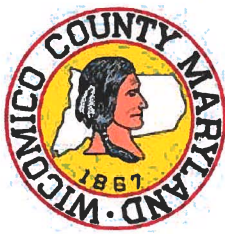


The seal of Wicomico County, Maryland, is a circular emblem. It features a central figure, possibly a Native American, surrounded by the text "WICOMICO COUNTY MARYLAND" and the year "1661".

# Wicomico County Maryland

**Police Accountability Board  
2023 Annual Report**



# Wicomico County Police Accountability Board

110 N. Division Street, Suite 108 ● Salisbury, Maryland 21801 ● (410) 546-5400 ext 1813

Jessica Lewis, Coordinator ● (443) 944-5034 ● jlewis@wicomicocounty.org

December 1, 2023

To: Madam Executive Julie Giordano and County Council members

Re: Police Accountability Board Annual Report 2023

It is my privilege to submit the annual report of the Wicomico County Police Accountability Board. The report includes a summary of the Board's activities from this past year and goals for the upcoming year.

Wicomico County has made progress in becoming more transparent and accountable in law enforcement. This past year, the Administrative Charging Committee has reviewed a total of nine cases: two of which were from 2022; seven from 2023. A mediation program with TriCommunity Mediation is in the end stages of review and will be submitted for approval soon. Additionally, a process was created and put in place to give inmates at the Wicomico County Detention Center the opportunity to submit complaints.

As a Board, we continue to be proactive in our relationships with law enforcement and the community to achieve our mutual goals of transparency and accountability. A Coordinator was hired this year to assist in creating ease and consistency in the complaint and accountability process as well as working to be a liaison between the boards, law enforcement and the community. We are actively seeking ways to engage with the citizens of the County and hope to participate in outreach events this year.

The Board commends you for your leadership and trust in us to act in the best interests of the residents of Wicomico County as we pursue our mandate to improve policing in our community.

We welcome your feedback and input on our ongoing role in advising you on the major issues facing the County. In the new year, we will meet at least quarterly and welcome your participation if you would like to join us.

Sincerely,

Matthew Litzel

Assistant Director of Administration  
Wicomico County, Maryland

---

## **Summary of Overall Changes to PAB for 2023**

### **Board and Committee Member Updates**

In September, Lori Brewster and Deni McJilton reached the end of their one-year terms of service. Both Mrs. Brewster and Mrs. McJilton were reappointed to continue their services as members of the Administrative Charging Committee.

Two positions on the Police Accountability Board opened up in September due to lack of attendance. In October, eight applications were received in interest of being selected to serve on the Police Accountability Board, of which, four individuals were interviewed. In November, the appointments of Darron Whitehead and Laura Dibbern-Kemp were unanimously voted on by the Wicomico County Council. Both Mr. Whitehead and Mrs. Dibbern-Kemp participated in the required "Shoot/Don't Shoot" Training administered by the Salisbury Police Department on November 29, 2023.

### **Addition of a Coordinator for the Police Accountability Board**

During the 2023 year, the County was awarded a grant under the Police Accountability, Community, and Transparency Grant program to create a Coordinator position for the Police Accountability Board. This position was necessary to have someone outside of law enforcement and the State's Attorney's Office who can not only coordinate the intense needs of the Review Boards, but can also increase awareness of the boards, the process and how it works, as well as any other resources available in the community to those filing complaints. It was also determined that there was a need to provide implicit bias and de-escalation training to the community as a whole in addition to continuing to provide the aforementioned training across the review boards and law enforcement in an effort to combat adverse community experiences and increase resilience.

Jessica Lewis was brought on in September. Mrs. Lewis comes to us with 11 years of law enforcement

---

experience from Accomack County, Virginia and as a Department of Defense Security Specialist specific to Anti-Terrorism Force Protection at Surface Combat Systems Center in Wallops Island, Virginia.

Mrs. Lewis' roll will be multi-faceted: providing administrative services for the Board, Administrative Charging Committee and the Trial Board, administering implicit bias and de-escalation training to new members to the aforementioned boards and committees, and providing training/outreach within the community to give updates and serve as a liaison between the community, law enforcement and the review boards.

