

# Chief's Advisory Committee

## March 29, 2022, at 2:30 p.m.

---

**Meeting Participants:** Chief Bieber, Captain Buttice, Earl Gooding Jr., Noah Leavitt, Steve Moss, Roberto Rodriguez, Curtis Phillips (via Zoom)

**Absent:** Captain Braman, Brooke Bouchey, Roger Esparza, Sandy García, Kanasha Henderson, Ruthell Martinez, Dick Morgan

- 1) Chief's Welcome and Thank You**—Chief Bieber thanked the members of the Advisory Committee for their time and contribution over the past two years. The questions, guidance, and perceptions you brought in the meetings impacted how Chief Bieber moved forward. For example, there was a time the group was reviewing the use of force policy, and Dick Morgan recommended more “shall” language be used rather than “should” language. The policy was reviewed, and this was done.
- 2) The Police Chief Selection**—City Manager Shawa selected Captain Buttice as the next Chief of the Walla Police Department. Chief Bieber retires on April 30, and Chief Buttice becomes Police Chief on May 1. Curtis Phillips and Roberto Rodriguez congratulated Captain Buttice on the promotion.
- 3) The Future of the Chief's Advisory Committee**—Chief Bieber advised Captain Buttice to continue utilizing the Advisory Committee and to invite the active members to continue if they want to continue participating. In addition, he recommended replacing any members who have not been actively involved, so more demographics in the community have a voice here. Both Chief Bieber and Captain Buttice are unavailable for the next meeting, so the April 26 meeting was canceled. The next meeting will be held on May 31. Captain Buttice found extreme value in connecting and talking through some tough subjects with the Chief's Advisory Committee over the past two years. He appreciated the commitment the members brought in setting aside the time to actively participate and be involved. Captain Buttice wants the Advisory Committee to continue after he transitions as Chief, so he continues to receive that counsel. Those members who are actively involved on the committee and want to continue are invited to continue in this journey. The members who are ready for someone else to take their role or have not been able to actively participate will be replaced. Captain Buttice plans to recruit representatives from a cross-section of this city to represent whatever slots are left unrepresented, plus he will seek replacements that will also speak up. He looks forward to the group growing as it moves forward. Earl Gooding Jr. responded he did not need any time to think about his answer—he would commit today to continuing forward with the Advisory Committee.

Each member of the Advisory Committee is an ambassador to the community. There are those in the community who are not comfortable asking their questions without going through a representative, such as a member of the committee. The goal is that community members become comfortable with asking their questions directly.

Steve Moss found the Chief's Advisory Committee very productive. He recommended the members be approved by the City Council and possibly broaden the group's focus. In the beginning after this committee was formed, Steve Moss heard people commenting this was just a "yes" committee. He tried to explain that was not the case.

Chief Bieber responded this is an operational focused committee for the Police Department. It was created to give the Police Chief guidance. If the City Council wants to put together a health and safety based advisory committee, then it should be a separate one. Earl Gooding Jr. agreed with Chief Bieber one hundred percent. There may be a perception the Advisory Committee tells the Chief what to do. We do not set the policy or the rules for the Police Department. We are not an oversight committee.

Chief Bieber continued the committee members do not set the police department's policy; however, the members give the Chief advise to consider and offer different perspectives. It would be helpful to clarify how this committee is formed, what is its role, and how the members are selected so it is transparent to the community.

Law enforcement is a complicated profession. Chief Bieber prefers having an advisory committee, rather than an oversight committee. He wishes he had channeled more emotional intelligence into the tattoo issue and had more face-to-face conversations rather than sending emails and letters. He failed to remember and address there is a big difference between inference and implication. We dropped the social media platform when a posting was simply placing fuel on the fire. That past misstep created a huge opportunity now to rebuild a relationship with Whitman College and the Walla Walla Union Bulletin.

- 4) **Body Worn Camera Update**—The Bureau of Justice Assistance Small, Rural, and Tribal (SRT) Body-Worn Camera (BWC) Program sent the contract for the grant (towards the acquisition of body-worn cameras for the police officers). Once the legal review has been completed by the City Attorney's office, Chief Bieber will place this on the City Council's agenda for consideration since the entire project cost will cost considerably more than the \$90,000 grant.

Captain Buttice clarified he is completely supports implementing body cameras, still he wants to do this right and fund a full-time records clerk. This is an expensive project. Every case with body camera footage will need redaction done to remove unrelated license plates, the faces of innocent parties, etc. There is no private funding source for body-worn camera projects, so Captain Buttice has asked his FBI contacts if they are aware of any additional funding sources.

- 5) **Designated Crisis Responder**—The County has a \$100,000 grant for a Designated Crisis Responder. Sgt. Knudson is working on how this could work, such as researching whether the position should be located at the Police Department or the Fire Department. We need to focus on reaching individuals with mental health and drug abuse challenges, since these two issues consume a lot of resources (such as the Sleep Center). We want to get individuals connected with the tools and resources that are available to help them succeed. On a side note, Sergeant Eric Knudson is being promoted to Captain on April 1.

- 6) **Community Relations**—Captain Buttice has already setup conversations to repair and rebuild some community relationships. Hopefully some open and honest discussions

with the Walla Walla Union Bulletin, Whitman College, and holding neighborhood meetings will start that process. The Police Department is considering how best to respectfully get our message out on social media, and what platform would be most effective (YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, etc.). We can no longer blame COVID for our lack of communication. And we will start with reaching the underrepresented neighborhoods.

Captain Buttice felt there was a purpose when the Advisory Committee looked at differential call response. We need to define the committee role and expectation and look at how our short and long-term goals are progressing.

- 7) **Next Meeting**—May 31, 2022, from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 at the WWPD. If you cannot attend a meeting, then simply email Captain Buttice with your discussion questions and comments to share with the group.

*Note: The April 26 meeting was canceled due to Chief Bieber's retirement and Captain Buttice being unavailable.*

The March 29, 2022, meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.  
Submitted by Deborah Minter