

PBAB Minutes 7/20/23

Present: Amara Dunn (chair) (AD), Andrew Spink (secretary) (AS) James McCorkle (JM), Geoff Geiger (via zoom); Amaris Elliott-Engel (via zoom) (AEE); Jeremy Busch (JB) (alternate), Stefanie Newcomb (SN) (City Comptroller)

Absent: Rob Maclean; Michele Neary; Tanya Higgins

Minutes from 6/15/23 approved without objection.

AD gave a summary of things that the PBAB has been working on.

JB asked the question about how to read expense report.

AD: We've been reading it every month and would make notes about questions we had. The questions we had were questions regarding lack of detail. Also, the way budgeting has run in the past, it's a way to make the bottom line be zero in every category. For example, if you run out of money in office supplies but not fuel, you'll see office expenses show up in the fuel line. That's just the way the system works, but we'd like to know what the actual office expenses are.

JM: And the maintenance of vehicles is not in the police budget, but rather the DPW budget. So some things that the police spend are not in the police budget.

SN: When I came in, I tried to implement the change so that office supplies are actually charged to office supplies, and then they ask for a readjustment from one category to another. The previous mentality was that it was all the same bucket.

AD: One thing that we had gleaned from old reports is that some things are used very rarely, such as the lie detector device (called the Computer Voice Stress Analysis, or CVSA) so we recommended maybe letting that machine go.

SN: The reports raise questions for us, and then we have discussions on it.

JM asked about Chevy Malibu which was mentioned in the reports.

SN: That was the car that was totaled in Canandaigua. There was an insurance recovery.

AD: There is a google drive with our comments on the budget report.

AD: We've learned a lot about budget and met with Chief Passalacqua several times before. We hope the new chief will come (or send a representative). I didn't have the emails for the lieutenants.

SN: There should be a new chief announced by 8/1/23.

AD: There's a google sheet on our drive with the summary of how many officers are each year and what types of crimes are reported.

AD: Last fall we spent a lot of time discussing the DCJS report. There are notes and questions about that in our google drive. We also have the recommendations that the PBAB made in prior years.

AD: We also created a list of possible grant funding opportunities and ways to increase recruitment. We also wrote a report on proactive policing and mental health which we presented at the May City Council meeting. There's a record on the google drive of things we wanted to research. The ideas in the document are domestic violence, violence interruption.

AS: And we also discussed how to make GPD contracts more efficient (i.e. finding better deals on things the GPD needs, for example body cameras).

SN: Most are a 3-5 year contract.

JB: And it's not bad to let current contractees know we're looking for competitors.

AS: I know that the GPD would find it useful if we assisted with ideas on recruitment. That was the issue brought up most in the police chief interviews. And it's my understanding we've have allotted for positions in line with what DCJS recommended, but that we don't have enough recruits who have passed the civil service exam.

SN: It's a challenge across the board that most police departments are facing. Once we even get a recruit that commits to the GPD, before they are a full time employee operating on their own, it's 18 months. After academy there is FTO field training. They need to be with another officer for a certain amount of time. The civil service calls for exams every so often, but then have to take the physical exam. Part of the physical exam is running 34 laps in a gym. There are odd factors we don't have control over, such as timing of tests and police academy. They try to stagger the start, but it's complex finding an academy that has an opening, and there is a limited number of people who can go into academy. Even signing bonuses in other counties weren't enough.

JB: I remember it was a huge thing when they allowed officers to have tattoos, because you used to not be able to have one.

JM: Because of civil service laws, do they need to go through a period of probation. Is that on top of everything else?

SN: No, that's part of the 18 month window. We would hire people two weeks to a month before academy start date so they're within the department and learning about it and forming camaraderie, so once they go to academy they have a sense of the department they'll be working with. The last four recruits have done that and seems to have been received positively.

JM: Another issue we suggested was offering additional training, such as offering incentives for officers going to additional college.

SN: I know it has been discussed by officers in general, but we haven't taken a deep dive in the budget conversations.