## **Mediation Program**

After much discussion between all parties involved, and it was determined that a Mediation option shall be added as an initial step in the complaint process after filed. If both subjects of the complaint are amenable to a supervised mediation session, it could eliminate an extensive process of reviewing a complaint. Mrs. Lewis and Andrew Illuminati, Esq., have collaborated and reviewed a Memorandum of Understanding with TriCommunity Mediation. The MOU will be submitted to Delmar PD, Fruitland PD, Pittsville PD, Salisbury PD and Wicomico Sheriff's Office for any modifications specific to their respective agencies.

## **Technology Addition to the Administrative Charging Committee**

Part of Mrs. Lewis' grant provides funding for laptop computers to be issued to the Chair of the Police Accountability Board and the members of the Administrative Charging Committee. This will give all members the same capabilities of viewing all documentation and body-worn camera footage as they pertain to complaints received and their respective investigations. Each of these members will have a county email account assigned to them for receipt of said documentation and any other emails regarding their positions.

---

## **Creation of Process for Filing Complaints at the Wicomico County Detention Center**

In October, Mrs. Lewis began receiving PAB complaints from inmates housed at the Wicomico County Detention Center on lined paper. After reaching out to the Detention Center, a process was created to allow inmate access to the appropriate form. Since the inception of the process, four complaints have been filed by inmates from the Detention Center.

## **Community Outreach Efforts**

The Police Accountability Board is actively looking for ways to engage and reach out to the community in efforts to increase awareness of the complaint process, legislation updates and to receive concerns or feedback from members of their community.

Mrs. Lewis has been creating literature to disperse at community outreach events to assist in educating about the Police Accountability Act, the purpose of the Review Boards, and included a QR code that connects people to the County website page for the PAB, complaint form, and contact information. See Appendix A.

---

## **Police Accountability Board Members and Staff**

### **Police Accountability Board**

- **Ronald B. Lewis, Chair**
- **J. Anthony Dickerson**
- **Deanna (Dena) Y. Hall**
- **Deborah Hammel**
- **Gaylon E. Adkins**
- **David H. Owens**
- **Darron S. Whitehead**
- **Laura Dibbern-Kemp**

### **Administrative Charging Committee**

- **Ronald B. Lewis, Chair**
- **Carlos Ayala**
- **Debra (Deni) McJilton**
- **Mark David (Babe) Wilson**
- **Lori Brewster**

### **Trial Board**

- **Kevin Beauchamp**
- **Joseph Cossaboom**
- **Paul Marshall, Jr.**
- **Mark Glushakow**
- **Kort Dickerson**

---

## Police Accountability Board Meeting Summaries

### **January 18, 2023:**

During this meeting, questions were asked of Police Agency Commanders. Questions included their expectations when meeting with the Board; community involvement and outreach opportunities for the Board; and how new marijuana laws affect law enforcement agencies during traffic stops. Suggestions were made for mediation for minor complaints, and meeting with officers after adjudication to communicate recommendations for changes.

### **April 19, 2023:**

This meeting included presentations by Law Enforcement Agencies of their civilian complaint data over a five-year time span, patterns in complaints and how the data displays agency involvement in their communities. Over the course of the last five years: Delmar PD reported one complaint, Fruitland PD reported a total of eight complaints, Salisbury PD reported 14 complaints, and Wicomico Sheriff's Office reported 23 complaints. It was agreed that the Executive's Office be made aware of the board members attendance record.

### **July 19, 2023:**

During this meeting, Chairman Lewis asked present agencies for feedback of the PAB's first year. Clarity was requested regarding when the Board is reviewing a complaint, and another incident arose that the complainant didn't include in their complaint form. The Board explained the agency is permitted to investigate separately since it doesn't relate to the initial complaint. Mediation was brought up again and was noted that it would assist PAB complaints as an initial step after the complaint was filed. This could eliminate an extensive process of reviewing a complaint and that it gives the citizens an opportunity to have a supervised one-on-one with the officer(s) the complaint was filed against. Regarding open complaints that correspond with an open criminal case, counsel advised it is best to wait until the criminal portion of the case is completed first.

