



Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board

July 28, 2020 Meeting Summary

The Ohio Collaborative Community Police Advisory Board (Collaborative) is a multidisciplinary group consisting of a diverse group of Ohioans including, law enforcement, community members, elected officials, academia and the faith based community. The Collaborative was created by executive order 2015-04k on April 29, 2015 after the Governor's Task Force on Community Police Relations completed its work and produced a report with recommendations on how to improve the important relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

The Collaborative is chaired by Assistant Director Karen Huey, Department of Public Safety. Members appointed by the Governor DeWine, including ex officio members, are identified below:

- Commissioner Lori Barreras— Chair of the Ohio Civil Rights Commission
- Representative Juanita Brent – Ohio House
- Dr. Ronnie Dunn—Cleveland State University, Associate Professor of Urban Studies and Interim Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer
- Dr. Robin S. Engel—University of Cincinnati, Professor of Criminal Justice and Director of IACP/UC Center of Police Research and Policy
- Officer Anthony L. Johnson—Columbus Police Department and member, Fraternal Order of Police
- Sheriff Tom Miller—Medina County Sheriff's Office and member of the Buckeye State Sheriff's Association
- BCI Superintendent Joe Morbitzer— Ohio Attorney General's Office
- The Reverend Walter S. Moss— Pastor and CIRV Project Director, Stark County Prosecutor's Office
- Honorable Ronald J. O'Brien—Franklin County Prosecutor
- Chief Justin Páez—Dublin Police Department and member of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police

Ex officio members:

- Senator Sandra Williams, Ohio Senate
- Representative Phil Plummer, Ohio House
- The Honorable Tom Roberts, former Ohio Senator and President, Ohio Conference of Units of NAACP
- The late Honorable Louis Stokes, former member of Congress
- The late Honorable George V. Voinovich—former U.S. Senator, Governor of Ohio, and Mayor of Cleveland

The purpose of the Collaborative is to advise and work with the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) in the Ohio Department of Public Safety to implement the Task Force's recommendations, as identified in the Executive Order.

July 28, 2020 Virtual Meeting of the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board

Due to Coronavirus, the Ohio Collaborative meeting on July 28 was held virtually using Microsoft TEAMS Live. The meeting began at 10:00 AM. The following members were present at the meeting:

- Assistant Director Karen Huey, Chair
- Executive Director Karhlton Moore
- Commissioner Lori Barreras
- Representative Juanita Brent
- Dr. Ronnie Dunn
- Dr. Robin S. Engel
- Officer Anthony Johnson
- Sheriff Tom Miller
- BCI Superintendent Joe Morbitzer
- Rev. Walter Moss
- The Hon. Ronald J O'Brien
- Chief Justin Páez
- Representative Phil Plummer
- The Hon. Tom Roberts
- Senator Sandra Williams
- Special guest: Nana Wilson, President, Columbus Chapter of the NAACP
- Special guest: Staff Lieutenant Ed Meija, Ohio State Highway Patrol

Assistant Director Huey welcomed everyone. She talked about the importance of the Collaborative and gave an overview of the presentations to be given by Nana Wilson, President of the Columbus Chapter of the NAACP and by the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Assistant Director Huey remarked that COVID presents us with many challenges at the Ohio Department of Public Safety, but that many have risen to the challenge, and she hopes that the Collaborative can do the same.

Assistant Director Huey remarked that the George Floyd tragedy has caused many to look internally and at our criminal justice system. There is a focus on law enforcement, and this is what the Collaborative was built for. She listed the topics and standards to be discussed by the group, including a police oversight board, a licensing oversight board to raise the professionalism of policing, independent investigation and prosecution of law enforcement, and the standard of mass gatherings, as requested by Governor DeWine. Executive Director Karhlton Moore will discuss the statewide Office on Minority Recruitment.

