



POLICE ADVISORY BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING

The Police Advisory Board (PAB) Workshop Meeting was held on February 19, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at the Dover Police Department in the James L. Hutchison Public Assembly Room with Chairperson Dr. Chanda Jackson presiding. Members of the PAB in attendance were Rev. Dr. Carol Boggerty, Dr. Katera Moore (departed at 7:18pm), Mr. Otis Harris, Jr., Miss LillyRose Granger & Miss Ayrue Lin. Dr. Charlisa Holloway-Edelin, Ms. Melynda Cameron and Mr. Waverly Debraux were absent.

Ex-Officio Members in attendance Chief Thomas A. Johnson, (Dover Police Department) & Deputy Chief David Spicer (Delaware State University). Sergeant Ian Thompson (Dover Police Department) was also present.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Chris Asay, representing the League of Women Voters of Delaware, provided public comment and noted that several new members had recently been added to the board. He asked whether the board felt it had reached at least the minimum membership required under the bylaws or if it was still seeking additional members. Dr. Jackson responded that the board is close to having sufficient membership for the time being, which will allow it to move forward with other priorities. It was noted that the bylaws specify a membership range of nine to thirteen members. While the board is not currently at the top of that range, it is believed that the board has likely reached at least the minimum number of members required.

Mr. Asay also commented that the list of board members on the organization's website appears to be approximately eighteen months out of date. He suggested that both the board member list and the board member biographies be updated, noting that only four members are currently displayed online. The board acknowledged this issue and indicated that updates to the website are already being addressed. Dr. Chanda Jackson stated that board members will be asked to submit professional photographs and biographies so the website can be updated with accurate and complete information.

Additionally, Mr. Asay referenced a suggestion he made at the November meeting recommending that the board produce a written annual report. He explained that such a report could serve both as a report to the department and as a public-facing document that allows the public to see and better appreciate the work the board has completed over the past year or two. He noted that he had not seen this topic included on the agendas for the January or February meetings and asked whether the board planned to discuss it. In response, Dr. Jackson stated that addressing membership had taken precedence in recent meetings. However, once new members are fully on boarded and settled, the board indicated that it would be appropriate to have a discussion about developing an annual report in the future.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Dr. Carol Boggerty moved to accept the Agenda, seconded by Dr. Katera Moore and unanimously carried.

CITIZEN COMPLAINTS - None Reported

MEMBERSHIP – MS. DOMINIQUE DIXON

Dr. Katera Moore asked for clarification regarding the application and vetting process for board membership, specifically whether applications remain open to the public and what steps occur before candidates are presented to the board for consideration. It was explained that applications are generally accepted on an ongoing basis when vacancies exist. Once an application is received, a vetting process takes place before the board makes a recommendation. After the board approves or recommends a candidate to move forward, the application is forwarded to the Mayor's Office, where the mayor makes the final determination regarding appointment.

Chief Johnson further explained that the vetting process is relatively straightforward because the role is a volunteer advisory position and not an employee position within the police department. Applicants provide demographic information and authorize a cursory criminal history check. While having a criminal history is not automatically disqualifying, individuals with violent criminal histories, sex offense-related histories, or active warrants are screened out. This is done to ensure the safety and integrity of the board, particularly considering the presence of younger board members. The Chief also noted that the board seeks to maintain a diversity of perspectives among its members. After the preliminary review, the mayor—who is ultimately responsible for matters related to the police department under the city charter—ratifies the board’s selection, provided there are no issues in the applicant’s background that would prevent them from serving. When asked whether any applicants had previously been denied, it was confirmed that there have been instances where applicants were not approved.

Mr. Otis Harris asked Chief Johnson for clarification regarding the applicant, Dominique, noting that she had mentioned previously completing the required training. Mr. Harris asked whether she had been a prior candidate or whether her training was completed through participation in the Citizens Police Academy or another similar program.

In response, it was clarified that the reference was to training requirements rather than the vetting process for appointment. The applicant explained that she had completed the required workshop hours approximately one to two years earlier. Chief Johnson confirmed that she had attended and participated in the advisory board training seminars he previously developed for the state. He noted that she attended the classes before expressing interest in becoming a board member, which is somewhat unusual, as the training is typically completed after individuals are appointed to the board.

Chief Johnson further explained that the applicant participated in a combination of training sessions over the previous two years, attending classes that covered the responsibilities and functions of advisory boards. He remarked that it is uncommon for a non-member to complete the training prior to seeking appointment and noted that this situation may be unique among recent applicants.

Dr. Carol Boggerty moved to accept the application of Ms. Dominique Dixon for membership on the Police Advisory Board pending recommendation by Mayor Robin Christiansen, seconded by Miss LillyRose Granger and unanimously carried.

