

RICHMOND POLICE COMMISSION

**Wednesday, March 7, 2012 – 7:00 p.m.
Employment & Training Building
330 – 25th Street
Conference Room 1**

MINUTES

I CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, PLEDGE

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Bea Roberson

ROLL CALL

Present: Therese Barquet
Nemy Bautista
Scott Gillespie
Felix Hunziker
Bea Roberson
Glenn Stephenson
Eleanor Thompson (arrived at 7:02)

Absent: None

Vacancies: Two

Administrative Staff:

Don Casimere, Confidential Investigative & Appeals Officer – Present

Malia Glover, Executive Secretary I – Present

Council Liaison: Jeff Ritterman, Council Liaison – Present

City Attorney's

Office Representative: Bruce Soublet, Assistant City Attorney – Absent

II APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 4, 2012 and February 1, 2012

Upon motion by **Commissioner Bautista** and second by **Commissioner Stephenson**, the minutes for the regular meetings of January 4, 2012 and February 1, 2012, were approved as written.

Item VI was moved to Item III

III REPORTS BY RICHMOND POLICE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION, LATINO POLICE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION, GUARDIANS OF JUSTICE

Off. Virgil Thomas was there to represent the RPOA. He said he is a school resource officer at Kennedy High who also coaches baseball at Kennedy High. He reported that the RPOA has recently donated money to various organizations such as the Richmond Eagles and Relay for Life. He said they are proud of Felix Tan who was recently promoted to sergeant.

IV REPORT OF COUNCIL LIAISON JEFF RITTERMAN

Councilmember Ritterman inquired about the vacancies on the commission. **Chair Roberson** said there are currently two vacancies. He talked about LBNL and said that several organizations within the city are interested in job opportunities with LBNL. **Councilmember Ritterman** also talked about the plan to reduce congestion on I-80. He reported on the first reading of the marijuana ordinance and also reported that the first calls for Cease Fire have taken place.

V PRESENTATION BY GINA SWIRSDING OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION RE: POLICE TRAINING ON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Gina Swirsding explained that the reason she got started on the Mental Health Commission was because of the way she was treated while she was in the mental health system herself many years ago. She said the thing that disturbs her regarding the mental health system today is that things have not changed and there have also been no changes in the way mentally ill patients are treated in the ER. There is crisis intervention training (CIT) in CCC. She did some research and found that the best training is in Memphis, TN. She said it is a very effective model and also very cost effective. They treat mentally ill people with respect. Not all mentally ill people are violent; most are scared of the police. With the Memphis model, the police become friends to the consumer. She would like to see this model used in Richmond. She would like to see officers have proper CIT training and work more closely with the ER.

VI REPORT OF CHIEF OF POLICE (Chris Magnus or his representative)

A. Discussion regarding RPD training on dealing with the mentally ill.

Capt. Gagan said he was very impressed with **Ms. Swirsding's** presentation. He said that they want their officers to be highly trained and highly aware of how they can serve people that are in need and avoid tragedies. He said the problem is very complex. People that are in crisis need help and are rarely violent, although some of the most violent things that happen in society are perpetrated by mentally ill people. He said he agrees that they need to continually evaluate how their officers are trained and how they approach these situations. He explained that there is really no way for officers to completely choreograph how they respond to a call involving somebody

who is mentally ill. **Capt. Gagan** said they have taken steps to improve how they handle these situations. RPD officers are trained to re-evaluate when they have to physically restrain someone. They are also trained to make appropriate referrals. They are working with the staff at the clinic at 38th and Bissell. Whenever they are in need of having a welfare check done on an individual, they will provide the officers with the patient's history, their triggers and what medications they may be on. He said it's not exactly the Memphis model but it definitely reflects a change of philosophy and the need to understand what their role is and how they can make the situation better. **Capt. Gagan** said that Rubicon is willing to assist them with the population that is not quite ready to be committed for evaluation or even transported, but rather for people who need a continual high level of supervision. They will make sure that officers can make the right referral to the parent, neighbor, or to whomever is upset about the erratic behavior.

