

PBAB Draft Minutes 1-19-23:

Present: Amara Dunn (AD) (chair), Andrew Spink (AS) (secretary), James McCorkle (James M), Stephanie Newcomb (SN) (City Comptroller) (via Zoom)

Absent: Jonathan Millis, Michele Neary, John Lynch, Robert Maclean, David Strickland (alternate), Frank Gaglianese (City Council Liaison)

AD: There is confusion as to whether Jonathan M. wants to continue on the PBAB. He told Lori Guinan he did not want to continue but has not told anyone else.

AD emailed City Clerk Lori Guinan about the reappointment of members. Ms. Guinan said it would be addressed in February City Council Meeting, but until then they can keep coming to meetings.

SN: If there is a vacancy on the board, does that mean a new person needs to be appointed to bring us to seven? Or does the expansion last until the expiration of James M. and Robert's terms.

AD: Jonathan Millis, Michele Neary, and John Lynch need to be reappointed this year.

AS: When are the terms for the other members?

AD: I was originally appointed for one year, then was reappointed for a two year term.

AS: So it sounds like Amara, myself, and James do not need to be reappointed?

AD: Yes, that's correct.

AD: I will need to resign this summer due to moving outside the city. I do not know whether June or July will be my last meeting. I intend to be fully involved as long as I am here.

AD: Because there are 7 people on the board, what is a quorum? Is it 4 or 3?

SN: I haven't heard from legal, but the City Council resolution didn't address that.

AD: It's unclear whether we can approve the November 2022 meeting minutes. I already reviewed my changes.

AS: I'm of the view that we cannot approve the November 2022 minutes with only 3 members here tonight, to be on the safe side.

AD: Next agenda item is to update Robert and James about what the PBAB has done while they were off the board.

JM: I think we should wait until Robert is here.

AD: What are the plans for the first half of 2023? I thought it would be good to have a plan.

AD: Stefanie, can you remind us of the budget timeframe?

SN: Theoretically, end of April early May we will start looking at budget based on preliminary info from 2023. We'll start looking at salary and positions and any changes happening there. Then I will meet with department heads to get budget requests, eventually by the end of July. We take the month of August to review the overall budget, reconnect with department heads, and by the end of August having a finalized budget, which gives us roughly 3 weeks because we need to present to City Council on September 21. The idea is that the last month is tweaking of numbers and information. City Council has until October 31 to make changes, otherwise, the budget that the city manager puts forward becomes the budget. The June meeting is where we bring up topics for possible changes, to have ready for July.

SN: I just heard from the city manager that we need 4 people to be a quorum for the PBAB.

JM: How does hiring of the Chief of Police affect the budget?

SN: This will be discussed at the February City Council meeting. We're trying to build in a buffer so the GPD is at the end of my department meetings. The timing of hiring may happen after the budget process needs to be approved. We're trying to get input from the current Chief, but also other command officers who will be there after the Chief retires. There is some mold remediation that needs to be done, but there probably won't be big changes to the budget because we'll be in the middle of bringing in a new police chief.

AD: This past year we wrote a mini-report with suggestions. Would you want that by July?

SN: Yes, we would receive it and review it, and say why we've included certain things or not. If we could get suggestions in July that would be good, and then regroup in August, and final budget in September.

AD: We wanted to make suggestions about the budget process. For example, last year we had trouble understanding what was being asked for in certain budget requests. When would you like that?

SN: You would get a copy of the GPD's budget request when we do, so we would have the month of June to look at it. If we can get what the GPD is asking for in June and get clarification questions and suggestions from the PBAB, we would then use August to wrap things up, and that would be good. The city manager plus Erica Collins plus myself will be the best people for information about getting answers. If we have suggestions from the PBAB before the PD puts their budget together, in the first quarter of 2023, then that's something we can bring up.

AS: What about the budget proposals we did last year, and the research we're doing, is that something you want us to address in the first quarter?

SN: If you come across what other police departments in other locations are doing, those suggestions would be at the forefront of the first quarter. March or April would be a good timeline for that. We would want to discuss and make suggestions on even before the Chief pulls together his budget, rather than trying to revamp the budget after its done.

JM: What types of topics were you looking into during my absence?

AD: We would love to see some sort of narrative budget justification that goes along with the budget request, and each line. We would like more clarity about where the number came from.

SN: Because of when I was onboarded, I had to pretty much take the numbers as they were. I am sending out quarterly budget reports to each department. I want to have conversations with them about the 2023 budget and planning for 2024. I would like to have the justification for each number, which shouldn't be too much of an ask.

AD: We had decided to research the question about efficiency in GPD contracts with outside providers. For example, with body cameras there was a need to get those done fast, so with more time a better one could be found.

SN: We researched this at the time, but since body cameras are more common, we think other providers have entered the market. I want the PBAB to research this. Also, one thing that keeps coming up at City Council is the cameras in the city. I can send information on the current contracts. I can find out when they're renewing/expiring.

AS: On the question of city cameras, are we looking just at the contractors for a set amount of cameras, or is the number of cameras also something we're looking into?

SN: Our IT department is looking at this. There are only 2 companies that do this kind of camera work. There are two different ways they can be set up. 1) there is a central basepoint receiver that goes to each camera, or 2) the cameras piggy back on each other, i.e. going from camera A to camera B to C etc. The one we have is the central receiver. But the current receiver is old. What is the cost of repairing the system versus getting a new one? Canandaigua has implemented cameras, and we have a shared service agreement, so we have an idea what they have set up. But I would like to know what other cities have and what are the best places to have cameras? What are other cities finding are the most beneficial locations?

