

# Chief's Advisory Committee

## February 23, 2021 at 2:30 p.m.

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**Zoom Meeting Participants:** Chief Bieber, Captain Braman, Captain Buttice, Sandy Garcia, Earl Gooding, Kanasha Henderson, Noah Leavitt, Ruthell Martinez, Dick Morgan, Steve Moss, Curtis Phillips, Roberto Rodriguez

**Absent:** Brooke Bouchey and Roger Esparza

- 1) **Chief's Welcome and Thank You—New Members**—Sandy Garcia and Ruthell Martinez joined the committee. Welcome!
- 2) **2020 WWPDP Statistical Annual Report**—Last year's statistical report has been finalized and posted on the City's website; Chief Bieber emailed a copy of it to the Chief's Advisory Committee members. Walla Walla has experienced a drop in crime of almost 30% since 2015, and a reduction of almost 10% from 2019 to 2020. This morning Chief Bieber participated in the City of Walla Walla's weekly video update where he encouraged people to visit the City's website and review the recently uploaded 2020 Annual Statistics Report. Questions and/or comments can be sent to Chief Bieber.
  - In 2017 there was an increase in Calls for Service that was primarily due to switching our dispatching software. During the transition process the definition of "quick calls" and "regular calls" changed.
  - We are required to include the statistics for crimes that occur at the Washington State Penitentiary (which houses approximately 2,100 inmates). The inmates are also included in our city/county population statistics.
  - Last year we were operating with five new officers attending police academy training, which they completed in November. We are currently four officers down from our original authorized 48 officer staffing level, since an officer recently retired, another moved to another state, and, due to budgetary constraints, two vacant positions are not being filled. On the positive side, we have a good list of bilingual/bicultural candidates on our Civil Service List.
  - Last fall after Sgt. Wood retired, Sgt. Knudson took over leading the detectives group. Sgt. Knudson has since created a computerized tracking system for monitoring the cases. Cases are prioritized by solvability. Recently Chief Bieber spoke with City Technology Service about the possibility of overlapping crime mapping onto the council wards.
  - Each WWPDP detective has around thirty-two active cases sitting on their desk. While this is a higher case load than found typically in law enforcement, our local case load may be reduced when we look closer at the solvability.
  - Noah Leavitt noted questions regarding the State demographic data keeps coming up, specifically on how to get clear statistics based on ethnicity. It would be helpful to possibly put together focused research to study the local data sets.

Chief Bieber's only concern was to ensure individuals rights would not be stepped on while gathering demographic data. Some statistical data is gathered on the 911 calls; however, we currently do not break down the type of call leading to an arrest with racial data. This could possibly be done with some staff time or by creating an additional CAD query.

3) **2021 Police Reform Legislation**—Earlier today Chief Bieber emailed the committee members the latest law enforcement reform legislative update that was issued by Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC). The top bills regarding law enforcement reform are being tracked as they go through the legislative process. Legislation changes in Washington and Oregon State tend to mirror each other. We are waiting to see which of bills pass and what changes are made between being introduced and passed as legislation. While there are good intentions behind each of the bills, Chief Bieber's concern is the unintended consequences of passing them. We need law enforcement reform, especially regarding differential call response. Sending a uniformed officer is not necessarily the right tool for the job, just because they are available. Chief Bieber supports the thirteen recommended reforms drafted and proposed by WASPC. WASPC has thought through the consequences we may have going forward. We all want to make the community safer, rather than the opposite. See <https://www.waspc.org/reforms>.

- *SHB 1054 – ready to advance. To gather more support, they may strike the K9 ban and work with WASPC on model policy.*
- SSB 5051 – Passed Ways & Means Committee on 2/15 – Overhauls CJTC and De-Certification.
- SHB 1202 – eliminates qualified immunity. *If this bill is approved, people may leave the law enforcement profession rather than to risk their financial security. Removing qualified immunity may also provide a disincentive for officers to get involved in a situation.*
- SHB 1203 – community Oversight Boards – problematic – Investigate complaints or own initiative. Access to any investigations (criminal or internal). Access to crime scenes and evidence – right to issue subpoena documents and compel testimony – Garrity Rights issue. Requires involvement by Oversight Board in hiring of Chiefs of Police. Some movement on this bill but the heart of the concerns is still there.
- SSB 5259 / SHB 1092 – Data Collection – Use of Force Database – Attorney General's Request Bill – fairly broad swath of use of force, including pointing a firearm at someone.
- SHB 1267 – Office of Independent Investigations - creates a new state agency using limited commissioned former officers then transitioning to civilians to conduct investigations of OIS, sex offenses committed by officers, any other criminal activity related to or discovered during the investigation.
- SHB 1310 – Use of Force – limits the use of physical force to one of three criteria -1. Effect an arrest, 2. prevent escape, 3. protect against imminent threat of bodily injury. Any use of force for any other reason is not allowed. Taken along with the

decertification bill and the loss of qualified immunity would set up a trifecta against an officer. Requires de-escalation, use of space, time and distance.

- SSB 5263 – Felony Bar – Limits use of felony defense statute by law enforcement – there must be a finding beyond a reasonable doubt that the person injured or killed committed a Class A or B felony.
  - SSB 5066 – Duty to Intervene and duty to report – really narrows the definition of use of force. A great deal of subjectivity with the term “wrongdoing” in the bill. WASPC has a model policy, but the legislature seems intent on ignoring WASPC’s more reasonable reforms.
  - HB 1499 – Drug Legalization – legalizes “personal use amounts” of ALL controlled substances.
- 4) **Community Member Concern—Open Carry in Washington State**—A citizen recently voiced a concern to Noah Leavitt about individuals openly carrying firearms at rallies. Washington State law allows the open carry of weapons with some restrictions— including the banning of people carrying a weapon in a school, tavern, or bar. Chief Bieber would be supportive of a ban to restrict open carrying of weapons at public events. We want events to take place peacefully. If weapons are present, then things could go wrong. The State law does not allow cities or counties to amend the weapon ordinance on a local level. Amending this would require a state-wide initiative to be completed. It can be difficult to know if a person is carrying a hidden weapon, where or not the individual has a permit to carry a concealed weapon.
  - 5) **Differential Call Response Work Group Update**—Steve Moss gave a brief update. The Work Group is meeting twice a month. They are researching what situations an officer is legally required to respond to and best practices for differential call response. Sergeant Bayne and Dispatch Supervisor Peter Erb (of WESCOM) have attended every meeting. They have been very helpful in explaining what is and is not possible due to regulations, technology, staffing, and such.
  - 6) **Anything for the Good of the Order**—Kanesha Henderson gave kudos to the LEADS program, which has been a great resource for her clients.
  - 7) **Next Meeting**—March 30, 2021, from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 on Zoom platform.

The February 23, 2021, meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

Submitted by Deborah Minter