Commissioner Stephenson said that some commissioners brought back information from a NACOLE conference regarding this subject. They passed the information on to the chief and he's glad to see that some of it is being used.

Vivian Feyer, a member of the Human Rights Human Relations Commission, said it's a very sensitive line as to who you categorize as mentally ill or who has mental health issues. She said that officers should have sensitivity to the entire population.

Ms. Swirsding said a lot of patients are bi-polar or schizophrenic and officers are called out to deal with them repeatedly. She said if officers had a relationship with them they would be more willing to come forward instead of resisting. **Capt. Gagan** said that that's the premise of community policing but every situation is different. It is a national problem but he thinks that Richmond has many tools in place to comply with what Ms. Swirsding is asking for. **D/C Brown** said that the current version of their community policing model aids the process in terms of dealing with people in crisis. They try to keep the same officers working in the same neighborhoods for longer periods of time, which makes them able to be more sensitive and compassionate in these situations.

B. Report of recent activities, events, incidents, and related matters

D/C Brown handed out a copy of their recently updated department mission statement. They've asked all employees to reaffirm their oath of office and to reacquaint themselves with the code of ethics. He said they are still working on revising policies. They will be incorporating revised policies into a completed policy manual binder and forwarding it to the police commission for review. He announced that they have chosen Det. Eduardo Soto as Detective of the Year and Off. Benjamin Therriault as Officer of the Year. They will be honored at the Public Safety Awards Dinner April 13, 2012. **D/C Brown** handed out the RPD COMPSTAT Crime Statistics for February 2012. He reported that Felix Tan has been promoted to sergeant. He will be a patrol supervisor in the northern district. The first call-ins for Operation Cease Fire started last week. He said he was very impressed with the meeting. Off. Phil Sanchez received an award for CCC Avoid the 25 Campaign for

over 100 DUI arrests over the calendar year. They've added a second officer, Benjamin Mendler, to their DUI enforcement unit.

Commissioner Barquet asked for clarification on the Cease Fire program. **D/C Brown** explained how the program works.

Commissioner Barquet asked if a person could be anonymous when reporting a burglary. **D/C Brown** said that anybody could be anonymous at any time but they prefer that people tell them who they are. They can act on anonymous information but it only gets them so far in the legal process.

Commissioner Hunziker said that 16 members of the north and east neighborhood passed out crime prevention materials. He asked if D/C Brown was excluded from part of the Cease Fire meeting. **D/C Brown** said the meeting is structured so that representatives from every group involved give a message first, then the justice people are excused. That allows the other partners to interact one-on-one with the special guests there.

Vivian Feyer said that she was involved in the Cease Fire program and would be happy to answer any questions.

VII PUBLIC FORUM

There were no public speakers.

VIII DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR PROMOTING POSITIVE POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE POLICE COMMISSION (Commissioner Hunziker)

Commissioner Hunziker showed a rough cut of the RYSE Center video. He said he will send a link to each commissioner for review and feedback.

The commissioners had a discussion on how they could improve internal communications.

IX REPORTS BY:

- **CHAIRPERSON**
- **COMMISSIONERS**
- **STAFF**

Chair Roberson

- Helped with and attended fundraiser for Juneteenth
- Attended RNCC meeting
- Attended Council meetings

Commissioner Stephenson

- Attended East Richmond NC meeting

Commissioner Bautista

- Received certificates from NACOLE for completing the 2011 Certification Program and for being a NACOLE Trained Practitioner for 2011

Commissioner Hunziker

- Distributed crime prevention handouts in Beat 7
- Ride-along on 2/4/12

CIAO Casimere

- Handed out daily activity log
(There were no questions or comments by commissioners regarding the activity log)

X ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Don Casimere
Confidential Investigative & Appeals Officer