

Sussex County Southeast Regional Accountability Committee

Quarterly Meeting November 14, 2024, 1 PM

32 West Ave, Ocean View, DE

Present: Chairperson Gayle Marie Brown Driver, Esq., Mr. Denny Pridgeon, Pastor Ethan Magee, Mr. Scott Mumford, Ms. Claudia Rogers, Esq., Mr. Gregory Flynn, Chief Jason Lovins, Chief Michael Morrissey, Chief Ken McLaughlin, Chief Constance Speake

Absent: Ms. Lauren Weaver, Mr. Ed Klima, Mr. Ian McCauley, Esq.

1. CALL TO ORDER/Pledge of Allegiance

2. ROLL CALL

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

4. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson Driver asked if anyone had any questions or corrections to the minutes from the April 24, 2024 meeting. Chief Speake asked to correct the number of full-time Dewey Beach officers from three to thirteen. There were no other corrections brought up by the committee. Mr. Pridgeon made a motion to approve the minutes with the one correction. Ms. Rogers seconded the motion, the vote passed, the motion was carried unanimously, and the minutes were approved as amended.

5. OLD BUSINESS

Chairperson Driver noted that the committee does not have a lot of old business as this is only the second meeting and this is all new to everyone. She explained that the state passed House Bill 206 requiring all police departments in Delaware to establish a Police Accountability Committee (PAC) either on their own or with other departments and so this PAC was started.

Chairperson Driver explained steps taken by the PAC since the last meeting-

- Ms. Kendahl Hearn was hired as Administrative Assistant for the PAC
- A website has been set for the PAC ([SCSRPAC.com](https://www.scsrpack.com))

Chairperson Driver said that during the first meeting, a question came up about whether some type of waiver would be necessary for PAC members. Chairperson Driver determined that since this PAC is not like the New Castle County Police Accountability Board which is a county PAC where members have more authority and review police reports and personnel records, no waiver is necessary at this time for this PAC. This PAC is supposed to review policies and give assistance, interact with the community, and be a face in the community on behalf of the police departments. Waivers will be needed for ride-alongs and waivers from the departments in the PAC will be available to PAC members.

Chairperson Driver asked that each department submit their policies so that members can review them. Members will not change the policies but they may make recommendations. If they review something that is not public information, they may need a waiver agreeing that they will not divulge that information to the public.

Chief McLaughlin encouraged departments to add the PAC website link to their town and/or department websites. He also mentioned that all of the departments currently in the PAC

utilize Lexipol for their policies and policies are very similar. Lexipol monitors legislative decisions and case law and notifies departments quickly to changes that affect their policies. Chief Lovins asked if PAC members could be added to department Lexipol accounts with read only access as the policy manuals are quite large and frequently updated and it would be much better for PAC members to have access to electronic versions. He said he would reach out to Lexipol about this. Chief Lovins also noted that it isn't possible to easily identify differences between his department's policies and the policies of the other departments. He thinks it would be beneficial for PAC members to take the time to read the policies and discuss the differences between the various departments' policies which could provide valuable insight. It was agreed that PAC members should be given access to manuals for all departments in the PAC.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion and vote on PAC Bylaws

A copy of the bylaws (operational guidelines) was distributed to the committee and Chairperson Driver asked if everyone had read them over and if anyone had any questions. Mr. Flynn made a motion to accept the bylaws, Mr. Mumford seconded the motion. Motion to accept bylaws passed unanimously.

Chairperson Driver noted that Article IV, Section 1 of the bylaws states that the PAC should have two community members from each jurisdiction and Article X sets out the requirements for other jurisdictions interested in joining the PAC. Ms. Rodgers asked if there was a limit to the number of departments the regional PAC would consider accepting into the PAC. Chairperson Driver said that since all of the departments in the PAC are so small, it makes sense to have the Sussex County Regional PAC and that it will be up to the PAC whether or not they accept more departments in the future.

B. Vote on accepting the Dagsboro Police Department's request to join the PAC

Chief Disciullo from Dagsboro Police Department completed the required steps for consideration and must be approved by two-thirds majority vote of existing PAC members.

Pastor Magee motioned to accept Dagsboro Police Department into the PAC. Ms. Rodgers seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous among the six out of nine PAC voting members in attendance, Dagsboro Police Department was officially welcomed into the PAC, and Chief Disciullo and his community representative, Holly Stiles, were asked to join the other members at the table. Ms. Stiles has already attended PAC training in Dover and looks forward to more training.

Chief Disciullo thanked the group and introduced the Dagsboro Mayor, Mr. William Chandler, and Dagsboro Town Administrator, Ms. Cynthia Brought, who were in attendance.

C. Next Steps – Discussion

Chairperson Driver mentioned that PAC members must complete 20 hours of training within one year of joining the PAC. Activities previously discussed include ride-alongs and community events. She said Ocean View often has training at their department and she was able to attend a full day simulator training which she enjoyed. Several members participated in Ocean View's Cops & Goblins. Members can pick activities they think will help them. When members get access to department policies and start reviewing them, they might come across areas where they would like training. Everyone should do a ride-along and members should engage with their

Police Chiefs to find out what they are seeing and their concerns so they can bring those items to the PAC for discussion.