JM: How old are the cameras?

SN: Some are roughly 7 to 8 years old, which are the newest. Some are over 10 years old. The biggest issue is the receiver being old. That would be the largest chunk we spend.

JM: At the library we recently replaced our cameras that were 10 years old, and the optics were way different.

SN: It's more taxing on the receiver with newer cameras we have.

AD: Michele and David added some things to the google doc about improving recruitment and retention of officers. It looked like one was a list of possible funding sources. I will send those files to Stefanie.

AD: We had also chatted about doing a budget training this winter.

SN: My timeline would be to have budget workshop in March to go over more in-depth of how we build a budget and what goes into it. Seeing how municipal budgets were build back in August was very helpful to me. March would be the budget workshop, and in April building and researching our recommendations.

SN: Across all departments we're seeing a significant increase in grant funding that is out there. It's not a bad problem to have, but grants are very cumbersome in trying to locate them. As we're looking at service contracts, we're looking at grants too. We're looking for grants for mental health responses. Also, there was one grant for a victim advocate. The county was researching having a victim advocate in the police department. We can test things out and look into shared services. No suggestion is a really bad suggestion, especially given the availability of grant funding.

AS: The victim advocate would address a different group of people than mental health responses, since mental health calls don't typically involve a crime victim who would get the services of a victim advocate.

SN: I meant the victim advocate more as an example, that because there are grants for things like that, there may also be grants for mental health.

AD: The COVID relief bill offered Medicaid funding to states to provide non-police or not exclusively police funding. The stories I found about communities implementing this are all much larger than us.

SN: We should narrow down topics into February meeting, and maybe look at putting something together. Maybe let's narrow down the types of research and focus on some. Some grants want to see what your program would look like to begin with, and some give money to start something.

AS: Our research shows there are basically 3 types of mental health response. 1) Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), which are officers specially trained to respond to mental health 2) Co-responder teams (an officer and a mental health provider respond together), 3) Mobile crisis units (non-officers who are trained mental health professionals respond) (an example of this is CAHOOTS in Eugene, Oregon).

SN: We need to decide that. The easiest would probably be training officers. Though, as for the second option, we have mental health partners in the area, whereas a mobile crisis unit is a fantastic option, but probably not feasible to implement in a city the size of Geneva in a timely manner. Or maybe do 1 and progress to 2 or 3. Maybe we could look at officer training, and see if there are trainings that people do for police departments. Maybe we could share the cost of this with the county.

AS: I haven't read enough of the research to know which of the 3 methods lead to best outcomes.

AD: There doesn't seem to be sufficient data on whether there are better outcomes with different types of mental health professionals, though I did see a study saying that CIT doesn't really work for good community outcomes such as avoiding injuries or lowering use of force, but it's good for officer outcomes. Though part of that could be whether the training is done in a comprehensive way, or just to check a box.

SN: I want to find something that is effective, not just checking a box.

AD: It makes sense to get others in the county involved. Most of what I'm reading about is about municipalities of 75,000 people or more, so going county wide could be good.

SN: If we come up with solutions, there might be better reception from other municipalities. Inter-municipal training might be good anyway.

AS: It makes sense to think of things on county-wide level since it already kind of works on that level anyway, due to CPEP running out of Clifton Springs because it's my understanding that Geneva General is not equipped to handle a mental health crisis.

SN: It makes sense to build on what we already have and get a larger response.

AD: Another thing that came up in my reading was the importance of involving 911 dispatchers.

AS: And the county runs the 911 dispatchers, right?

SN: Yes, that's right.

SN: One thing in our favor is that this is happening across the country, so I don't think anything that the PBAB suggests will come as a surprise. Coming up with something feasible might be good.

AS: Though I could see a situation where the City of Geneva is more interested in the mental health question than the county, so should Geneva be the first mover?

SN: Even if the county isn't on board, they still might send a letter of support saying it's a good idea, but something just not ready to implement. That's why it would be good to look at grant options.

AD: David and Michele did a document about recruitment and hiring.

AD: The one thing we haven't got into was efficiency in GPD contracts. I haven't heard back from anyone who is interested in this topic.

JM: My interests are mental health, but also interactions with senior citizens and well-being and property checks. Maybe something like CIT involving seniors.

SN: Let's table the contracts questions, especially since I'm not really sure which are expiring anyway. So let's focus on recruitment, and mental health for this year, and issues with seniors.

AD: Yes, that sounds good to me.

SN: I think it's good to narrow down the subject of topics to what we talked tonight.

AS: I like the idea of narrowing the topics too so we can have something really well-done to present to council.

SN: Doing one or two really well is better than having 4-5 topics, and it would allow the group to make suggestions.

AD: It would be great to get something into the budget about mental health.

AD: Stefanie, do you have any ideas about how to better engage with Council Gaglianese?

SN: The city manager is really good at finding different ways the city councilors prefer to communicate. Maybe we could loop info about this board into the City Manager updates at the City Council meetings. I was planning to talk to the City Manager about this.

AS: I would like City Council to know what we're actually working on, and not just the side issues that are talked about in the Finger Lakes Times.

SN: I want to give the opportunity to share our work plan at the next meeting. And the city manager is a big proponent of letting people know what we're doing.

AD: Agenda for next time: police responses to elderly, and continued follow up on mental health.

SN: I will follow up on whether we need to replace Jonathan Millis.

[Adjourned]