AS: The idea of additional education for officers was not discussed in the internal interviews.

JB: Would it be of any benefit for officers who are in training to be here for our meetings to see what we do?

SN: It's something we could definitely have a conversation with the next police chief about. We could have discussions with a recruit at a meeting, but it would be tricky because there are different recruits at different times.

JM: I would be wary of that since it would be intimidating, but a special meeting sounds good.

Next topic: updates on Chief search.

SN: Internal and external interviews done. City manager hopes to make an offer and announce on 8/1. The two lieutenants who I was working with regarding the budget proposal were also interviewed. I do have the budget submission, but I will do my clean up questions next week and be able to send it out next week.

AS: Can we put it on the agenda for next month?

SN: If PBAB meets next month and submits comments by end of August that would be fine because we don't present to Council until the end of next month.

AD: I did share with the City Clerk (to share with Council) the follow-ups to the report and the little spreadsheet the mayor requested, and also sent our request to have a liaison appointed. No liaison was appointed for July City Council meeting.

SN: The city manager will be leading a task force about all boards about how many members there should have, and how many liaisons each should have, but I'll also remind again.

AS: And Councilor Camera is not running for reelection, right?

SN: Yes, and everything will change in January.

AD: We need to select a new chair. Are there nominations? The chair responsibilities don't have to be onerous. Mostly to set an agenda and send out emails, to us, and to council.

GG: Can we have background on why we're choosing a new chair?

AD: I am resigning because I am moving outside the City of Geneva.

AS: I'll volunteer if no one else will.

JM: I'll volunteer for secretary if Andrew is chair.

Motion to appoint Andrew as chair.

Andrew elected as Chair 5-0.

Motion to appoint James as secretary.

James elected as secretary 5-0.

AD: I will add you as owner to the google drive. And then Andrew you take me off.

AD: Let's jot down things we want on the agenda. Sounds like we need to meet next month due to police budget request and a new Chief. I think the police budget requests could take the whole meeting to discuss.

JM: We could have some homework to rethink what our budget recommendations are.

JB: We should come in with concrete recommendation for the budget. I have to keep forgetting that we're a board about budget not policy.

AD: But there is overlap since policy and can affect budget efficiency.

AS: Is the homework to think about issues we'd like to address in general, or just in response to police budget request that Stefanie will send out?

JM: I think we're going to think of what we want to discuss in general, and also talk about the budget request on top of that. Budgeting is a value system.

AS: I was on the interview panel for Chief of Police and I wanted to report on that. I scored Lt. Colton the highest because he has the most experience. In the public interview Lt. Colton said he read our report, and disagreed with our concern that there were too many property checks. All three candidates did not think there were too many property checks. They thought it was a valuable service to the community, and if anything, they should be done more. All three candidates also emphasized how we need to hire additional officers.

JB: Doesn't the DCJS report recommend hiring new officers?

AD: It's relatively recent that the numbers have fallen down. But I'm still kind of confused about how many people work for the GPD. There haven't never been 34 officers, but rather 34 total staff (which is made up detectives, lieutenants, etc)

AS: There was a prior month where we discussed all the officers and the numbers what we have, and what the GPD staff currently is versus DCJS recommendation. [Editor's note: the prior meeting minutes where this topic was discussed was November 2022]

JB: We also need to determine who counts as an officer, versus support staff.

AD: The number of administrative staff was only reported in last couple years.

JB had question about categories of things on the budget reports.

AD: The categories in the budget are dictated by the state and some of them we can't change.

JB: I ran a budget for an NGO where for things under office supplies, you need to say what it is, and be more specific about what you're buying.

JM asked whether the interviews for Chief had any discussion of how to schedule officer duty shifts.

AS: Basically with such low staffing levels the only way we can do it 4 days on 2 days off.

AD: There were three internal candidates interviewed. The civil service process strongly prefers internal candidates. The interviews also seemed pretty brief.

Goodbyes and thanks to Amara.

[Adjourned]