

## **CARROLL COUNTY POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD** **2022 END OF YEAR REPORT**

The first Carroll County Police Accountability Board (CCPAB) was installed by the Carroll County Commissioners and held its first official quarterly meeting on December 5, 2022. The CCPAB had received one citizen complaint during the quarter, which was referred to the Carroll County Sheriff's Office, and as it involved alleged concerns arising in the time period prior to the effective date of the new sections of the Maryland Annotated Code, Public Safety Article, it did not necessitate further follow up action by the CCPAB.

At the initial quarterly meeting the CCPAB heard presentations from 5 of the 6 municipal police forces (namely Hampstead, Manchester, Sykesville, Taneytown and Westminster), as well as the Carroll County Sheriff's Office. As there were no complaints or disciplinary actions to review during the quarter, the information provided by these agencies was extremely valuable to the CCPAB in terms of informing the Board as to the day to day operations of each force, and the unique challenges each force faces. The Carroll County municipal forces are for the most part relatively small departments, with between approximately 5-15 officers and minimal support staff employees. The exceptions to this generalization are the larger municipal force in Westminster, and the Carroll County Sheriff's Office, which provides both county-wide police coverage as well as additional support for the various municipal forces. It is clear that all of the law enforcement agencies in Carroll County are collaborative and work together to assist each other, and to brain storm on issues. The larger forces of the Westminster City Police and the Sheriff's Department have been creative and successful in obtaining grant funding for various projects and in developing programming to help serve community needs as well as departmental objectives.

The chiefs of the town forces for Hampstead, Manchester and Taneytown all noted that due to the smaller size of their operations, their officers and staff all wear a variety of different

hats during the course of a regular day on the job. They also commented that most of the limited number of complaints that they typically receive are performance based rather than disciplinary in nature. The town force in Sykesville is slightly larger, reflective of a larger population base, and the downtown area of Sykesville (much like Westminster) is host to numerous events and festivals which require police coverage. All of the municipal forces and the Sheriff's Office expressed being in varying stages of obtaining or implementing camera resources, either body worn, in car, or a combination of both. The largest of the municipal forces is Westminster, which also is reflective of the status of Westminster as a larger population center, the County seat, and the site of the County governmental, courts, and social services related agencies. Westminster is unique in that the availability of numerous resources (both public and private) for challenged populations also tends to make it a more concentrated population of citizens dealing with substance abuse/mental health/residential and food insecurity issues. The Westminster City Police work closely with the Sheriff's Department as well as the on-campus security for McDaniel College, and has been successful in initiating a grant funded diversionary pilot program for offenders who may benefit from wrap arounds services to manage underlying substance abuse and mental health issues.

The Carroll County Sheriff's Office is the largest police force in the County, as it is responsible for coverage County wide. The Sheriff reported that his office has successfully obtained a large Congressional grant which will fund new camera systems, along with the necessary staffing to support these systems. The Sheriff's Office experiences a positive relationship with the County Commissioners, and will be involved in the process of transitioning to new physical facilities in the future.

Across the board, all of the police agencies expressed serious concerns regarding retention and recruitment of officers and staff. The Sheriff's Office has worked to secure salary increases in an effort to be competitive with neighboring counties, so that the office is not losing

good employees due to salary constraints. All of the agencies also described their efforts to bolster community engagement and involvement as a mechanism for improving public perception of law enforcement.

The chief of the Mount Airy police department was not able to be present for the meeting, however the chief of the Sykesville department described having a good working relationship with the Mt. Airy force. Mt. Airy is unique in having a split jurisdiction between Carroll and Frederick Counties, which places that force under the purview of the State Police Accountability Board. The Mt. Airy chief expressed (in a prior conversation) that he would like his agency to be considered under the CCPAB, and would be following up with seeking the assistance of the Carroll County Commissioners in pursuing this goal.

In an administrative session held on December 12, 2022, the CCPAB made its appointments to the Carroll County Administrative Charging Committee (CCACC) and that body is slated to engage in the week-long training as required by statute during the week of April 17-21, 2023. In the interim, and before the next CCPAB quarterly meeting to be held on March 6, 2023, the CCPAB will also seek candidates to fill the citizen role on the Trial Board, as may be needed.

In upcoming quarterly CCPAB meetings, we will review such determinations of the CCACC as may arise, and will identify trends and make recommendations at the conclusion of the coming year.

Respectfully submitted this 29<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2022,

  
Stacy P. Shaffer  
Chair, Carroll County Police Accountability Board