

**MINUTES OF COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, 11/8/11, 4:15 P.M.**

Board Members Present: Cathy Niiro, Bonnie LaForest, Jo Balda, Gene Barner, Barb Buchanan
Not Present: Dave Thomason, Ethelinda Larcena, Beth Connors, Lauren Nelson
Dept. Staff Present: Chief Rick Wallace, Martha Folsom

Prior to calling the meeting to order, LaForest said that she was being asked questions at work about the CAB and their function and duties, as she feels that perhaps it is being questioned as to giving her time off from work to attend meetings. Chief Wallace explained his feelings about the Board and their importance and offered to talk to someone at LaForest's office if that would help.

The meeting was called to order by Barner at 4:15 p.m. in the Police Department Conference Room.

AGENDA TOPICS

1. **September Minutes:** No discussion. Balda moved to approve the September minutes, Niiro seconded. Unanimous approval. The September minutes were approved as presented.
2. **Pertinent Updates:** Chief Wallace continued discussion on LaForest's questions about if there was any documentation about the Board's functions and duties, and accomplishments. He said that he hopes no one (on the Board) feels that they are wasting their time, and that he is glad that we don't have situations here where citizens are generally unhappy with the Police Department. He said that we do get complaints about specific instances sometimes, but is glad that we do not have a situation where there is organized, concentrated complaining about how we do our job. He feels this is a testament to the men and women of the Department. He feels that the CAB contributes significantly to the community, even if people are not "beating our doors down" to complain to the CAB about the Police Department. There was discussion of public notice for CAB meetings, and Chief Wallace will check with City Clerk Connie Wheeler to see if that is being done. Folsom said she has emailed notice to the Whidbey News-Times two months in a row for inclusion in their "Whidbey Activities" section, but the notice has not been put in the paper either time.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. **Prescription Drug Take Back Day:** Barner asked how this turned out. Chief Wallace said there were three areas where people could drop off prescription drugs – in Langley, Coupeville and Oak Harbor. He said we took in a significant amount. The DEA takes the drugs and disposes of them. It is a very popular program. Barner asked if it would help if CAB members were involved in some way. Chief Wallace said that a commissioned officer has to actually take the drugs, but the CAB could be present. LaForest said that she thought it was something the CAB could help with. Buchanan and she and Balda helped out on the last Take Back Day.
2. **Speeding in School Zones:** Balda mentioned that she was seeing a lot of drivers on Midway who were not following the 20 mph limit. Chief Wallace said he thought that the flashing lights would be the solution, but we are seeing violators, and our traffic officer writes a lot of tickets.
3. **Traffic Light Cameras:** LaForest said that she thought that traffic cameras were the best thing that ever came along. Chief Wallace said they are a good tool, but they are being challenged, and eventually removed in a lot of communities. Barner said that in the Phoenix area, hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent on red light and photo radar cameras, and the photo radar are all gone, but the red light cameras stayed. He said it was due to legal challenges. Chief Wallace said they are effective and fairly reliable, but that people just don't seem to like them.

4. **Chief's Concerns:** Barner asked Chief Wallace if there was any particular issue, concern or piece of information or feedback that he would have liked to have received from the public this year and did not get. He said that perhaps this could be an action item (for the CAB) for next year. Chief Wallace said that he could not think of anything.
5. **Homicides:** Buchanan asked if there was any information Chief Wallace could provide on the two homicide cases. Chief Wallace said that the Sheriff's Office was overwhelmed, particularly when the second crime scene was discovered, and we took on the search for the suspect in the City. We were tracking him by his cell phone and the Lieutenants did a great job of setting up a perimeter, and he was taken into custody without incident by Officer Cedric Niiro. This was a good thing considering that, at that point in time, we were under the distinct impression that the suspect was in possession of at least one firearm, and that was conveyed as the cause of death. The suspect is defending himself, and we have received a Public Records request from him. Niiro asked if he had been charged with the second crime, and Chief Wallace said not yet. Discussion was held on a possible motive for the crimes, and the location of the crime scenes. The suspect's relatives all came to the Police Department that day, as it started looking like he may be trying to kill further family members, and was looking for his mother. Discussion moved to issues of informing the public, and how fast the information and rumors spread that day. Chief Wallace said we are looking into a program offered by WSP for sending out information via auto-dial to specific geographic areas. There may also be the capability to send information via email and text. The problem would be finding someone to "man" it when an incident is occurring and everyone in the department is occupied with that.
6. **Nationwide EAS Test:** Barner asked about the Community Alert the Police Department had sent out earlier in the day, about the nationwide EAS (Emergency Alert System) test that would occur on November 9, 2011. He read that it will not say "this is a test" and wondered if that was normal. Chief Wallace said that he had heard that they were going to put that back in ("this is a test") as there would be too much blowback, with people inundating 911 centers with phone calls wondering what was going on. NOTE: At the end of the meeting, just prior to adjournment, Chief Wallace re-read the email to the CAB. It said that the audio portion of the alert would state that it was a test, but that the text message scrolling on TV screens would not indicate that it was a test.
7. **Election Night:** Barner asked if we anticipated any problems with it being election night, as it had been a pretty contentious election. Chief Wallace said no problems were anticipated.
8. **State Budget Cuts:** Niiro asked if we would be affected by the State budget cuts. Chief Wallace said there is always a trickle down effect. Apparently, the Governor is trying to recall the monies that cities get from liquor enforcement, and other pass through funds. The State Basic Law Enforcement Academy is no longer free to departments, but will cost over \$3000 per attendee, and this cost will go up if the Governor's budget passes. The effect is that agencies will start recruiting experienced officers from other agencies, to avoid the training costs. He thinks that the State may head in the direction of a "pay your own way" through the BLEA, where the agency does not pay, the candidate officer does. This has been presented by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) in the past, but was not instituted.
9. **HSRO Position:** Niiro asked if there was any word on the HSRO position (re-instituting it). Chief Wallace said that, in the past, the cost was split 50-50% with the School District, and both OHPD and the School District had an equal say in the officer's duties and responsibilities. He said it was a successful program and both parties were always able to work through any issues. He said that he doesn't see the School District's budget improving, and sees that there may be a push to reinstate this position, and if the costs are not split 50-50%, but the City pays all costs for the officer, then that position is more likely to be the first one "cut" (moved back to Patrol) if there are budget issues.

Adjourn: Buchanan motioned to adjourn; LaForest seconded.
The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m. on 11/8/11.

The next CAB meeting will be held on Tuesday, 1/10/2012 in the OHPD Conference Room.

Prepared by M. Folsom