

CARROLL COUNTY POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD **2023 END OF YEAR REPORT**

The first official act of the Carroll County Police Accountability Board (CCPAB) for 2023 was to appoint its citizen member appointee to the Trial Board for Carroll County in accordance with Maryland statutory requirements. Michael Fry was appointed to the Carroll County Trial Board on February 13, 2023, and brings abundant expertise to the Trial Board as the result of his experience as an attorney in the field of law enforcement disciplinary matters.

The CCPAB held regular quarterly meetings on March 6th, June 5th, September 11th and December 4th, 2023. In attendance at each meeting were the members of the CCPAB, on occasion members of the Carroll County Administrative Charging Committee (CCACC), and representatives from the Carroll County Sheriff's Office and from all local municipal police agencies. The minutes for CCPAB meetings for the first part of 2023 are available on the Carroll County Government website, as is the video from the meetings held on 9/11/2023 and 12/4/2023. The added benefit of the video of CCPAB meetings is the additional transparency of the process and it allows for citizens to access the information easily. The meeting on March 6, 2023 was a joint meeting for the PAB, ACC and citizen appointee to the Trial Board to meet, and to be introduced to the law enforcement agencies. At each quarterly meeting the CCPAB provided updates on CCACC matters, and heard updates from local agencies as to general concerns and upcoming potential disciplinary cases.

In addition to having quarterly meetings, the CCPAB also participated in the local government budget process by providing information to the Board of County Commissioners regarding the operations of the CCPAB and related CCACC bodies on March 28, 2023. On October 20, 2023, members of both the CCPAB and CCACC volunteered to assist with a training program organized by the Carroll County Health Department and local law enforcement agencies including the Carroll County Sheriff's Office and Westminster City Police Department. The training was focused on providing officers with additional background and brain-storming solutions for dealing with challenging scenarios where mental health and substance use were involved. The CCPAB has also added a standardized citizen complaint form, and additional general information on the County website explaining the law enforcement disciplinary process.

As part of the quarterly CCPAB meetings, the CCACC reported the case outcomes that had occurred over each quarter. During 2023, the CCACC held meetings on February 24th, May 3rd, June 21st, July 19th, August 16th, September 20th, October 18th, November 8th, and December 13, 2023. The CCACC completed the 40 hour, week-long training held at the Maryland State Training Facility during the week of April 17-21, 2023, which was an excellent opportunity for the members to learn the process and procedure to handle disciplinary matters, and to understand the application of the State Disciplinary Matrix as it relates to disciplinary recommendations. At the June CCACC meeting, rules of procedure and confidentiality agreements were adopted for the CCACC (these are also posted on the Carroll County Government website). In July of 2023, the CCACC provided additional information on procedure and best practices for investigations to be presented to the CCACC to the local law enforcement agencies, to help all to handle the matters as efficiently as possible. In the months following, all of the agencies that have presented cases before the CCACC have handled those matters with attention to detail and professionalism.

The CCACC has heard six agency presentations during 2023, and has made recommendations to administratively charge in four of those matters. To date, the discipline recommended by the ACC has been accepted by the officers charged, or the matters have otherwise been closed. In an effort to provide additional information to the public regarding the matters considered by the CCACC, the CCPAB has initiated the process of developing a case tracker, which will become available on the Carroll County Government website in the near future. While the tracker will not have identifying information (as these are personnel related matters and thus private as to the individuals involved), it will contain a brief summary of the nature of the citizen or agency complaint(s), and the outcome as determined and recommended by the CCACC.

In 2023, the CCPAB has received one citizen complaint generated from its website complaint form, which was forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation and has since been presented to the CCACC. The outcome will be included on the CCPAB tracker once it is available on the website.

As reported in the 2022 CCPAB End of Year Report, one of the most pressing challenges facing our local law enforcement agencies has been the recruitment and retention of employees. While this continues to be a significant concern, by the end of 2023 many of the agencies had

filled openings. As of December 2023, the Hampstead Police Department has 5 vacancies, with a total of 8 sworn positions; the Manchester Police Department had 7 sworn positions, however one officer has since relocated—the decision reached by the Department was to use the funds from that position to give raises to the remaining 6 officers, in an effort to retain good employees, while putting into place a Three-Year plan to hire a 7th officer; The Sykesville Police Department has 10 sworn positions, with 8 currently filled, 1 officer is at the academy and there is 1 vacancy; The Taneytown Police Department has a new chief as of this report, with 15 sworn positions and 5 vacancies currently; The Westminster City Police Department has a total of 45 sworn positions, with 7 vacancies, 5 recruits currently in training and 1 officer on light duty. The largest law enforcement agency in Carroll County is the Carroll County Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office has 139 authorized deputy positions, and currently 4 vacancies.

In terms of trends, the majority of the complaints brought to the CCACC in 2023 were the result of agency policy violations rather than direct citizen complaints made to the CCPAB, and did not involve any misuse of force complaints. As reported at the December CCPAB meeting, one municipal agency was reviewing a possible misuse of force issue, however if, after the review is completed it is found to have been outside policy limits, it would be a future CCACC matter. The three matters brought before the CCACC in 2023 which involved allegations of racial profiling were not sustained as to any racial profiling concerns, although one of those matters was sustained as to a policy violation. At the December 2023 CCPAB meeting, the consensus of the local law enforcement agencies present was that the move to body-worn and vehicle cameras has been beneficial to both the public and to the agencies. To date, it has generally revealed that the bulk of interactions between law enforcement officers and the public have been handled professionally and respectfully by the officers. And much like a review of game day film, it has also been of assistance in terms of allowing officers to review how they handled certain situations, and to identify where there might be areas for improvement for future public interactions.

In terms of recommendations, the CCPAB is fortunate to have local law enforcement agencies who are proactively providing on-going training and updated equipment to their officers in order to minimize possible negative interactions with the public. As such we recommend continued participation in events, such as the training held by the Carroll County Health

Department, and continued encouragement of officers' positive engagement with the community, both on a personal and professional basis. The CCPAB will continue to gather feedback from the local agencies, the CCACC, and from the public in an effort to offer more concrete recommendations as may evolve over the coming year.

Respectfully submitted this 18th day of December, 2023,



Stacy P. Shaffer

Chair, Carroll County Police Accountability Board