MEETING LIVESTREAM DISCUSSION

Dr. Boggerty introduced a discussion regarding the potential livestreaming of advisory board meetings. She noted that some advisory boards stream their meetings, although it is not a requirement. The purpose of raising the topic was to determine whether the board has the capacity to implement livestreaming and to ensure the discussion was placed on record so the public would know the board had considered ways to increase opportunities for community participation.

Mr. Harris asked how public participation would work if meetings were livestreamed, specifically whether individuals would need to attend in person to ask questions or if a virtual option such as a live chat feature would be available. It was noted that the Chief would provide additional information regarding the logistical and financial considerations.

Chief Johnson reported that the primary barriers to livestreaming are cost and technological limitations. After consulting with the department’s IT Director, preliminary estimates indicate that equipment needed to support livestreaming, including camera equipment, a device to connect the camera to a computer, and a business-level

Zoom subscription capable of supporting up to 300 participants, would cost between approximately \$1,640 and \$2,140 in the first year. He further noted that the room's current speaker system is not adequate for livestreaming and that additional upgrades could increase the total cost to approximately \$3,000. Chief Johnson stated that there is currently no budget allocation for these upgrades.

Chief Johnson also explained that the meeting space is a multipurpose room used for police academy training and operates largely as a closed system with limited internet connectivity. Additional logistical considerations would include camera placement, possible staffing to operate the equipment, and determining the appropriate platform and audio capabilities for the room.

Dr. Moore asked whether the department had received any requests from the public for virtual access to meetings. Chief Johnson stated that no such requests had been received. Dr. Boggerty reiterated that the purpose of the discussion was to ensure the board was proactive and that the record reflects the board's consideration of livestreaming. She stated that if questions arise in the future, the board can explain that livestreaming is currently limited by budget and technology but may be considered at a later time.

Members also discussed the importance of evaluating demand for livestreaming and researching how many viewers participate in similar meetings hosted by other boards. One member noted that while some advisory boards offer livestreaming, attendance may vary.

Mr. Asay shared that the New Castle County Police Advisory Board livestreams its meetings, sometimes utilizing public library facilities that support livestreaming, with occasional participation from viewers.

Chief Johnson noted that comparisons with larger jurisdictions may not be equivalent due to differences in population size, geographic coverage, and departmental resources. He stated that the Dover Police Department covers approximately 24 square miles with an authorized strength of 109 officers, while New Castle County Police Department serves a significantly larger jurisdiction with approximately 450 to 475 authorized officers.

Mr. Harris suggested that the board could also review viewership data from City Council livestreams as a potential metric. Chief Johnson noted that City Council meetings are streamed online and sometimes broadcast on television, but viewership numbers are often relatively low. He also emphasized that livestreaming would require additional staff support, including IT personnel to ensure the technology functions properly during meetings.

The board agreed that livestreaming may be considered in the future and that potential funding options, including future budget requests or fundraising opportunities, could be explored. At this time, no further action was taken.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN POLICING DISCUSSION

Chief Johnson provided an overview of how artificial intelligence (AI) is currently being used and evaluated within the field of public safety. He explained that AI technology is still evolving and continues to change rapidly, making it difficult to define its full role in law enforcement. Rather than replacing existing systems, AI is primarily enhancing technologies that are already in use.

As an example, Chief Johnson discussed license plate reader systems, which have been used in law enforcement for more than a decade. Traditional systems captured license plate images and compared them with databases containing information such as stolen vehicles, wanted persons, or other alerts entered into national law enforcement systems. Newer AI-enhanced systems expand those capabilities by analyzing additional vehicle

characteristics, such as bumper stickers, missing hubcaps, damaged mirrors, or other unique identifiers. This allows officers to search for vehicles based on visual characteristics even when a license plate is unavailable or obscured, such as in situations involving Amber Alerts or other urgent investigations. Chief Johnson noted that these searches still require a legitimate investigative purpose.

Chief Johnson also discussed a technology known as ZeroEyes, which may soon be considered for use in Dover pending approval by the Criminal Justice Council. This system is currently deployed at Delaware State University and uses artificial intelligence to detect firearms through existing camera systems. The AI analyzes camera footage to identify the visual profile of firearms and sends an alert when a potential firearm is detected. These alerts are first reviewed by trained monitoring personnel who verify whether the image is in fact a firearm before notifying local emergency dispatch centers to initiate an appropriate police response.

Chief Johnson explained that the system does not analyze behavior but instead focuses solely on identifying firearms. Any confirmed alert would be evaluated based on the surrounding circumstances, and officers would respond accordingly to determine whether any criminal activity is occurring.