Chief Lovins asked if there would be a log book to tell what training members have had. Chairperson Driver asked the Chiefs to talk about the types of training they think would be beneficial and work with their PAC members. Chief McLaughlin said members should email Ms. Hearn so she can track training for the group. He also mentioned that Ms. Hearn communicates with Director Moriarty at POST (Police Officer Standards and Training) to make sure the PAC is in compliance with state PAC requirements. Chief Lovins said they could have Simulator training for PAC members at SBPD. Chief McLaughlin asked if a date should be set for Simulator training as well as an overview of Use of Force with different devices. He thought this training should be four hours but could possibly be eight hours. Mr. Pridgeon asked where he could find training opportunities. Chairperson Driver said there would be a place on the website for that soon. Chief McLaughlin suggested all members should go on a ride-along at their departments and members are welcome to sit in on training at OVPD where appropriate. He said they were having K9 casualty care training at Camp Barnes Monday and Tuesday, November 18-19, 8:30 AM- 4 PM and if anyone wanted to sit in on that, they should contact him.

Chairperson Driver asked if there was a particular day of the week that worked better for PAC members. Some members mentioned that they are employed but could possibly adjust their schedule if given notice. Cpl/1 Nicholas Harrington said December 9- 13, 2024, he would be available to do Simulator training at OVPD.

Chief Lovins suggested that it would be beneficial for members to do ride-alongs at one or more of the other departments and not just their own. They may be able to bring back information to their department on how something is done differently somewhere else. He said members are also welcome to come in and tour South Bethany's Police Department.

Chief Speake said Dewey Beach will hold their seasonal police academy several Saturdays in April and for several days in May. They have scenario training as well as other types of training and members are welcome to attend to see what they teach the seasonal officers and what is expected of the seasonal officers. She will send the dates for the seasonal training and said everyone is welcome to do ride-alongs in Dewey. Chief Disciullo said members may come to Dagsboro for ride-alongs as well. Chief McLaughlin mentioned that all of the towns have various community events which PAC members should attend.

Ms. Stiles asked about Narcan training. This is available at OVPD monthly (third Thursday) and members are encouraged to attend that as part of their training. There is a link on OVPD's website under Community Programs. Ms. Stiles said the training she attended at Dover PD is the first Thursday of the month but they are skipping December. January will be class 3 of 4 but they will have a makeup class. She said it was super interesting.

Chief McLaughlin said there had been questions about FOIA and this committee does comply with FOIA requirements. The meeting was posted in the Cape Gazette and Coastal Point, meetings are videotaped and the videos are posted.

Chairperson Driver also recommends CERT (Citizens Emergency Response Team) training at OVPD.

D. Potential field trips - tour of SUSCOM, SCI

Chief McLaughlin said three places he thinks would be good for members to visit to understand the dynamics of Sussex County would be Sussex Communications Center (SUSCOM), local prison (SCI- Sussex Correctional Institution), and courts (Magistrate Court, Superior Court, Court of Common Pleas).

Chairperson Driver asked who was available the week of December 9- 13th to possibly set up Simulator training. Several departments have trainers for this training so those who can't make the group training can arrange to have the training another time.

E. Location of next meeting

Chairperson Driver mentioned that the meetings can be held at any one of the jurisdictions in the PAC. Chief Lovins said South Bethany's Town Manager agreed to holding a meeting in their town hall. The next quarterly meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, February 13th, 2025 at 1 PM at South Bethany Town Hall, 402 Evergreen Rd, South Bethany Beach, Delaware.

7. REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Chairperson Driver said there are currently no committees but that maybe a Training Committee could be established to seek out training and post on the PAC website.

8. REPORT OF STAFF

Ms. Hearn asked that members email her with training they have completed. Chief McLaughlin asked to have a calendar on the PAC website with available training. Ms. Hearn said that could be done. Ms. Rodgers asked if there was a way to let other members know if members are planning to attend training. Ms. Hearn said we will try to get something like that on the PAC website and/or email members about available training.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dagsboro Mayor, William Chandler, wanted clarification on when members might have to sign a waiver. It was explained that this would only be necessary if PAC members were viewing sensitive information like personnel records and probably won't be necessary for this PAC. Members will have to complete waivers for ride-alongs and each department has their own. Mayor Chandler asked how the PAC is funded and if the state provided funding. Chief McLaughlin said each department that wanted to join the regional PAC signed an MOU and each town is putting in \$2,000 per year, mostly to fund the PAC Administrative Assistant. He said this was an unfunded mandate but every police department in the state of Delaware is required have their own PAC or to be part of a regional PAC. Chairperson Driver mentioned that HB 206, Title 11, Chapter 84, sets out the responsibilities of a police accountability committee which are to "provide advice to departments on policy, training, and other issues related to or affecting the department and the community served by the department."

10. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Flynn made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Rodgers seconded the motion and meeting was adjourned at 2:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Kendahl Hearn, SCSRPAC Administrative Assistant

Video of Meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OdCOA6vyh0>