



**The Greensboro Criminal Justice Advisory Commission held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, July 15, 2021 virtually via Zoom.**

**Commissioners Present:** T. Phillips, J. Webb, N. Malpass K. Brown, F. Jalloh, D. J. Obrien

**Commissioners Absent:** C. Brown & Q. Brown, S. Friedland

**Staff Present:**

Trey Davis, Assistant City Manager

Latisha McNeil, Criminal Justice Administrator

Chief Brian James, Greensboro Police Department

**Legal Department Presents:**

**I. Call to Order:**

Chair Jaye Webb called the meeting to order at 6:35pm

**II. Update from Chief James**

Chief James spoke about the policy changes made by GPD last year. He stated that the department had made about 40 policy changes. Many of the changes were due to changes in the state legislator. Chief James spoke about the banning of a chokehold except in the case of deadly force. He stated that chokeholds are not something that is taught in GPD's police academy. Chief James stated that unless imamate dangers are occurring, the policy instructed to issue a verbal warning before using force. He further said that the department made changes to the policy for shooting into or from a moving vehicle. The department is constantly looking at ways to improve GPD policies and be proactive in its review of policies. Chief James went on to talk about a policy the department created on officers' associations with divisive groups.

He continues the discussion by talking about the behavioral health response team. The teams consist of officers and clinicians who answer mental health calls for service. So far this year, the group has responded to more than 2700 calls for service, which is about 70% of the mental calls for service. If the behavioral health response team is not available, the dispatcher can ask CIT officers to come to the scene. GPD just completed the recertification for Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) review. They do not anticipate any issues with the recertification approval.

The GPD worked with various community partners on the 500 jobs for teen's summer program. Five hundred twenty-five teens have been connected with jobs from over 26 agencies. The majority of the jobs will last beyond the summer. The goal is to decrease the number of negative interactions youth have with the police. The department is focused on thinking outside the box in creative ways to address issues in the community that can lead to crime. The department will continue the National Night Out celebrations and Operation Pass, which provide backpacks and school supplies to the youth. GPD has connected with Greensboro Housing Authority to do operation pass.

Chief James also spoke of the police departments' partnership with Research Triangle Institute (RTI) to evaluate calls for service and provide alternative responses for calls for service.

Commission Malpass asked a selection of resubmitted questions from the GCIAC.



**Question 1:** How can the GCJAC assist in communicating these policy changes to the public?

Chief James stated that he would work with ACM Davis and CJ Admin to help make sure that the GCJAC has the most up-to-date policy changes. He also suggested that the GCJAC could always go to the GPD directives on the webpage, and the commission could also put the new directive on its webpage.

**Question 2:** When the GCJAC gives a policy recommendation to the GPD and City Council, much work goes into it. As a commission, we strive to present well-crafted written recommendations for consideration. With that in mind, why does the GCJAC not receive written responses to its recommendations? Can this be something that happens going forward?

Chief James stated that he did not see an issue providing the GCJAC with written responses. ACM Davis noted that it would be something that they would need to discuss but that there was no problem keeping the communication open between the police and GCJAC.

Chair Webb spoke about the summer teen program initiated by GPD. He asked the chief if there was a way to continue following up with the youth who participated in the summer jobs program. The chief stated that it would be difficult to track the teens. The hope is that the City can continue to carry on the program with other community partners. The chief stated that some of the employers involved set up very comprehensive programs for the teen. There may be an opportunity for the teen to continue their employment after the summer and transition into a full-time job once they complete high school.

Chair Webb asked how the GCJAC could help the GPD take an active role in reducing violent crime in the City.

Chief James stated that he would like to see the GCJAC take an active partnership with GPD and go into the community to give a message about reducing violent crime. The Crime Stoppers and Gun Stoppers programs have been very helpful in solving crimes. He stated that maybe the GCJAC could place information about those programs on the GCJAC website.

Chair Webb asked if the department has felt the effects of officers quitting or retiring and the low morale other departments are seeing around the country. Chief James stated the police department's morale is good. In addition, he says that the community has been very encouraging to the officers. He also noted that the GPD would have the highest recruiting class that they have seen in four years this September.

