



# City of Tacoma

## Community's Police Advisory Committee

### Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 14, 2023

Hybrid Meeting

6:00 p.m.

**The CPAC is comprised of Chair Allen McKenzie, Vice Chair Shayna Raphael, and Committee Members Stephen Hagberg, Jabari Hampton, Louis Cooper, Jeffrey Sargent, Angela Mealing, Andrew Nguyen, Ralette Churchill, Esther Evans**

**Members Present:** Chair Allen McKenzie, Vice Chair Shayna Raphael, and Committee Members Stephen Hagberg, Jabari Hampton, Louis Cooper, Jeffrey Sargent, Angela Mealing, Andrew Nguyen, Ralette Churchill, Esther Evans

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Staff Liaison Ted Richardson, Staff Liaison Chelsea Talbert, Lieutenant GJ Roberts, Captain Gretchen Aguirre

**Staff Absent:** TPD Chief of Staff Curtis Hairston, Executive Liaison Jacques Colon

Called to order at 6:01pm

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

#### **Approval of the Agenda**

Approval of the agenda for the CPAC meeting held on March 13, 2023.

Motion Passed at 6:02

#### **Approval of the Minutes**

Approval of the minutes of the February 13, 2023 CPAC meeting.

Motion passed at 6:02

## **Briefing Items**

### **Welcome to the New Members**

- 6:03 – Allen welcomed new members and shared gratitude to everyone for their commitments and work. Allen reiterated that this work is important and requires more than 2 hours of time.

### **City Manager's Office**

- 6:04 pm – Ted shared that the Mayor's State of the City address is this Thursday at Mount Tahoma. Office of Strategy will have a table and will have CPAC materials there. The Community Trauma Response presentation was postponed but a memo will be going to Council. Andrew volunteered to help table the State of the City address.
- 6:06 pm – Chelsea shared that she sent out a doodle poll for the Oversight Subcommittee to schedule their next meeting with David and asked members to complete it.

### **Tacoma Police Department**

- 6:08pm – Captain Aguirre was not able to join the meeting until later so GJ offered to discuss complaints. Allen offered to discuss the police simulator first and then move to TPD updates and discussion.

### **Police Stimulator**

- Allen shared that TPD is looking at what kind of simulator training to use. Allen took the simulator training and said he definitely felt his blood pressure rise and that he didn't get everything right.
- Ralette shared she used a number of the simulators and that she felt her emotions and her fight or flight response. Ralette shared that the experience exposed the training issues and that often officers say they aren't trained or haven't received specific training. Ralette stated that there should be another step before taking someone's life, but she doesn't know what that step would be. Ralette shared that she doesn't know where the training gap is and what actions officers are trained to take.
- Allen shared that if TPD uses a simulator, ideally the decision points would be aligned with TPD training and point to where in the manual it outlines the correct action to take. Allen also stated that recommendation 25 of the 21COP report highlighted the importance of real-world scenario-based training and simulators vs. "death by power point". Allen shared that based on his understanding, TPD will make decisions on a simulator to use sometime in the Fall.
- Jabari shared that he also got a lot of the answers wrong, but he hasn't had training on what "the right" thing is to do so he wouldn't expect to get all the answers right. Jabari highlighted that he felt there was a rush to "end the situation", especially in the 3<sup>rd</sup> scenario. He felt there should have been the opportunity to wait for counselors and it seemed odd that a gun would be the first thing to go for. Jabari said he wants to be sensitive to the heightened emotions as well.
- Louis said that even though there was "justifiable action", he struggled with it and the lack of options.
- Allen asked if a TPD simulator should have de-escalation tactics.
- Ralette shared that even though situations are "unpredictable", TPD has been around long enough to start to predict the scenarios. She shared that sometimes decision-making is taking

the weapon out of an officer's hand and the training should be decision-making based and not mechanical based. Ralette highlighted how much weapons training TPD officers receive, and opined that when people are out in the field, they should have training on how to make decisions because they are human and not machines.

