique to Hampton; but unable to decipher why; Chief Sult has worked in four different cities, and has not seen this type of spike elsewhere.
 - January 2018 v. 2019 – down 18.5% and overall crime down 49 incidents or 14%
- HPD Commanders meet monthly to review crime trends and what resources are needed.
- Common charge for most of the recent homicides has been possession of firearms by convicted felon, which is a mandatory 5-year sentence; this is not deterring them from committing these crimes.
 - Analyzed these cases for a 3-year period and both suspect and victims lead high-risk lifestyles or knew each other.
 - Last year about 40% of homicide suspects were from other surrounding jurisdictions.
 - Media doesn't always portray accurate information or the full story.
- Common concern with these cases is trying to follow them from beginning to end as they make it through the judicial system (courts) to see what the outcomes are.

- Many times the disposition (ruling) is down-graded to a less severe consequence or court dates continue to be postponed so that by the time the case is heard, the court ruling was less of a consequence.
- One suggestion would be to have a Court Watch Group to hold judges accountable and monitor cases as they progress through the judicial system from beginning to end; we have a very lenient court system.
- HPD Investigations noticed this same theme, so we had PERF¹ come in and audit our investigation cases to determine how we could provide the prosecutors with better information, especially on firearm cases, so that the best outcome for these violent crimes are awarded; only a few recommendations were offered by PERF¹ which have been implemented.
 - HPD and Newport News PD also purchased jointly a new NIBIN² system to better track shell casings and link investigative cases; HPD has one full time person dedicated to reviewing shell casings using NIBIN².
 - Before obtaining the NIBIN² system, it would take up to 6 months to a year before we would receive results back.
 - With the NIBIN² system, it now takes us only about 48-72 hours to turn-around the results which has increased the quality of our investigations, many times linking the firearms to other similar cases not just in our city but in other jurisdictions as well.
- Then we have to consider how do we set our inmates up for success when they are released from jail?
 - Re-entry program – thought we had one, but is not as robust as it could be.
- HPD is doing everything we can do in the criminal justice system to ensure a good prosecution of each case.
- ACM Steve Bond: As a former prosecutor, sometimes cases would end up in agreements (plea agreements) for convictions especially if there were no witnesses; there are lots of impacts that direct whether or not a case can be proven in court.
 - Sometimes there may be separate charges that are combined into one case for prosecution before the case reaches the judge.
 - Many different dynamics occur with each case and convictions differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.
- Mental Health Issues
 - Law Enforcement is being tasked more and more with having to deal with mental health issues (i.e. opioid epidemic) that society isn't quite sure how to deal with.

¹ [Police Executive Research Forum](#)

² [National Integrated Ballistic Information Network](#)

- Officers have to deal with strategies to help drug abusers instead of dealing with the criminal aspect.
- Jails are the largest mental health provider in the criminal justice system.
- Re-Entry Program
 - For those being released from jail, need to establish a re-entry program that sets them up for success; otherwise, they are caught in a vicious cycle.
 - Most offenders in federal prisons are there because of drug violations and other violent criminal charges against them.
 - Need to get them rehabilitated to set them up for success, not a continuous cycle in and out of jail.
- Question: When hear statement: “Hampton is a safe place.” Is it?
 - Yes, it is a safe, but Hampton has a dense population made up of blue collar, military, shipyard personnel or other similar professions with non-crime areas and crime areas or pockets where crime is occurring.
 - But, then we must consider the gang dynamics because more often than not, those committing the crimes are somehow related to gangs.
- Crime: Perception or Reality
 - One neighborhood in the City is very connected to social media, and is planning to expand cameras in their area; they even have their own crime page.
 - Only takes 1 or 2 incidents to create the perception that crime is high; but because not all incidents are reported to police, we are unable to account in our statistics for that activity.
 - We always encourage citizens to call and report something suspicious, because if you think someone else might have reported it and they didn't, we won't know and are unable to respond or document those instances; there is a difference between reported and unreported crimes.
 - This is why HPD tracks neighborhoods and their activity.
- NEXTDOOR is a great app for neighborhoods but HPD has limited capabilities to send or receive information using this app; we can only receive posts.
- HPD is slowly moving to RING's app called [Neighbors](#).
 - This app allows citizens to post videos from any type of camera, or to report suspicious activity.
 - HPD can see every post and share the information including the video to officers.
 - Our Analysts are able to review the posts to determine if there is any link to other similar activity throughout the city or other jurisdictions.