### **October 24, 2023:**

Awaiting approval of minutes

---

## **Administrative Charging Committee Cases Reviewed**

### **January 24, 2023**

Continued review of case P2022-0001

### **February 28, 2023**

Review of case P2022-0006

### **March 28, 2023**

No cases for review

### **April 25, 2023**

No cases for review

### **May 30, 2023**

Review of case P2023-0001

Review of case P2023-0004

### **June, 2023**

**No Meeting**

### **July 25, 2023**

No cases for review

### **August 22, 2023**

Review of case P2023-0002

### **September 25, 2023**

Review of case P2023-0005

Review of case P2023-0006

Review of case P2023-0007

Review of case P2023-0008

### **October 24, 2023**

Review of case P2023-0009

### **November, 2023**

**No Meeting**

### **December, 2023**

**No Meeting**



## Case Statistics

### PAB Complaints Received in 2023

Case Number	Date Opened	Complaint Agency	Nature of Complaint	Reviewed by ACC	Sustained/Unfounded
P2023-0001	1/24/2023	Fruitland PD	Violation of Civil Rights	Y	Unfounded
P2023-0002	2/21/2023	Salisbury PD	Discourtesy	Y	Unfounded
P2023-0003	3/30/2023	Salisbury PD		N	
P2023-0004	5/2/2023	Salisbury PD		N	
P2023-0005	5/18/2023	Salisbury PD	Violation of Civil Rights	Y	Unfounded
P2023-0006	8/23/2023	Salisbury PD	Untimely Filed	Y	No Action
P2023-0007	8/25/2023	Fruitland PD	Violation of Civil Rights	Y	Unfounded
P2023-0008	8/29/2023	Fruitland PD	Discourtesy	Y	Sustained
P2023-0009	10/6/2023	WC SO	Discourtesy	Y	Sustained
P2023-0010	10/16/2023	Salisbury PD		N	
P2023-0011	10/25/2023	Salisbury PD		N	
P2023-0012	10/31/2023	Salisbury PD		N	
P2023-0013	11/6/2023	WC SO		N	
P2023-0014	11/20/2023	Salisbury PD		N	
P2023-0015	11/22/2023	WC SO		N	
P2023-0016	12/11/2023	Salisbury PD		N	
P2023-0017	12/11/2023	Salisbury PD		N	

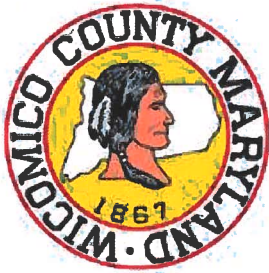
---

## **Goals for the upcoming year**

**The Board will work on the following items in 2024:**

- Incorporate the mediation element into the complaint process.
- Develop community relations. Explore possible community outreach events.
- Review trends of complaints received in 2023 and provide guiding principles.

# Appendix A



## WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

### MARYLAND POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

In 2021, the Maryland Legislature passed the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021. This law required all counties to create three police oversight boards, each of which serves a different function. The three police oversight boards consist of: a Police Accountability Board, an Administrative Charging Committee, and a Trial Board. In April 2022, the County Council created and the Acting County Executive signed into law the creation of the three police oversight boards. Collectively, the three boards are referred to as the Law Enforcement Review Board of Wicomico County.

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
OR FORMS, SCAN QR CODE  
BELOW



#### POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

- ✓ Holds quarterly meetings with heads of law enforcement agencies.
- ✓ Works with law enforcement and county government to improve matters of policing.
- ✓ Receive complaints of police misconduct filed by the public.
- ✓ Reviews outcomes of disciplinary matters considered by the Administrative Charging Committee

#### ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGING COMMITTEE

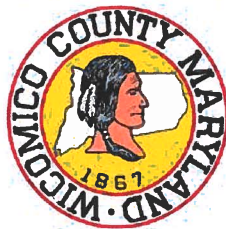
- ✓ Reviews the evidence of a law enforcement agency's investigation (as only a police agency investigates the complaint).
- ✓ Makes a determination as to whether or not to administratively charge the officer who is the subject of the investigation and if the officer is charged, recommends discipline.
- ✓ The ACC does not file criminal charges against a law enforcement officer

#### TRIAL BOARD

- ✓ Serves law enforcement officers who wish to have a trial on administrative charges brought by the County's Administrative Charging Committee.

#### CONTACT US

PAdmin@wicomicocounty.org  
(410)546-5400 ext. 1813



Contact Us:

Jessica Lewis  
PAB Coordinator  
(410)546-5400 ext. 1813  
[jlewis@wicomicocounty.org](mailto:jlewis@wicomicocounty.org)