Executive Director Moore provided remarks on the death of George Floyd and the impact it had on all people. He reminded everyone that we have great officers in the profession, but as with all professions, there are people who are unfit for the job. We need to have meaningful reform to rid those who should not be police officers. We have worked well with law enforcement, and have had productive conversations with the chiefs and sheriffs on issues of reform.

Discussions also need to be had about the distinction between peaceful protesters and those who are only interested in causing chaos and destruction. He is hopeful that at the end of the day we can develop a good standard that can be used as a model policy.

Finally, Executive Director Moore discussed the Office of Recruitment. Over the last several years, it has been very difficult to get people to be engaged in the law enforcement profession. This new office fills an existing need. We need to find people who have not always been attracted to law enforcement or have not thought of law enforcement as a profession to consider this as a possibility. He introduced Dr. Patrick Oliver and Officer Sarah Shendy and provided background on both. He also noted that Anjolie Harland, from the OCJS Policy and Research section, will be assisting Dr. Oliver and Officer Shendy in their efforts.

Director Tom Stickrath joined the meeting and thanked everyone for being a part of the Collaborative. He commented that the work of the Collaborative is now more important than ever, and will be a big part of the reform efforts that are undertaken. He appreciates the work of the new Office of Minority Recruiting, and the wonderful collaboration with other entities, such as the Attorney General's Office, the BSSA, and the OACP. He is excited to move forward on the standards, and he appreciates all the work being done by the group.

Assistant Director Huey asked for comments from the members on recent events.

Assistant Director introduced Nana Watson.

Ms. Watson thanked the Collaborative for inviting the NAACP to participate in the conversation. She provided a bit of her history as a civil rights advocate and current president of the Columbus Chapter of the NAACP. The NAACP has been around for over 100 years. It is volunteer-driven. They address key issues of quality education, economic sustainability, fair housing, engaging youth, voter registration (though they are non-partisan), and fairness in the courtroom. They have a criminal justice committee that supports and seeks to increase trust and faith in public safety by advancing law enforcement procedures.

The NAACP has a relationship with the Columbus PD and has been involved in efforts such as their body worn camera rollout, and most recently their discussion to create a civilian review board with subpoena power. Regarding mass demonstrations, we need to know who the protesters are, where they come from, and their goal. She remarked that people have the right to protest, but not the right to destroy property.

When asked about minority recruitment efforts, Ms. Watson noted that we need to look into what it means to be an officer. Right now, many in the Black community do not like or trust the police. There is a need for cultural understanding and an awareness of biases. Until these biases are discussed loudly in the community, we cannot move forward.

When asked about other recommendations of the NAACP besides a civilian review board with subpoena power, Ms. Watson noted the following: 1) abolish knee holds; 2) abolish no-knock warrants; 3) determine how to equip cameras on riot gear (currently not easy to do so); 4) de-escalation; 5) implicit bias training; 6) recruitment of Black officers.

Assistant Director Huey reminded everyone that this is a community Board, and we want the community to reach out to us on these topics.

Executive Director Moore thanked Ms. Watson for her presentation. He reminded the Board that we need to take efforts to ensure the community is aware of the work of the Collaborative. Even though it

is voluntary, four out of five officers are under an organization that is certified or is in the process of being certified. This message needs to get out to the community. We should lean on the NAACP and the Urban League to get the message out. Ms. Watson agreed that a meeting between the NAACP and the Collaborative would be beneficial.

Assistant Director Huey thanked Ms. Watson for her efforts and let her know the Collaborative would remain in touch.

Assistant Director Huey then provided an overview of OSP and their history of being involved in protests, especially at the Statehouse. She felt they would have good perspective on how to handle protests, including the need to interact with other involved law enforcement agencies.

There were technical difficulties, so the meeting proceeded to the next speaker.

