**Community Policing Council Meetings April – May 2021**

**Community Policing Council meetings are required by the 2015 Court Approved Settlement Agreement (CASA, aka Consent Decree) between the City of Albuquerque and the US Department of Justice and are citizen volunteers residing in a region of Albuquerque served by 1 of 6 APD Commands.**

**LWVCNM Observer Report Karen M. Douglas**

* ***Community Partnership/Ambassador Program*** – initiated by APD Chief Medina 2021 to improve APD relationships with minority/disadvantaged community (race/religion/disability/sexual orientation) by instilling compassion and promoting a culture of empathy. 12 Ambassadors currently assigned April 2021 – participation is voluntary. 90% of interactions with victims indicate a need to improve rapport. The Ambassador program emphasis is to open a dialogue and support all residents equally. APD questions whether all detained/in custody released in the same fashion/same release criteria. Although Ambassadors serve specific groups of residents, Valley CPC Chair Wymark noted that following 1 year assigned to a Command officers can bid on other positions in order of seniority.
* ***APD Chief Medina selected 2021 from national search narrowed to 3 candidates***. Candidates were selected on basis of college education, military service, life experience, and work history. Medina has 26 years of experience with APD and served as police chief for Laguna Pueblo where only local native officers were assigned to village celebrations.
* ***APD Investigations of Use of Force –*** Sequence when officer involved shooting occurs initiates with a multi-Agency task force dispatched, followed by a criminal investigation, facts presented to District Attorney, and evidence processed. Transparency is now implemented throughout the investigation process beginning after APD chain of command is notified. Investigations are performed by Civilian Police Oversight Agency Force Review Board (appointed by CABQ City Council) which evaluates tactics, de-escalation, and whether the situation was handled appropriately by officer.
* ***APD Superintendent of Police reform Sylvester Stanley was selected 2021*** to manage the APD Internal Affairs Division investigations and the APD Training Academy with responsibility for Consent Decree compliance. Sup. Stanley has 46 years of law enforcement experience including Bernalillo County and is a retired Army military veteran. His experience includes service as a Chief of Federal Agency with supervision of Native Americans trained both at the Indian academy and other police training academies. Selection of the new APD Academy Curriculum manager is anticipated 5/22/21. Sup. Stanley has found APD Internal Affairs Commanders to be both responsible and responsive. Sup. Stanley discussed entrance requirements for the APD Academy and addressed the issue of lowering educational prerequisites from 2 yrs. College to a HS Diploma. Stanley’s 6 - month goals include:
  + Acquaintance with DOJ, APD, staff, Independent Monitor
  + Identify officer training inadequacies, hire new APD Academy Commander
  + Complete Internal Affairs investigation backlog and progress to current Use of Force cases
  + Correct issues with DOJ & Independent Monitor
  + Improve APD officer morale (recommendations included offering rewards and benefits for officers, recognizing an Officer of the Month, and including positive public comments in officers’ files).

Superintendent Stanley’s vision includes completing CASA compliance, promote community-based policing, and become a better partner with community members.

Medina discussed the (Police Union) Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and leadership concerns. There are 3 APD Unions which include the Chicano Police Officers Association (CPOA), Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), and the Albuquerque Police Officers Association (APOA). Police Commanders and higher ranks are at-will employees, Lieutenant and below are CBA. CBA officers’ contract and pay is negotiated by the union and officers may bid on open positions on basis of seniority.

The May 2021 CPC meeting featured a Panel discussion on Restorative Justice:

* Jim Harvey – Diversion course instructor at Center for Peace & Justice
* Alfred Mattewson, JD – Dean Emeritus of UNM School of Law & Community Coalition spokesman
* Tonya Covington – APD Program Director, Accountability & Diversion

The most powerful cause of violence – 1/14 minority children with a parent in prison

Restorative Justice decreases the high rate of recidivism to 7%, decreases suspicions, and gains relationships. Both sides must participate voluntarily, discussing how they felt, and what actions would suffice to make amends. Raul Torres, 2nd Judicial District Attorney, supports RJ which decreases the number of 18 YO youth assigned to juvenile probation. RJ avoids court, detention, and any police record which could limit future entrance to the military or college admission. Appearance of an armed police officer is avoided during Restorative Justice which decreases child’s concerns. Each Albuquerque Public School Police Officer is assigned more than 300 students and writes police report of incidents – Restorative Justice would change this sequence. Restorative Justice currently is limited to only minors and misdemeanor offenses. Teachers and principals have requested Restorative Justice in public schools which could offer youngsters tools to solve problems in nonviolent ways.

Victims in the Restorative Justice program face the perpetrator and the suspect must admit wrongdoing. A recent successful Restorative Justice interaction:

* Victims question “Why me?”
* Suspect makes reparation with recommendations from victims (yardwork or other chores)
* Victims review suspect’s report cards and attend High School graduation
* Suspect attends college following High School graduation

Former Dean Matthewson would like to have a similar approach applied to a pattern or practice of police excessive Use of Force or unconstitutional policing. However, police officers don’t admit wrongdoing, so no closure or community healing can occur. Should police reform involve a similar truth and reconciliation process?

APD encounters with the mentally ill are more challenging and officers note that mediation is more successful than Restorative Justice.

Tonya Covington discussed the school to prison pipeline as arrested minors are 4 times more likely to end up in prison. The Covid pandemic increased this problem with no social interaction available to youth.

A resident raised the current issue of the Albuquerque Police Officers Association disinformation Campaign “Crime Matters More” which indicates that the negative police culture can’t change.