- HPD can also alert and poll citizens for any suspicious activity.
- And, for about every 20 subscribers that sign up from Hampton, HPD will receive a free RING camera (doorbell) to give to citizens.
- We want to have neighbors watching neighbors through video.
- Death / Suicide v. Homicides
 - Homicide – is the unlawful killing of a human being by another; but ruled justifiable
 - Death by suicide - death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with intent to die as a result of the behavior.
 - Gunshot injuries – 2017 v. 2018
 - Injured by gunshots – decreased
 - Deceased v. not deceased – trending downward
- ACM S. Bond, Assistant City Manager and licensed attorney
 - Spent 7.5 years in City Attorney's office
 - Prior to that, was a prosecutor in Norfolk and Newport News, prosecuting homicides and child sexual assaults
 - Personal Interest:
 - Issue with black males nationwide; Hampton at least 85% are black males
 - Black males are the predominant perpetrators but also the victims as well.
 - Education level of those committing homicide crimes; socio economics come into play when looking at data for gunshot injury data.
 - HCS has a 93% graduation rate; perception is that we have a high drop-out rate; but that is not true.
 - Because of the Academies of Hampton, HCS graduates have a higher rate of obtaining jobs right out of high school than years ago.
 - When sentencing is issued by courts, for murders or violent crime, there are sentencing guidelines and parameters within a set range, if sentencing is outside those guidelines, courts must file a report why they issued a sentence differently.
 - Hampton is one of the Cities United that works to find strategies for black male achievement.
 - How do we provide a true obtainable hope for people who feel hopeless to make better choices?

- It's a community issue that involves police, schools, and other public and private partnerships.
- Hampton is hosting the 2019 Cities United Convention; some of the concerns that will be looked at include:
 - What is our role to play and how can we impact change?
 - Every life matters; how do we make intervention that give folks a real chance of hope? A better life?
 - What can we do as a community and individuals to make this happen?
- Johns Hopkins University partnership
 - Working with Johns Hopkins on a social autopsy program for homicides.
 - Looking to identify common factors, like socio-economics, victimology and suspect-ology, education and other factors that play a part in these cases.
- Hampton is doing a good job with graduation rates; but you don't hear about what the schools are doing to keep the kids in schools; we need to do a better job at emphasizing our graduation rates.
 - Need to look at the whole picture to include demographics, beyond race and include the socio-economics in our communities as well.
 - Look at infant mortality, drop-out rates, health rates, teen pregnancy, medical related calls for service and other factors that are life critical events that affect the socio-economic status.
- HPD has worked closely with HCS to help implement the Academies of Hampton and remains a big supporter of the program.
 - The Academies offers the opportunity for students to gain full time employment right out of high school and make a true living with benefits.
- There is a small percentage of the black males in our city that are committing these crimes but we do not want to dehumanize or target that population.
- Opioid overdoses are predominantly white males.
- City is working on the misperceptions.
- National statistics show that if you broke down the crime, it's approximately 1200 neighborhoods across the nation that account for all the murders in the country, which is about the size of Rhode Island.
- Media does not report the entire story, which reflects the perception by citizens.
- Hampton has many positive African-American role models, Mayor, Vice-Mayor, Sheriff, Commonwealth Attorney, and Assistant City Manager.

- HPD's Social Media is taking ownership and putting out the complete story first before the media can, while also trying to promote the positive stories as well.
- To improve crime, we need to improve economic development.
- To draw higher, executive level and corporate businesses that produce jobs, we have to improve our housing market.
- This evening we are focused on the perception; while some perception may be reality, how do we put into context what is really being done, the real issues or root causes.
- These statistics have all been shared with City Council.
- We can only report what is reported to HPD; these numbers are based on what is reported to HPD.
- HPD does not shy away from comparing its numbers with the other localities.
- Violent Crime and Gang Unit: One gang officer is assigned to the Community Response Team and they handle gun, gang and drug interdiction; federal partners are involved with this as well.
 - HPD is focused on Guns, Gangs & Drugs.
- Lt. Col. Martin reported that he met with the Mayor and Col. Tyler and wanted to pass on his gratitude for this committee and all that the City is doing for the Hampton community.
- Collision Reporting Center (CRC) has already rolled out and is working very well; few minor glitches (software related), but have had no complaints to date.
 - Have seen a 30%-40% reduction in officer time for minor accidents.

NEXT MEETING:

- Thursday, June 6, 2019, 6pm**
 - Location: HPD's Townsend Community Room, 40 Lincoln Street, 5th Floor.
- Chairman thanked everyone for attending and for HPD working so very hard on these issues.

Meeting adjourned at 1922 hours.

*****Subsequent to this meeting, the June meeting was moved to Thursday, June 13, 2019, 6pm.***