

Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2017

12650 Detroit Ave., Lakewood, OH, 6:00 PM

In attendance were members: Gary Rick, Tariq Ata, Chitra Walker, Rachel Donaldson, Sam Gantous, Barbara Howell, Bernadette Elston, Jessica Sloan, and Harry Lader. Cindy Marx (City Council Liaison), Melissa Garrett (Community Relations Specialist), Mayor Summers, and Police Chief Malley.

Chief Malley gave an overview of how policies are formulated from Lexipol, a national firm, providing best practices from Federal and state and court decisions, which are ever-changing and needs to be updated regularly as laws change.

Policies are available to all police officers and they need to sign off to show that they understand them. Daily training using scenarios help officers understand policies that affect how the police officers should respond in different situations.

Use of Force Policy, Police Officer training and employment: Chief Malley reviewed Use of Force Policy, Policy Manual 300 of the Lakewood Police Dept. which is available on the Lakewood website.

These policies also apply to off-duty officers. Off-duty employment must be approved by Chief Malley. Training on the policies is done once/year followed up by 4 in-service training sessions per year using relevant situations, and also using simulator video training with weapons.

Use of deadly force is dictated by the Supreme Court and applied to the municipal level. Accountability is at the local level. If an officer observes another officer who used inappropriate force, then that officer is also liable.

Prospective police officers have a background investigation, ranked based on test results, take a polygraph, and are interviewed by the mayor who tries to find out their motives for their desire to take a job in Lakewood. There is an 18 month probation period. As a condition of hiring, there is a psychological testing exam, meeting with a psychologist, and interview with the Mayor. Mayor Summers tries to impress upon them that their family is living here and what their behavior might be like in that situation. While there is no additional psychological testing after they are hired, annual reviews are conducted, attendance issues and complaints are reviewed, and an employee assistance program is available. As a result of the Madison Library incident, additional emphasis has been placed on de-escalation training. There is additional training for situations dealing with autistic children, including a registry that police officers have access to, so that officers are also prepared for issues with mental health crises. There is also a juvenile detective's bureau for juvenile and sex crimes. This also has a juvenile diversion program to help modify behavior.

Any time that force is used, a report is made. Last year there have been 19 incidences of use of force reports. This year so far, there have been only six use of force reports.

Police Officer and community involvement: Police are involved in the DARE program with all 5th graders for nine weeks to create a relationship with the officer; they also work with seventh graders to help in decision making in addition to drugs training; also with high school program, and various other programs like Cones with Cops and summer programs in the parks to interact with kids to create relationships and support. There is also the Division of Youth which is comprised of social workers that work with families at risk to help with public safety and social issues.

Madison library incident: The city is being sued over the Madison library incident so they can't talk about it directly. However, they said that this was the first time in 16 years that Lakewood has been sued. The officer acted outside of policy and was punished by a five day suspension and prohibited from working off duty in addition to retraining. Chief Malley said that many factors go into making a decision concerning punishment including: the seriousness of the accident, employee background, the action taken by the officer and why, and what punishment will serve as a deterrent to others. In this case, there was no arrest, so the officer could have handled things differently. We discussed whether the library in fact needs an officer present, which puts the officer in a different role than his normal job. When an officer works off duty to provide security, his is there to enforce the laws of the business. There is a long history of using police officers in the library to maintain order when librarians cannot do so themselves.

Possible Community Conversations: We discussed having public conversations on topics like the use of inappropriate use of force, "nuisance" ordinances where landlords are held responsible for 911 calls possibly resulting in eviction of tenants who may be victims, and domestic policy issues, having a panel discussions by bringing in outside experts such as social workers, police enforcement, recruitment, and training experts, and experts on policy creation and enforcement.

Community conversations would be an important way to get information out to inform the public regarding community and police policies regarding minorities, police training using video simulation scenarios, the use of police video cams to record all police actions.

Mayor Summers mentioned that the city is looking into new software for a citizen's portal and will need input from our committee to help decide on the kind of information is needed. Chief Malley and Mayor Summers mentioned the Citizens Academy, which gives citizens an inside view of the how the police dept. operates. They meet Thurs. evenings for 12 weeks starting Jan. 11. Melissa said that she would rearrange any committee meetings to avoid a conflict.

Next Steps: Jessica and Rachel will solidify the concepts for community conversation topics.

Next meeting: December 14 followed by a holiday party.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Lader Secretary

Dated: December 13, 2017