- Allen shared that if officers are training for hundreds of hours for how to use a weapon and only 8 hours on de-escalation, their muscle memory is going to go for the weapon and the weapon can trigger a fight or flight response for people.
- Louis shared that police need to learn how to manage the space they are in, even if an officer needs to take a life, do they need to approach the situation with "I am the boss". He also shared that police and people need to have dialogue and be open as there have been several incidents around the Country where a situation could have ended differently if people were able to talk to each other instead of approaching a situation based on fear. George Floyd and Manny Ellis were highlighted as examples of this. Louis shared that there is not only the psychological approach needed but also a change in culture.
- Stephen shared that officers are getting less lethal and getting better at containing situations, based on reports on police scanners.
- Louis shared that TPD is getting there but the culture in America right now is that if you're black or brown, you will be approached differently on the street. Louis shared that's what needs to change, the culture.
- Stephen shared that he did a virtual reality helmet with the simulator, and he liked that he could see it from the perspective of the person in crisis.
- Allen's main take-away was the fight or flight feeling. He also suggested that officers should be trained to check their biases like when checking if someone has a record and then perceiving them as a more of a threat in addition to the color of their skin and their gender. Allen would like to see trainings turn biases on their head.
- Ralette shared that punishment and discipline would help officers deal with their biases. She shared that police don't have to like black people, but they do need to do their job and know that there will be backlash if they don't do it properly. Ralette shared that if the legal discipline is missing, there needs to be social discipline. She also shared that if officers can't check their egos and biases, you can't blame training, there needs to be some sort of consequences even if that is CPAC's involvement in weighing in on promotions and employment of officers.
- Louis shared that you can't test racism or bias and that officers have to be held accountable. Louis highlighted that the training commission is now diving into the history of policing which is rooted in slavery and the true history of how we got to policing is important and should open the space up for more dialogue and understanding.
- Allen shared that a future CPAC topic could be qualified-immunity and that some states are creating workarounds. Allen recommended "Shielded" by Joanna Shwartz who did a deep dive into qualified-immunity and the way the system protects officers who violate rights. This was mentioned as a potential good topic of discussion at a future meeting.
  - [Shielded: How the Police Became Untouchable - Harvard Book Store](#)
- Allen thanked everyone for watching the simulator because it isn't easy to watch and transitioned to the next topic.

## **Presentation – Community Liaison Officers**

- Captain Aguirre shared that they are revamping their officer mental health policy and that the Academy has included the history of policing in their trainings. The National Network of Police Training came to Tacoma and helped develop a program for new recruits and it does talk about

procedural justice and the history of training. She affirmed that new recruits at TPD go through that training.

- Captain Aguirre shared that TPD is working on creating a physical space to do reality training to help with critical thinking. TPD is also looking at virtual training options and the 3-dimensional trainings are important. She reiterated that the examples with simulators are extreme examples. She shared that there are a lot of mental health simulations that help officers understand what resources they have.
- Captain Aguirre shared that TPD has moved towards “teams tactics” including using force and electives instead of using a firearm. That includes using multiple officers to work together to try to resolve a situation with the lowest level of force. She also called out that de-escalation operates on the assumption that the person is participating and that if people are in fight or flight, it can be hard to get them to deescalate, especially when mental health and when drugs are involved.
- Allen asked about a decision-points simulation scenario which included tasing and noted the officers in that situation used teams tactics but had trouble subduing the large subject and tased him repeatedly, and the subject apparently died later. Captain Aguirre shared that there isn’t evidence of use of tasers contributing to death.
- Captain Aguirre began the PowerPoint presentation on community liaisons. She shared that in an ideal world, there are 16 community liaisons officers. She also called out in scenarios when a person is experiencing mental health challenges, officers can take a person to get evaluated but it may take several hours so the way they are presenting in the field is different from how they present in the hospital. Captain Aguirre shared information about lieutenants. She shared that sometimes people would reach out to their pastor who would then reach out to CLOs to discuss issues.
- Louis affirmed that the Port of Tacoma is the third largest container port in the Nation.
- Andrew shared kudos to Lt. Katz, Officer Butts and Benboe for helping the Korean Women’s Association with some grand theft auto issues for the last six months or so. They’ve been providing decoy cars in the KWA parking lots to deter theft.
- Allen asked how officers interact with the Northwest Detention Center. Captain Aguirre said if a detainee wants to file a report, TPD would respond.
- Captain Aguirre shared that TPD approaches HEAL and homeless outreach reach from the perspective of how to get resources out to people.
- Captain Aguirre shared examples of community involvement and collaborations with CLO as well as additional information about other units like special events, traffic enforcement, community clean ups.
- Allen asked if CLOs do this as their full-time job or just parts of their shift. GJ responded that this is their assigned duty and sometimes they will respond to calls, but they are not primary call responders. If there are issues with drug houses, the CLO is the best person to contact.
- Jeffrey asked if CLOs are available for ride-alongs and if Hilltop is now being called upper Tacoma. Jefferey also asked how Lt. Bervin Smith fits into this chart.
- Captain Aguirre shared that since Bervin is new, they are still working on defining his role and will follow up. Jefferey shared he would like to discuss integrating outreach efforts with CPAC and CLO work.
- Louis shared there have been some challenges with encampments in Hilltop and officers have been great. Captain Aguirre shared that the number of times one needs to offer someone experiencing homelessness services is usually 10 times and then you must work to get them those services ASAP.