Commissioner Jalloh asked what the GPD is doing to combat gun violence in the city. Chief James stated that the department is focusing on repeat offenders and locations. He said that there had been 20 homicides this year compared to 29 at this time last year. In addition, the department has taken over 1000 guns off the street this year compared to 500 last year. Therefore, he believed that they are focusing their efforts in the right direction. He also feels that the community connections have strengthened since the previous year.

Commissioner K. Brown asked how the GPD would like the GCJAC to give the department feedback on issues and concerns that they received from the community. Chief James stated that the information could come to the CJ Admin, and she can forward it to the appropriate people.

### **III. GCJAC Subcommittee Reports**

#### **Policy Subcommittee**



Commissioner K. Brown provided an update on the policy subcommittee. The subcommittee met with Deputy Chief Biffle to talk about officers' communication, courtesy, and de-escalation training. Chief Biffle spoke to the group about the type of communications officers receive in the academy and during in-service training. The committee is now looking at the information received and will be looking at how GPD and other agencies practice the policies.

#### **Education and Outreach Subcommittee**

Commissioner Jalloh gave the report from the subcommittee. Due to scheduling conflicts, the subcommittee may change their meetings to around lunchtime instead of 5:30 pm. More information will be forthcoming. The group talked about reaching out to Legal Aid for assistance with the Understanding your rights forum. The Know Your Rights brochure is in final edits and should be ready for National Night Out on August 3, 2021. All commissioners will receive copies of the brochure for them to hand out as they see fit. As speaking opportunities and community outreach increase, the committee stressed the importance of giving handouts to the public. The group talked about the upcoming GCJAC meeting with Chief James and ensuring they can have questions to ask. One such question would be. How can the GCJAC help to educate the community on changes with the department?

#### **IV. Additional Commissioners Comments**

Commissioner K. Brown said the GCJAC was a vessel to bring information from the community to the GPD and use the information they received to make policy recommendations.

CJ Admin asked a question from the chat if there are any updates on In-person meetings. ACM Davis stated that the city is trying to maintain consistency with board and commission meetings. Still, if the board would like to draft a proposal to meet in person, he would take it to the other city leadership for discussion. Commissioner Phillips stated that the next PCRB hearing should be in person.

Commissioner Jalloh stated that she had received an inquiry from a community member in cybercrime. Is there a formal way to report cybercrimes? ACM Davis noted that in many instances, the police department could not recover money lost in cybercrimes. Still, they can provide the victim with the report that they can take to their banking institution. He also stated that there had been some campaigns around staying vigilant to cybercrime. He said that he would talk with Chief James about doing more campaigns and the family justice center has some resource material on helping people be more aware of cybercrime.

Commissioner K. Brown stated that she is often asked for updates on data and policy by community members. She wanted to know what is the best way to be equipped to answer those questions. ACM Davis stated that she can always ask questions and send emails to get her information. CJ admin said that if the commissioners have, specific data ask to send it in, and she will work to get the data, and if the information is not available, she will advise the group.

Commissioner Jalloh asked about the "8 Can't-Wait policy" and if the policies can be overturned. ACM Davis stated that concerning "8 can't wait," policy changes were made, but there are extenuating circumstances where certain uses of force would be allowed. He also addressed the narrative within the community that the policy should be ordinances. He advised that group that descending councils or chiefs could undo any policy or ordinance so the idea that making policies ordinances does not protect them from being changed. He also stated that he could not see a

future chief changing Chief James's policies around eight can't wait. Commissioner K. Brown said that ordinances have to be changes publicly, but the police can make changes privately. In addition, some of the policy changes need to be in place longer to obtain data to measure the effectiveness.

CJ Admin McNeil informed that group that NACOLE just published their study on Civilian Oversight. Other agencies across the country have reached out to understand the work that GCJAC is doing in Greensboro. Other cities have been very impressed with the level of detail and commitment the commission takes to bring forth meaningful and serious recommendations for change.

**V. Adjourn.** The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 pm.