

Advisory Commission on Human Relations & Disability Issues

Meeting Agenda

August 2, 2021

5:30pm

I. Call to order –

II. Roll call – Abbie Dillard, Ollie Carroll, Tom Alonzo, Julie Xiong, Karen Greenwood

Not present: James Echols, Christina Van Cleave

III. Old business

A. Acceptance of meeting minutes from July 2021 – Motion by Ollie Carroll to accept the meeting, seconded by Marge. Motion approved.

IV. New Business

V. Abbie announced that moving forward, a member that brings forth an issue or proposal must take responsibility for drafting, creating and presenting it to ACHRDI.

VI. Speaker: Chief Oakman – Police Chief Oakman joined the meeting at 6 p.m. He began with remarks about his personal history. He retired from the KCMO police department as the deputy chief for patrol. He supervised about 1,024 people. He said he feels the KCKPD is a good police department. He is instituting a few changes. One of the main issues is perception and reputation from the past, and that is a hurdle to get over, to help the community see what the KCKPD has to offer. He has an 8-step strategic plan he has started to implement. One aspect is to make sure the department is healthy internally, and he has implemented some changes in that respect, such as patrol officers being involved in policy process. He also said a goal is to change the culture of the officers, to underscore they are there to serve the community. He also wants to improve the image of the department by engaging with the community. He asks the community to share events with the police so they can be involved.

Youth engagement is another piece he is working on. Viable youth programs are needed, such as new drivers education program through the Police Athletic League. A junior academy with summer camps is planned for next year, at which conflict resolution will be taught.

Chief Oakman stated he is in the process of creating a Hispanic police officer liaison position to help build engagement with the Hispanic community. He acknowledged that

there is a lot of fear among the community to report or engage with the police. This position will help bridge the gap. A Spanish language police academy is planned for early 2022.

The chief said he is in the process of scheduling quarterly meetings in each commissioner district. The first one will probably start in September.

The other long-term goal is to hire a social worker at each patrol division office to work on prevention on the front end and aftercare on the back end. This will be an excellent tool for patrol officers.

Phyllis asked about an LGBTQ liaison. Chief Oakman said they are looking at it. He said he was involved in setting it up in KCMO. He said it is on the table for down the road. Abbie asked if there were liaisons for the African American and Asian communities. Chief Oakman said one of the reasons for the Hispanic liaison is the language barrier. This person will be bilingual. The goal is to decrease the crime, including gang activity that is allowed to prosper because of the fear in the community.

Crime reduction efforts was another strategic goal. He said the police do not want to put things in place that will marginalize communities.

Another goal is to review weekly at shootings that occurred, including uncooperative victims, and how to mitigate the issue. This program is meant to help ensure the right people are being put in jail.

Risk for retaliation is another program that helps identify who might be at risk at retaliating against someone instead of working with the criminal justice system. This program aims to offer resources to them, and their family and friends.

The cold case section is in the works and he hopes it will be operational in January or February 2022.

Another goal is to develop a career development program for all members of the police department. Additionally, there is a goal to enhance recruitment. Inclusion is key to this program. Recruiting, hiring, training and retention are the key components of this program.

Tom Alonzo asked a few questions of the chief:

LGBTQ liaison – Chief Oakman stated the position he is creating is a captain position. The focus will be on the Hispanic community. Eventually the position will be switched to a minority community liaison, and the LGBTQ responsibilities will be under this position.

Collecting data on hate crimes – Chief Oakman said the state of Kansas has to change the law to require a stop report to be reported to their agencies.

Cold case unit in KCKPD – Chief Oakman said it is not a squad to investigate adjudicated homicides. This squad will investigate unsolved, open homicides, starting with 1980-1990 time frame, because there are a lot of unsolved homicides across the country in that decade. The goal is to start it in 2022.

Policy regarding communication with ICE – Chief Oakman said it depends on what the arrest is for. For misdemeanors, they do not contact ICE. When there is a felony arrest, you have to determine identification. Normal routine interactions do not involve communication with ICE.

Proximate causes for violence – Chief Oakman said with social media and cameras, crime is more visible. What is getting overlooked are crimes like burglaries, sexual assaults, robberies have been trending down. Homicide and aggravated assault has been trending up, but this year there has been a decrease. He said marijuana is starting to take the place of crack cocaine. Violence around the sale of marijuana is on the rise.

What areas are the worst and why – The risk for retaliation program addresses this. People trying to take the law into their own hands.

What can groups like ours do to support law enforcement in the community – The number one thing is recruiting. Family members discourage people from becoming law enforcement officers and that needs to change.

Karen Greenwood asked about the KCKPD working with the District Attorney on its conviction integrity unit. Chief Oakman said that is the DA's initiative, but when it comes to records or information, the KCKPD is willing to provide whatever the DA needs.

The chief addressed a question about penalties for marijuana. He said the state legislature would have to change that. KCMO does not arrest for possession under 36 grams. If Kansas does change the laws, they should look at fatalities, which increased after it was legalized. There was an increase in fatalities due to marijuana use.

Abbie asked what to do if a citizen witnesses a police officer killing or assaulting someone. The chief responded that this can be reported to internal affairs on the website. He advised that citizens tell the truth of what happened, without overdramatizing it. That can throw your credibility into question.

VII. Safe and Welcoming Ordinance-Part II Review

- a.** Review of Proposal - Karen Greenwood stated it was unfortunate we do not have minutes from the original meeting where the ACHRDI voted on it. She stated the Safe and Welcoming ordinance has always had two parts. She said there were discussions on both parts of the issues and the ACHRDI voted unanimously to support it. The ordinance has always included non-compliance with ICE. Abbie stated that without the minutes, she cannot recall that the commission spoke on this. She said she had just joined the commission in February 2020. Abbie said she remembers the first part very clearly. If it passed before, she said she believed the ACHRDI should talk about it again, and get into it in depth. Karen stated she didn't feel it was necessary to have another vote. She said there was a misunderstanding about what the staff to do. Abbie stated that she wanted to have a discussion about it. Maritza stated she did believe there were minutes from that meeting.

Marge asked if commission members could receive a copy of any official letters sent on behalf of the ACHRDI. She also asked if minutes could be posted online. Abbie said yes. Discussion about past policies. Maritza said there have been some changes internally on posting content on the UG website, and once she is trained she can start doing that.

Abbie also asked about a private dropbox for the ACHRDI to post documents and other items for projects they are working on. Maritza stated she would have to talk to Phyllis about it.

The discussion continued after Chief Oakman's presentation. There is a disagreement about whether the ACHRDI voted on the complete ordinance including ICE non-compliance. Maritza read a portion from the February 2020 minutes. A vote was taken to support Safe and Welcoming.

It was determined that ACHRDI will send a simplified letter stating its support of Safe and Welcoming in its entirety. Marge will work on the draft and send it to Phyllis.

VIII. Goal/Initiatives Alignment Presentations by Community – It was determined these presentations and goal discussion would be done next month. Abbie stated everyone on the ACHRDI has to be involved in some area to support and report on it.

IX. Open Discussion

X. Chairperson Observations

XI. Adjournment – Motion by Karen, seconded by Tom, to adjourn at 7:25 p.m. Motion passed.