- Esther gave a shoutout to Sector Four CLOs especially Officers Ali and Butts. Esther shared that they did a great job answering questions that were more meant for City Council and that Officer Butts was professional and that officers did an amazing job cleaning up encampments.
- Ralette shared this was a good presentation and noticed there are a lot of young officers and expressed hope that we can retain them. Ralette asked if there is collaboration between the HEAL team and CLOs and also if there is data being collected at homeless encampments.
- Captain Aguirre answered that Cassie is the designated crisis responder and is embedded in the HEAL team. Sometimes CLOs can help support work of the HEAL team if their work overlaps.
- Jeffrey asked on the business district map why it says “Upper Tacoma” instead of “Hilltop Business District”. Chelsea will reach out with Neighborhood and Community Services for information.

### **Complaints Review**

- 7:25 pm Allen asked if anyone objected to tabling the complaints discussion in order to accommodate the rest of the agenda. There were no objections.

### **Public Comment**

- 7:25 pm – Allen opened the floor to public comment.
- 7:26 pm - Cheryl Kopec said that in the military people are trained to shoot to kill instead of shooting something out of someone’s hand. Captain Aguirre affirmed that TPD also subscribes to only pointing your firearm if you are prepared to use deadly force. Captain Aguirre also clarified that pointing a firearm at someone is considered a use of force that needs to be documented. If it is pointed to the ground, it’s not a use of force. TPD does not fire a warning shot. Ralette clarified that her comment was about providing options to officers that are an alternative to deadly force. Allen thanked Cheryl Kopec for her military service.
- Oneida Arnold shared that the racial biases in officers can’t be trained out and that there needs to be officers who set the standard and call people out for inappropriate behavior. Oneida shared that there were multiple times where officers could have made different choices with Manny Ellis and George Floyd. Oneida asked how an outcome could be different if an officer stood up and said this isn’t the right way to handle it. Oneida said it’s important for officers to have compassion for people at encampments and that they saw about half the officers had a heart for the work. Oneida also said Sunshine at the City is doing great work.

### **Oversight Subcommittee**

- 7:35 – Louis shared that the subcommittee had an extremely valuable meeting with David discussing the objectives and working on the discussion template. Allen agreed that the subcommittee is making progress on articulating goals.

### **Policy Subcommittee**

- 7:37 – Stephen shared they had a great meeting and are hoping to have videos placed on the server for folks to be able to access. Allen shared that the expectation is everyone is reviewing complaints and not just the policy subcommittee.

### **Outreach Subcommittee**

- 7:38 pm - Jeffrey shared the subcommittee has met twice since the last meeting and have created materials to help support outreach work. Jeffery shared a flyer that has been shared on Peach Jar with Tacoma Public Schools to help recruit for the youth seat. Jeffrey shared that the Tacoma Fire Department made a video about combatting PTSD called “The Call We Carry”. It follows officers through their duties and will be at the Blue Mouse Theater. It can also be accessed here:
  - <https://youtu.be/M44NNoDLEo0>
  - <https://www.thecallwecarry.com/>
- Louis asked if the flyer has gone out to other organizations. Jeffrey offered to create a generic version to share with CPAC in the next couple days.

## **SUBCOMMITTEES**

- Oversight Subcommittee: Louis Cooper, Shayna Raphael, Allen McKenzie, Ralette Churchill
- Outreach Subcommittee: Esther Evans, Andrew Nguyen, Jeffrey Sargent, Angela Mealing
- Policy Subcommittee: Jabari Hampton, Stephen Hagberg, Allen McKenzie, Ralette Churchill

## **Chair Comments**

- Allen apologized for leaving Louis off an email.
- Allen encouraged everyone to watch the State of the City and reminded folks about upcoming meetings including the March 22 meeting with students as well as the joint CBC in April.
- He opened the floor for a motion to adjourn.

## **Adjournment**

**Motion:** Louis

**Second:** Jeffrey

Motion passed 7:47

*/s/ Allen McKenzie*

Allen McKenzie, Chair

*/s/ Chelsea Talbert*

Chelsea Talbert, Staff Liaison