

**TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND  
POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD**

Minutes of Public Meeting  
May 14, 2024

The meeting of the Talbot County Police Accountability Board ("PAB") was called to order at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 14, 2024. Present were Chairman Mitchell Ettinger, Members Michael Bibb, John Gilbert, Jo Ann Murray, Chris Rice, Connie Webster, and Board Secretary Victoria Bradley.

- I. **Call to Order** – Chairman Ettinger called the meeting to order and made welcoming remarks.
- II. **Minutes** – Upon motion made by Mr. Gilbert, seconded by Ms. Murray, the minutes of the Tuesday, February 13, 2024, PAB meeting were unanimously approved without modification.
- III. **Discussion with Law Enforcement Agencies ("LEA")**

*Submission of Quarterly Use of Force Reports* – The LEAs discussed their submitted reports. Easton PD discussed they had a few use of force reports related to intoxicated individuals and altered mental state.

The Chairman asked the Sheriff's Office about a use of force report that was submitted regarding a motorcycle. The Chairman stated it had a similar tone to an ACC complaint they received with a driver of a dirt bike and pepper spray and asked if they had a policy regarding use of hands on a motorcycle driver. The Sheriff discussed the report in question and stated they do not have an official policy on this matter. The Officer was performing a traffic stop with 3 motorcycle drivers, one of the motorcyclists did not obey the officers' orders and attempted to drive away. The Officer tried to grab the motorcyclist with his hands. The Sheriff stated this was a reaction from the officer and they do not have an official policy on this matter, the Sheriff stated the officer performed this traffic stop in a safe manner for all involved. The Sheriff stated the officers' actions were reasonable for the circumstance they were in.

The Sheriff further stated there has been an increased safety issue with motorcycle drivers over the past few years. The Sheriff further stated there have been reports at least 4 times a week of motorcycle and motorbike drivers that have been participating in unsafe and illegal driving practices and many result in collisions. The Chairman thanked the Sheriff for the added information regarding this report. The Chairman stated he could see an incident like this possibly ending with a complaint in the future and for the LEA's to be mindful of this when looking at their policies.

The LEA's discussed proper use of force standards they receive from the Attorney General's Office.

Current Arrest Data for 2024 – The LEAs discussed their arrest data for this quarter. The Sheriff and Easton PD stated that the arrest and incidents reports are up for the schools. The LEAs also discussed the rise in drug related arrests as well as assault and theft related arrest.

Criminal Activity Trends or Upticks – The Sheriff stated that they have seen overdoses reported to their office have been trending down, however this doesn't take in to consider those who go to the hospital. The Sheriff stated there has been a rise in fatal overdoses related to Fentanyl and Xylazine. Xylazine is not listed as a controlled substance at this time and Narcan does not have an effect on it.

Easton PD stated there is a decrease in deaths related to drug overdoses thanks to Narcan being more accessible, however the number of overdoses themselves have not gone down. Easton PD further stated there has been an uptick in crack and cocaine arrest. The Sheriff stated cocaine overdoses are currently up by 20%.

Easton PD discussed the uptick in child abuse and sexual assault cases, Easton PD further stated that they received 4 in one day.

Community Relations Activities in Q1 and Planned Events for Q2 – The LEAs discussed their ongoing community relations activities. Easton PD discussed their community Mock Trial Class, it was well attended and had 13 graduates. Easton PD stated that they recently had one of the most successful coffee with a cop event he has attended with great discussions. Easton PD stated they have the National Night Out coming up in August.

The Sheriff stated there will be a fishing tournament that all of the LEA's participate in on June 22, 2024. The Sheriff Office is working on having a community police academy. The Sheriff stated they have had and will be having some events at the school that work with the Talbot Goes Purple initiative. The Sheriff stated they have a rapping about prevention program at the schools that was successful last year and will be anticipated to be successful this year.

Oxford PD stated they have a community police academy starting in September and they had a very successful Oxford Day celebration this year.

Report on ride-along participation by PAB members – Ms. Webster discussed her experience with her ride-along she did with the Sheriff's Department. Ms. Webster said it was a great experience and was very impressed with the officer. Ms. Webster further stated there was some confusion regarding her ride-along with the administrative staff when she arrived but was an excellent experience.

The PAB will contact the LEA's about scheduling their ride-along experience. The Chairman stated he is also asking the ACC members to reach out to the LEAs to schedule ride-along experiences.

Teen Court – The Chairman discussed his experience with the Teen Court program, he stated it was done well and is a great alternative for the kids involved. The Chair asked the other LEAs why they have not engaged in the program. Easton PD stated he has talked with the Sheriff about the program and is open to it, however from the investigator standpoint the program is not making The Department of Juvenile Services “DJS” do what is required.

Ms. Murray stated from her experience with the similar programs that it is a great program that has show to work. The Chair agreed and stated if the DJS is not doing what is required then this leaves a hole in the system that Teen Court can fill. Ms. Murray stated she understands the system can be frustrating, but we should utilize programs like Teen Court that can help.

The Sheriff stated if anyone was interested in sitting in on the Teen Court program that he will send the information through Secretary Bradley to coordinate it.

Status of Requested Trial Board – The Chairman asked what the status of a requested Trial Board is. Easton PD stated everything for this case is pending the criminal case at the request of the State Attorney Office. A Trial Board may not be necessary depending on the outcome of the criminal case.

LEA Topics of Interest/Concern – The Chairman asked if there was anything the LEAs thought the PAB should focus on this year. The Sheriff stated that there is not currently a line in the county budget for programs to help inmates with recovery from addictive substances, they learned recently of a new program and grants for this, and it could be a good idea to put in the end of year PAB report for the Council.

The Chairman asked if the LEAs were taking part in the mental health training. The LEA's stated this was mandatory training that is required every two years. The Lea's also stated they all take mental health very seriously and work with a local mental health facility for this training and do frequent mental health checks with their officers. The LEA's stated they will send their officers to seek mental health evaluations if they have been involved with a difficult case, incident or situation; they will also send them if they notice any signs of stress or mental health issues.

VI. **Next PAB Meeting** – The Board set a date for the next PAB meeting with the Local Law Enforcement Agencies for September 17, 2024, at 8:30 am.

VII. **Adjournment** – There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Bibb and seconded by Ms. Webster to adjourn the meeting. The motion was passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 9:38 am.