



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes

Columbia Police Chief's Vehicle Stop Committee

Tuesday, November 12, 2019

5:30 PM

City Hall - Mezzanine
Conference Room, 701
E. Broadway

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Toni Dukes called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. A quorum was established. She said that member Tara Warne-Griggs had resigned her seat and that Police Chief Geoff Jones would solicit applications from Race Matters, Friends, whom Tara had represented.

Present: 6 - Robert Aulgur, Toni Dukes, Pamela Hardin, Don Love, Eric Parsons and Jerome Sally

Absent: 3 - Andre Cook, Matthew Nichols and Dale Roberts

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/REVISED AGENDA

Motion passed unanimously.

Revise the agenda to include selecting a topic for the December meeting.

Yes: 6 - Aulgur, Dukes, Hardin, Love, Parsons and Sally

Absent: 3 - Cook, Nichols and Roberts

Motion passed unanimously.

Include the following items on the December 12, 2019 agenda: Policy 402 (Bias-Free Policing) and Policy 500 (Traffic Enforcement Function and Responsibility); data updates, as provided by the Data Subcommittee; and variables for the Committee's consideration.

Yes: 6 - Aulgur, Dukes, Hardin, Love, Parsons and Sally

Absent: 3 - Cook, Nichols and Roberts

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Committee Minutes - Oct. 8, 2019

Motion passed unanimously.

Accept the October 8, 2019 minutes as amended on pg. 2, under Data Subcommittee, third bullet, line 3, to read: "Chief's policy – how do we suggest it be changed, measured and enforced"

Yes: 6 - Aulgur, Dukes, Hardin, Love, Parsons and Sally

Absent: 3 - Cook, Nichols and Roberts

IV. STORIES OF EXPERIENCE FROM THE COMMUNITY - PRIVATE CITIZENS AND RETIRED CPD OFFICERS

Stories of Experience (highlights)

Pam introduced five community members who agreed to speak with the Committee about past and current interactions with Columbia Police

Caleb Wright, firearms instructor and founder of Sharp End Gun Club: with more violence in the community, has noticed that more people want to own and carry - usually instructs people, if they've been pulled over, to let officers know they're carrying - he and his friends have been pulled over a few times

- Pulled over for an expired plate by two officers - one heard the word "gun" and searched vehicle
- A friend was pulled over, said he had a gun and was searched
- Had some stops when it wasn't clear why he was stopped - the reasons seem nitpicky

Observations from Caleb and members: newer officers tend to be more tense than veteran officers in these situations - can lead to escalation - telling an officer you have a gun should lead to de-escalation - there should be clear lines of communication and training so officers make better judgments when dealing with legally armed citizens - approach to stopped vehicles shouldn't be different because of race - officers should demonstrate common courtesy - being detained automatically makes people upset - not everyone knows how to handle these events

Alma Tapp, community activist and entrepreneur: lives in central Columbia and, from her home, can see when people are stopped - frequently involves young black males with more than one person in the car - this happened even before the recent violence - at one time, we had relationships with officers

- At Garth and Noble Court, the people stopped were out there for hours and not told why they were stopped - they were all let go, and it took a long time to not discover anything
- Her daughter was stopped, just coming from across the street - the officer was nasty and told her daughter she would be sorry if she didn't get back in the house - she was followed

Observations from members: one of the Chief's mandates is to send in an officer's name and ask to review camera footage - it's been suggested that CPD do something to make it easier for people to feel comfortable going to the police station and to be more accountable

Mary Ratliff, Columbia Branch NAACP and community activist: about a year ago, people complained that they're not given forms and are denied the opportunity to file a complaint - only a limited number reach the Citizens Police Review Board - how many are filed, resolved and sent to CPRB? - has been stopped a couple times

- A few years ago, for speeding - remembers officer's nasty treatment
- Remembers when an officer escalated a situation involving her grandson using a slingshot - she eventually won in court - the officer was rude and wrote a false report saying she resisted arrest

Observations from Mary: these are the things that make the community feel the way they do - hopes police training will take place - community policing is the order of the day, and not just on paper - must undo the past to regain trust

Preston Bass, retired Columbia Police officer (1974 - 1994): commends Caleb for educating students on rights and responsibilities - vehicle stops are an ongoing problem - commends Chief for addressing the issue - kids need to know there is a way to act when stopped and what you try to tell officers when there are injustices - treat everyone the same - it's complex and has gotten worse with everyone having a firearm - not everyone handles guns the same way - when you look at officers killed during stops, you can see why they're on edge - they're human and want to go home

Observations from Preston: it starts with hiring and training - with crime prevention, neighborhood watch and other programs - need to build trust and explain the police role to citizens - build rapport and see police doing something other than stopping cars or having a negative encounter - people spread that experience - when you deal with kids, they may come back and help you

Fontella Ford-Henry, retired Columbia Police officer: built community relations when she was a cop - Columbia has changed, but can ask for camera footage - we did not talk to people rudely - was in crime prevention - need to have the right attitude and be willing to understand and respect people - wanted to be involved in the community outside of policing because she was a transplant

- Was stopped at 4th and Walnut - officer was polite, but there was no reason to stop...she had not crossed the centerline - "I got it" that I was driving a car that might have looked suspicious - asked if she had been drinking - officer did not smell alcohol and let her go - didn't think he ran her name

Final observations

- Police have the most charge and should be accountable for escalating and de-escalating events - it's irritating when people are stopped and don't know why - train young officers who may be afraid of black people or look at them as criminals
- A lot of officers who work for CPD don't live in Columbia - younger ones may not know they're the face of the whole department
- Officers may have had more time to interact with people in the past - may start their shifts with backlogged calls
- We lost a lot when the crime prevention and motorcycle units ended - good PR but got static from younger ones who said they didn't do any work

V. DATA SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: DATA ADDITIONS, DATA REQUESTS FROM CPD AND ATTORNEY GENERAL'S ADDITIONS TO VEHICLE STOP DATA

Toni asked to postpone the full report until December, when Eric, the subcommittee chair, can be present, and allowed a brief synopsis by Don, a subcommittee member.

- We have all the data to drill down into disproportions
- Incident-based and odor data are excellent examples of big disproportions
- Can look at each incident and tell if an officer is acting on fact - the new traffic stop and bias-free policing policies provide for fact-based behavior
- The VSR data is limited because it "aggregates" totals, for instance, for stops of white males. CPD keeps its data in an "incident-based format," which allows various categories of data to be examined at the same time, for instance, stops of white males occurring just before dark.

Attorney General's 2020 Vehicle Stops Report Changes Summary

No time to consider at this meeting.

VI. GENERAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC, MEMBERS AND STAFF

- Chante' Wright - relationship between officers and the community - goes both ways when neither one smiles - "what are we doing," not just, "what aren't *officers* doing?"
- News media representative - has been stopped and thinks about ways to have non-antagonistic encounters - has been reviewing vehicle stop data and CPRB business - "odors" seem stand out as totally discretionary and contribute to antagonism

VII. NEXT MEETING DATE - DECEMBER 10, 2019

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn.

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