The Honorable Ron O'Brien spoke next. Since the events of Ferguson and the death of Tamir Rice, there is a renewed belief that such cases are not fairly handled. Whether reality or perception, it is recommended that the legislature make the requirement that either the Attorney General or an outside prosecutor be involved in the case. This was one of the recommendations coming out of the original Task Force final report. We need to make the recommendation now so that the legislators can move forward. Of discussion is the question of who should select the prosecutor. Given the concern is ensuring trust in the investigation and in the outcome, it makes sense to consider the prosecutor should be selected on a rotating basis amongst the larger jurisdictions that are more familiar with handling such cases.

Assistant Director Huey then introduced Staff Lieutenant Ed Mejia, commander of the Mobile Field Force. They are responsible for responding to civil disturbances, including the recent disturbances in downtown Columbus.

Staff Lieutenant Mejia spoke to the Collaborative about the general philosophy of the Mobile Field Force. It is two-fold: 1) protection of life; 2) protection of property. OSP recognizes people's constitutional rights to speak freely, but also knows that there is a potential for agitators to inject themselves and try to hijack a peaceful protest. The Patrol always sets out to make contact with the groups that are protesting and lay ground rules on what are acceptable and non-acceptable behaviors. They work well with partner law enforcement agencies.

Representative Brent complimented the OSP, stating that she heard of individuals remarking that they felt safe while protesting on state property (where OSP has jurisdiction), and she wondered how/whether OSP could train other law enforcement agencies to use similar tactics for working alongside protesters. Staff Lieutenant Mejia noted that the optics of the situation are very important—responding in military tactics is not good, and they do not approach a protest expecting any type of war. People want to express how they feel, and feel safe doing so. The only time OSP responds in this way is when things have gotten out of hand. It was noted that the OSP has provided a great deal of resources to training on de-escalation and basic line formations necessary for handling mass demonstrations, and the mobile force in particular trains four times a year on the issue. This is much more training than most departments have the ability and resources to provide. It was also noted that OSP generates an after-action report after each demonstration, as a matter of policy and practice.

Assistant Director Huey thanked Staff Lieutenant Mejia for his presentation.

Assistant Director Huey then discussed the mass demonstration standard. For the next Collaborative meeting, they plan to invite university law enforcement, who are familiar with protests, to speak to the group. They also hope to include the media perspective in mass demonstrations. Collaborative members will hear these perspectives before drafting the final version of the mass demonstration standard. It was mentioned that it might be worthwhile to bring in a few protest organizers to provide feedback, in addition to the media.

Before concluding, Assistant Director Huey asked the group if they had other items to consider. Pastor Moss asked whether oversight boards are being considered by the legislature—they are, and DPS can provide updates on this. BSSA and OACP are providing some language. Dr. Dunn asked if the Collaborative would consider establishing a certification on the standard of cultural competency and bias-free training. There has been a proliferation of consultants providing training in this area, and agencies feel compelled to address these issues, but not all trainings are created equally. If the Collaborative established a certification relative to cultural competency training, this would allow the training to carry a bit more credibility. Dr. Engel agreed with Dr. Dunn, and reiterated that these trainings should be evaluated. There are researchers who have studied crowd management, and it would be wise to learn from them.

To conclude, Assistant Director Huey asked Dr. Oliver and Officer Shendy to provide a few words to the Collaborative.

Dr. Oliver expressed his excitement to be involved in the Governor's Office on Recruiting. He highlighted that the quality of the agency depends on the quality of the officer. No amount of equipment and training can replace the quality of the officer. High moral character is important. An agency reflective of the community is important.

Officer Shendy expressed how thankful and honored she is to be a part of this group. She gave her background as an officer at Copley Police Department and a former trainer at OPOTA. She is a Muslim female in uniform, and is passionate about law enforcement as a profession. It is troubling for her to hear that minorities do not want to be in uniform, and she wishes to change this. She believes she has done so in the jurisdiction where she works. She looks forward to Ohio leading the country when it comes to law enforcement recruiting and retention, and she wants to be a part of that change.

Executive Director Moore ended the meeting by reiterating his excitement for the future that lies ahead with this team, and encouraged members to reach out to him with information and ideas to consider.

The meeting concluded at 12:14 PM.