He further noted that while AI has demonstrated significant advancements in both the private and public sectors, law enforcement agencies are proceeding cautiously with its implementation. Current legal and judicial standards do not permit AI to independently generate official police reports or serve as direct evidence in court proceedings. As a result, AI is currently used as an investigative tool to assist officers rather than replace human judgment.

Chief Johnson concluded by emphasizing that the department is approaching the use of AI carefully, ensuring that all information generated by AI systems is verified through traditional investigative processes before any official action is taken. At this time, AI serves as a supplemental investigative aid rather than a standalone basis for enforcement decisions.

YOUTH

Miss LillyRose Granger and Miss Ayrué Lin presented a report regarding substance use and disciplinary practices at Dover High School. The students explained that they were tasked with gathering information on substance use trends and reviewing how discipline is handled within the school. They reported that available data indicates a decrease in substance-related incidents, although areas for continued improvement remain.

According to information provided by School Resource Officer Corporal Stevenson, the primary substance-related issue at the school involves THC vape devices, with occasional incidents involving THC edibles. Corporal Stevenson stated that there is not a significant drug problem at the school and emphasized that physical altercations remain the more prevalent concern. Data shared in the report indicated that fights have decreased from 179 incidents during the 2023–2024 school year to 89 incidents during the 2024–2025 school year, with 18 incidents reported thus far in the current school year.

The students explained that Corporal Stevenson generally exercises officer discretion and attempts to avoid criminal charges for first-time offenses. School disciplinary decisions are handled by the Associate Principal for Discipline, Mr. Cohen, in accordance with the school's Student Success Guide. Under the current policy, a first offense involving a THC vape results in a one-day out-of-school suspension, a second offense results in a three-day suspension, and a third offense may lead to a five-day suspension with possible alternative placement outside Dover High School. Tobacco violations follow a similar progressive discipline model but begin with in-school consequences before escalating to more serious disciplinary action. Corporal Stevenson noted that criminal charges may occur if there is evidence of distribution, such as selling vape cartridges, but stated that he has only pursued criminal charges in limited circumstances.

The students also reported that the school has implemented several measures to improve safety and reduce incidents. These include the addition of three hall monitors, four constables, two behavior specialists, and additional lunch staff. According to Corporal Stevenson, the increased staff presence throughout the building has contributed to the reduction in fights. Vape detectors were also considered but were determined to be ineffective due to frequent false alerts.

The Youth Committee members shared several potential strategies to further address vaping and substance use among students. These included asking supportive questions when a vape is confiscated, even on a first offense, to better understand why students are using vaping products and whether they need support or resources. They also suggested implementing student check-ins after incidents, expanding peer support opportunities, increasing parental or guardian engagement through informational sessions, and replacing first-offense out-of-school suspensions with educational interventions focused on the effects of vaping. Additionally, they recommended expanding community-based activities to provide students with more positive engagement opportunities outside of school.

Board members thanked the Youth Committee for their report and commended their efforts. A board member asked whether the students needed additional support from the committee as they continue gathering information.

Chief Johnson provided additional context regarding school resource officer training and noted that officers complete both a 40-hour basic course and a 40-hour advanced course related to school-based policing. He emphasized that arrest or formal criminal charges are considered a last resort and that officer's work closely with school administration to address behavioral issues through school policies whenever possible. Chief Johnson noted that the goal is to maintain a safe educational environment while minimizing unnecessary involvement of students in the criminal justice system.

COMMUNITY MEETING UPDATES

Miss Lin informed the board that Dover High School students had organized a scheduled walkout in connection with protests occurring at multiple high schools regarding immigration enforcement (ICE). The student stated that the walkout was approved by Dr. Solomon and was scheduled for March 3. It was also noted that the walkout was planned so that it would not disrupt class time.

The student further indicated that the event had not yet occurred at the time of the meeting, so there were no outcomes or results to report. In response to a question from a board member regarding whether the student representatives would be speaking during the protest, the student stated that they may potentially participate as speakers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deputy Chief David Spicer (DSU Police) reported that Delaware State University is preparing for commencement, which is scheduled for May 15, with staff, faculty, and students looking forward to the event. He also noted that DSU will host the DIAA High School Basketball Championships on March 1, an event expected to draw strong attendance and excitement. Deputy Chief Spicer added that Dover High School is currently ranked number one in the state and may participate in the championship.

Chief Johnson reported that he and the department's Accreditation Manager, Mr. Robert Scott, will be attending the CALEA Conference in Tucson to appear before the East Coast Regional Board regarding the Dover Police Department's four-year accreditation review. Chief Johnson explained that the department must demonstrate continued adherence to established best practices in order to maintain accreditation. He noted that the department has already received positive preliminary feedback from the assessor and expressed hope that the accreditation

renewal will be finalized before the board's next regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm