

Summary – Public Safety Committee Meeting

November 27, 2018

Committee Members Present:

Sharon Bulova, Chairman At-Large
Penelope Gross, Mason District (Vice Chairman)
John Cook, Braddock District (Committee Chair)
John Foust, Dranesville District
Pat Herrity, Springfield District
Catherine Hudgins, Hunter Mill District
Jeff C. McKay, Lee District
Kathy Smith, Sully District
Linda Smyth, Providence District
Daniel Storck, Mount Vernon District

The meeting was called to order at 11:36 a.m.

The meeting summary for the October 23, 2018, Public Safety Committee meeting was approved. A copy of this summary, along with the November 27, 2018, meeting agenda and materials are available at the following link:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/board-public-safety-committee-meeting-nov-27-2018>

Link to the November 27, 2018, Public Safety Committee meeting video:

http://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=9&clip_id=1212

The first topic on the agenda was a “First 90 Days” discussion with Chief John S. Butler, Fire and Rescue Department.

- Chief Butler started by stating that his first 90 days as Fire Chief will be completed on November 30, 2018. He then stated his appreciation for his senior staff and their support, he acknowledged the excellent department and the dedicated men and women who serve, but acknowledged that some improvement can be made.
- Chief Butler stated he started out by conducting a listening tour, first conducting one-on-one meetings with Assistant Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs. He then hosted six Town Hall meetings for uniformed Fire and Rescue officers, stating that approximately 22 Battalion Chiefs, 62 Captains, and 61 Lieutenants made up the roughly 145 personnel who attended the meetings. He had then to date conducted 18 station visits, with many more to go, but has appreciated and benefited from the candid conversations.

- Chief Butler further noted that other work sites and staff were also visited, to include the administrative team, EMS and Medical Directors, PSHOC staff and Dr. Stewart, Volunteer Commissions, Chaplains, and USAR staff. Other meetings were held with various Board members, stakeholder agencies and committees, as well as various project leads. He has also visited parts of the magisterial districts as he continues to learn.
- Chief Butler stated that during discussions certain common themes emerged, with an overarching one of a real or perceived lack of trust/transparency within the agency. Other themes included resource deployment, authority, time management, information management, the Lieutenant rank and assignments, work performance evaluations (physical fit for duty evaluations), and promotional exams.
- Chief Butler has begun an organizational evaluation to identify priorities. He is conducting workforce planning and has announced selections/promotions to his Senior Leadership Team, particularly two new Assistant Chiefs and three Deputy Chiefs. There have also been meetings with the Department of Justice on the consent decree with a focus on recruitment, hiring, and retention practices and strategies.
- Chief Butler spoke about the *Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department, Organizational Climate Review Report (February 2017)*, and that he is taking the findings and recommendations seriously. He is working closely with his staff and also Deputy County Executive Dave Rohrer and County Executive Bryan Hill to identify priorities within the report to move forward.
- He also discussed other priorities he is focused on, to include overtime reduction, a Diversion First Co-Responder Model which is being piloted, and implementation of the Field Available Component Therapy Response (FACTR).
- Supervisor Gross asked for an explanation of the FACTR program. Deputy Chief Jason Jenkins explained that FACTR is a cutting-edge capability in this region for rare cases of patients trapped for extended periods of time. EMS personnel can relocate blood products from the hospital to the scene so that paramedics can administer to the patient.
- Supervisor Gross followed with a second question concerning the Women's Initiatives Workgroup and whether Chief Butler had been able to yet formulate a plan or proposal for action going forward for this workgroup. Chief Butler stated he has met with the Women's Initiative Group once to date, as well as many other female employees who are not members of that group, and most of the issues he has heard are ones which are institutional across Fire and EMS services nationwide. He further stated that it is difficult to have one voice representing all members of any under-represented group, but that he is continuing to listen and to learn and that he takes the approach that he is the one ultimately accountable, and an action plan is being formulated. Supervisor Gross asked that he inform the Board going forward as he decides on specific actions or plans to take.

- Supervisor Foust asked how success will be measured in the future as actions are taken to affect change in the department. He specifically referenced the survey that was part of the original climate assessment and whether another would be done in the future. Chief Butler responded that for change management it is important to allow some time as steps are implemented to affect change, then reassess and measure. He believes that perhaps in 24-36 months another survey type instrument would be appropriate. Supervisor Foust echoed Supervisor Gross' that the Board be kept informed. Supervisor Cook stated that he agreed with the Chief's timeline for a future assessment, but that it would also be important to start identifying in advance areas that should be assessed and measured.
- Supervisor Storck thanked Chief Butler for not only his work to date in leading the department, but also his visibility and leadership in the community at events already.

The second topic on the agenda was Hate or Bias Crimes and Incidents with a panel presentation led by the Police Department.

- Police Chief Edwin C. Roessler and Captain Gregory Fried lead the panel for the discussion. They were joined by Jeff Dannick, Executive Director, Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia (JCC), Ramona Carroll, Interfaith Coordinator, Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS), Hurunnessa Fariad, Interfaith Coordinator, All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS Center), Shirley Ginwright, Chairman, Fairfax County Communities of Trust (COT), and Michael Shochet, a Cantor at Temple Rodef Shalom and also a Fairfax County Police Chaplain.
- Supervisor Cook opened up the discussion by stating that this portion of the meeting was planned after recent events at the JCC, and as incidents of bias and hate seem to be rising nationwide, a finding affirmed in reported FBI crime data. He further elaborated on his growing concerns about a political and cultural environment of hate and hate speech and that dialogue such as this is important and he hopes will be beneficial.
- Chief Roessler began the discussion by stating that hate, bias, and criminal activity related to hate and bias have no place in our community, and that the Police Department will continue work to prevent and fully investigate hate and bias crimes. The mission statement of the Department speaks of engagement with the community to aid in prevention and fighting of crime. Chief Roessler addressed the importance of understanding the relevant laws, which laws officers are able to enforce, and also Department policies. He explained that the Department tracks not only bias crimes but also incidents to better understand what is going on in the community and to address situations before they escalate. He also reiterated One Fairfax, and the importance the department places on community engagement and building trust.
- Captain Gregory Fried thanked the community partners who joined them for the panel. He explained that the department uses the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), the most transparent and thorough method of reporting crimes and statistics.

The department is required to report crime statistics, including hate/bias crimes, to the Virginia State Police, and those requirements were explained.

- Captain Fried presented the Police Department's definition of bias crimes and incidents, which are consistent with the definitions used by the FBI and the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Captain Fried stated law enforcement agencies are required to report statistics on bias crimes and incidents to the FBI, but that not all agencies do so it is difficult to get a comprehensive understanding of national trends. Concerning though is that the number of bias crimes reported to the FBI did increase 17% from 2016-2017.
- Captain Fried then presented Fairfax County statistics concerning bias crimes and incidents, noting they too had a significant increase from 2016-2017. Some of this may be due to ongoing efforts by the department to engage the community and to encourage the reporting of crimes and incidents.
- Captain Fried then presented data showing bias crimes and incidents by type broken down yearly from 2015-2017 and 2018 YTD. The number one category for bias related crimes were destruction of property, followed by assault. Additionally, suspicious events and persons was the primary component to the bias related incidents.
- Captain Fried highlighted some of the strategies the department uses to combat hate and bias through community education, outreach, and intervention. These include:
 - Fostering partnerships and established liaisons with organizations and leaders within target communities.
 - Educating the community on bias crimes and incidents
 - Attempting to heal the harm inflicted
 - Enlisting community support to send a clear message that hate and bias will not be tolerated.
 - Meeting with target communities to allay fears, reduce any potential counter-violence, and provide safety and crime prevention information.
 - Conduct aggressive proactive follow-up procedures to ensure the needs of the community are being met to reduce fear and prevent recurrence of similar events.
 - Provide appropriate services and resources to the victims and witnesses of bias crime and incidents.
- Captain Fried then outlined some of the events and programs the department engages in specifically with faith communities as primary partners to educate, prevent, and intervene for bias crimes and incidents.
 - Security Checks
 - Active Violence Presentations
 - Security Briefings/Assessments
 - Tabletop Exercises

- Worship Watch Workshops
 - Personal Safety Presentations
 - Victim Resources
 - Interfaith Collaboration
- Captain Fried echoed the Chief's comment that the department has fully embraced One Fairfax, and then further outlined some of the other broader community engagement and prevention measures the department undertakes, to include:
 - Crime Prevention Program
 - Communities of Trust Council
 - Citizen Advisory Committee
 - Chief's Advisory Council
 - Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services
 - Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council
 - National Night Out
 - Use of Social Media Platforms
 - The other panelists then spoke, each empathizing that hate and bias cannot be tolerated and the importance of ongoing intentional dialogues such as this one. They each also stressed the importance of their existing positive relationships with the Police Department and the Board of Supervisors, and the need for education, prevention, outreach, and intervention.
 - Jeff Dannick, Executive Director, JCC, stated that he never thought he would become an expert on hate crime, but has unfortunately become well versed over the years due to incidents of hate, particularly the painting of swastikas, against the JCC, and other area congregations. He discussed that how hate is addressed and battled here as a community working together will distinguish Fairfax from other places, and that the diversity of the County requires each segment to support one another, and not tolerate hate against any group, no matter the basis. After the tragic attack at the Tree of Life Congregation synagogue in Pittsburgh event he attended a FBI briefing in Pittsburgh which stressed the value of building relationships with local law enforcement. He highlighted that a strong relationship already exists here, and that the Police Department is always responsive to requests or proactive if a threat may exist, or just visible around the JCC and elsewhere. He appreciates and is reassured by the ongoing efforts of the Board of Supervisors and Police Department.
 - Ramona Carroll, Interfaith Coordinator, NCS, explained that her role is to work with all faith communities within Fairfax County and help build relationships and partnerships before, during, and after an incident. She said they have had an excellent partnership with the Police Department, and as an example of relationship building, she highlighted a recent "Breakfast with the Captain" Captain Fried held for faith leaders to get to better know the faith community in his area in Franconia. The measures and other prevention outreach steps already discussed all help build relationships, collaborative partnerships, and trust. She also highlighted and appreciated the intentional conversations such as this.

- Hurunnessa Fariad, Interfaith Coordinator, ADAMS Center, stated Fairfax County is unique in the breadth of its diversity. The Police Department has built a relationship with the ADAMS Center and are always responsive and available, and that those who come to the ADAMS Center for prayer are comfortable with engaging with officers. She highlighted that the visibility and dialogue officers have had with those who attend the mosque, including men, women, and children, has helped demonstrate officers as approachable and has helped build bridges of trust.
- Shirley Ginwright, Chairman, COT, stated that COT is currently hoping to organize and host community forums on hate crimes, to bring the community together for dialogue. She stated she was going to an interfaith workshop in Washington, DC, that evening designed to “train the trainer” to teach communities how to overcome hate crimes and to teach people how to work together, and that she hopes to bring the training back to Fairfax. Like others she highlighted the power of building relationships and the efforts of the Board and the Police Department, and she also acknowledged the efforts of Ramona Carroll in encouraging more faith leaders to become involved in COT.
- Cantor Michael Shochet introduced himself as “wearing two hats,” as he is a cantor at Temple Rodef Shalom and a Police Chaplain, and therefore a liaison between the Chief’s Office and the Jewish community. He stated synagogues and the Jewish community here and across the country are focused now on safety and building security, but believes we are well positioned here because of the relationship between the community and the Police Department. One area he highlighted from his perspective as not only as a faith leader, but as a parent, is that he hears more about concerns from students and parents about bias incidents in schools. He always encourages them to report any incident. He also said that as school representatives are in the COT he hopes they can continue to build education and relationships with a focus on school incidents.
- Supervisor Cook thanked the panel for their presentation, and particularly thanked Captain Fried for discussing prevention through coordination and cooperation with the community. He also mentioned the need to work collaboratively with the School Board on enhanced training and security, with a focus on bias crimes and incidents.
- Chairman Bulova stated that she appreciated the presentation, and reiterated that the County is unique in its diversity. She was disheartened to see the bias crime statistics, and stressed the importance in building a trusting relationship between the community and law enforcement so the former feels comfortable in coming forward to report crimes, incidents, or suspicious activity across faith and immigrant communities. She spoke to how the roles of police officers have evolved over the years, but believes officers in Fairfax County perform very well. She elaborated that she thought the panel represented the strong network of communities which are important and unique to Fairfax County. She also took the opportunity to commend the recent memorial service at Temple Rodef Shalom in the aftermath of the tragic attack at the Tree of Life Congregation synagogue, and reiterated that people must never tire of standing up against hate.

- Supervisor Herrity stated hate crimes are unconscionable and unacceptable, and he appreciated the ongoing prevention efforts. He also appreciated that the Police Department and faith community leaders have positive relationships, but hopes that a relationship of trust ultimately also develops between the department and entire congregations.
- Supervisor Smith stated that she thinks it is important to amplify and spread the message that the community should report hate crimes and incidents to ensure awareness and appropriate follow-up and action.
- Supervisor Storck reiterated that hate does not belong in Fairfax County, or anywhere. Education must start with children at home and in schools, with teaching and reinforcing the right values.
- He asked if the panel members were confident that processes and working relationships existed between the officers, the faith community, and schools to identify and work with students who may display hateful behaviors. Chief Roessler responded by discussing the role of particularly SROs and the renewed trainings and policies, and the advent of the AAP program and other diversion programs in lieu of prosecution or discipline when appropriate. He reiterated the importance of reporting bias incidents or behaviors, to include in schools, early so prevention or intervention can occur before a situation or behavior escalates. Intervention and healing through counseling and education is preferable to, and more beneficial than, enforcement only strategies.
- Supervisor Hudgins thanked the panel, and thought back to the establishment of Faith In Action. She too emphasized the importance of starting with children, and although she agreed with the importance of the role of schools in teaching they cannot be expected to do it all. She asked that all consider how the community and faith communities can also best engage young people and families in positive venues to reinforce and support healthy, respectful relationships and to enhance understanding of others.
- Captain Fried stated that the department is partnering with schools to have deliberate, positive conversations with youth and have found that to be beneficial. He stated the department has done similar outreach in faith communities and congregations to have interaction and engagement with young people in different settings. He also noted that he and other district commanders are establishing partnerships with their area School Board members as well to work collaboratively.
- Shirley Ginwright followed up by stating that there has also been a “Police at Lunch” program in some schools, and is also working to bring in the Sheriff’s Office, Fire and Rescue, and the Virginia State Police to join these programs.

- Supervisor Foust stated that he wanted to specifically thank and acknowledge the faith community in Fairfax County for their unique efforts to work collaboratively and to hold so many interfaith events and activities. This allows them to come together on a regular basis, and build understanding and respect for each other. He appreciated too how the police department has integrated into the faith community and the interfaith activities.
- Supervisor Foust did state his concern as to the significant increase in the bias crime statistics, and does not believe that all can be attributed to encouraging people to better report. He believes there is a fundamental problem and that there are, in fact, more bias crimes occurring. He then asked what might be holding people back from reporting crimes and what could be done to improve reporting, if anything. Chief Roessler responded by stating there was no intention to minimize the data, that no bias crime can or will be tolerated. The most likely barrier remains that some people are afraid of police. The department is engaged with community partners, including faith communities, to conduct outreach and build trust, but the work is ongoing. Chief Roessler reiterated the importance of ongoing education, enforcement, prevention, and partnership as the foundation for moving forward and thanked the community partners.
- Hurunnessa Fariad stated that often, especially within the immigrant community, persons do not necessarily think about reporting harassment or bias speech directed at them versus physical attacks. Therefore, she and other interfaith leaders stress to their communities the importance of reporting any bias behavior so police and others can better understand the scope of the issues and investigate as appropriate. She said the ADAMS Center is often the recipient of threatening and strange phone calls, but that they are comfortable in reaching out to the proper authorities to report. They do this because it is important to report, but to also set an example for their members to do the same. She stressed that more education and awareness is needed as to the importance of reporting all bias incidents, not just crimes.
- Supervisor Gross said hate, bias, and fear are unfortunately learned behaviors, and that it is important to overcome that with teaching love and respect instead. She also noted the unique opportunities as a Board member to interact with various faiths and beliefs, and finding more similarities than differences. She also stated that people need to stand up and speak out, and call out statements which are bias based when they happen – not only collectively with “many voices,” but as individuals.
- Supervisor Gross asked Exec. Director Dannick about the different reactions at the JCC after nineteen swastikas were recently painted on the building, and then removed after reporting, with many calling to first hold a gathering to stand against hate. Exec. Director Dannick stated the philosophy supporting the quick removal was so the symbols of hate would not be visible for too long and cause members further distress or harm. They also wanted to show the offender(s) that their actions would not deter activities at the JCC, and that life would go on there. But he further stated that the community response was interesting, with many community members of all faiths calling and offering to come with scrub brushes, and to join in “washing away hate.” Youth and others wrote messages of love and tolerance on the sidewalks in response to the hateful vandalism.

The JCC did hold a gathering the following week with about 500 people attending, and as seen at the service at Temple Rodef Shalom, these gatherings can be powerful and tangible stands against hate and intolerance. These can also be part of a cathartic healing process, and we should not deny the community opportunities to stand together in the face of hate. Supervisor Gross appreciated his comments and highlighted the extraordinary community response. She stated again the importance as a community and individuals to stand up and speak out.

- Supervisor McKay also commended the memorial service at Temple Rodef Shalom and the community response. He appreciated that law enforcement was an integral and visible part of that service, and that people of all faiths could see them as vital, engaged, and caring members of the community. He thanked the panel for the presentation, and stated that he believed the bias crimes and incident statistics do bear watching, but that he does agree that one of the reasons the numbers have increased is because people are more willing to report incidents to the police. He believes that community engagement and building trusting relationships has helped law enforcement increase the reporting. Reporting is important in that leads to not only increased awareness, but prosecution of offenders, which is also important in showing these crimes are not tolerated and in helping with prevention. As a parent and an elected official, Supervisor McKay also appreciates the efforts of the schools, but he spoke to the challenges we face with a national rhetoric of hate which is adversely impacting our children. He emphasized the importance of continuing to partner with the School Board to adopt collaborative strategies.
- Supervisor McKay then asked about chart 5 on page 5 of the PowerPoint presentation, referring to the “All other groups” category, and asked how the bias types are broken down and reported. The goal should be to have additional distinct categories or groups, and he asked if the categories were defined by the Police Department or NIBRS requirements. Chief Roessler stated that NIBRS sets the standards by which these categories are defined, and that there is an effort to update and change the categories to expand them to collect more accurate information. If NIBRS is updated and expanded, there will also need to be training on how an officer documents the information. Captain Fried further clarified though that the department does maintain more detailed information, but that for the purposes of conserving space in this presentation the categories were truncated and grouped together as appropriately as possible. The department is aware of and sympathetic to all of the groups and that the published reports break down the information much further. Supervisor McKay understood for the purposes of the presentation, but stated it would be helpful to see that information to better understand what is happening within the diverse communities here in Fairfax.
- Supervisor Cook again thanked the panel for their presentation and their ongoing work. Also, due to time, he already had noted that the presentation on Electronic Control Weapons would be moved to the January Public Safety Committee meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:36 p.m.