

# MINUTES - Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: September 19, 2024

*Chairman: Jon Reaud*

*Vice-Chairman: Shawn Javed*

*Members:*

*Dwight Benoit, John Dean, Carlos Hernandez, Sohaib Jabbar, Shawn Javed, Glen Johnson, Will Landry, Roy McGrath, Brian Nepveux, Lashon Proctor, Jon Reaud, Rodney Robichau, Frances Graham, William "Bill" Sam, Thomas Sige*

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**Call to order by Community Advisory Committee:** Chairperson Jon Reaud

**September 19, 2024 - 1:10 p.m:** A normal meeting of the Police Community Advisory Committee was held in the Beaumont Police Conference Room

**Members in attendance:**

Dwight Benoit, Frances Graham, Carlos Hernandez, Sohaib Jabbar, Shawn Javed, Glen Johnson, Roy McGrath, Brian Nepveux, Lashon Proctor, Bill Sam, Thomas Sige

**Members not in attendance:**

John Dean, Will Landry, Jon Reaud, Rodney Robichau,

**Members of the Police Department in attendance:**

Chief Ocnaschek, Assistant Chief Plunkett, Captain Tyler, Lt. Cole, Sgt. Swope, Sgt. Viator, Judith Rawls, and Emma Nelson

**Guests in Attendance:**

Mayor West, AJ Turner, Miles Haynes, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Javed's guest

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Opening Prayer** – Benoit

**Moment of Silence for fallen officers**

**Roll Call** – Vice-Chairman Javed

Lt. Cole introduced himself and gave a brief overview of the layout of the Narcotics unit. He introduced Sgt. Viator. They are a supportive department that interacts with many other units both within and outside of the Beaumont Police Department. Narcotics and violent crime go hand in hand. It is rare and almost never that they do a high risk search warrant for narcotics without finding weapons. What they saw last year with fentanyl they are not seeing as much this year. This could be due to the campaign against it as well as the murder case that they were able to build and prosecute last year due to the new Texas law. Nepveux asked about the changes that they had seen and crimes coming out of Houston. Sgt. Viator spoke about the classifications of Fentanyl. Lt. Cole spoke about the vast technology that is now allowing them to catch criminal activity coming into our area from Houston. He also spoke about the importance of building relationships with the DA, etc. Benoit expressed his dissatisfaction at the slow rate that the

system moves in prosecuting cases. Things are getting out of hand before they can be addressed. What is it that citizens can do to help influence?

Lt. Cole said that it begins with legislation. He gave the example that juvenile laws are still set up as if juveniles are not committing these intense, violent crimes. On the local level, there is not much we can do except be persistent. Sgt. Viator explained that it wasn't a law enforcement issue. These people can have the police called on them weekly and it does not phase them. It often gets stuck in legal system.

Nepveux asked if these drug dealers are using juveniles to commit crimes for them because they know that juveniles will have a lesser punishment. Lt. Cole said that they are but it seems like it is happening less than in the past. Sgt. Viator explained that there has been more of a team assembled recently among all the parties involved in prosecuting these juvenile cases.

Lt. Cole explained that these cases have to have immense intelligence, surveillance, and information gathered in order to execute a high risk search warrant. It could take weeks or months. Even when the whole neighborhood and the police know, there is a legal process for Narcotics to be able to execute a search warrant.

Benoit reemphasized that this committee wants to do anything and everything in their power to help. Lt. Cole said even just knowing there is community support means the world for morale. He emphasized that you can reach out to the DA, legislation, etc. Chief Ocnaschek spoke on the new city legislative agenda that Miles Haynes/Hayes is working on. Many things are placed on the police – such as mental health – that should not be handled by police. Asst. Chief Plunkett spoke on enhancements for multiple offenses, however it takes so much to get there. More and more they are seeing instances like a person who is on parole from multiple courts – parole is not being withheld like it once was – and the legal system is not made to work this way. Ms. Graham asked about the process of juveniles being prosecuted as adults. Asst. Chief Plunkett explained the juvenile jail and penitentiary systems and how overcrowded they are. Jabbar asked about state vs federal cases. Lt. Cole and Plunkett explained that process. Plunkett explained that they push as much federally as possible. Sgt. Viator explained that there are a lot more boxes to check in a federal case than a state, but its worth it.

McGrath asked about whether East Texas was a drug overdose hub. Lt. Cole said that they actually felt like fentanyl overdoses had dropped. It could have something to do with the homicide case that they prosecuted last year. Sgt. Viator said he would like to see some statistics because he doesn't see our area struggling more than others. Cole also said that community education does help. The campaigns have helped with awareness. Sgt. Viator also said that the committee can help spread the word that the Narcotics unit protects informants. People can talk to them. They are honest and upfront with informants.

Hernandez asked if there was a juvenile boot camp at one point. Cole said the Sheriff might have operated one. Plunkett said that it would have to come from the state level. Benoit and Robichau both spoke about funding and helping start something back up.

Mayor West said it could be worthwhile for the committee to meet with the Sheriff and/or DA's office. This is a layered problem. Robichau also said that we have jury problems. Graham spoke to people needing to show up for jury duty. She also spoke to her experience at work with the Westbrook student prosecuted as an adult for beating up another student. There was a great outpouring of support from the community. Jabbar spoke to reaching out to students and juveniles and giving them opportunities to interact with police and other entities involved in prosecuting. The committee then spoke about the juvenile curfew and how police cannot

currently enforce it. Landry asked about having a prosecuting attorney and/or DA come speak. The committee agreed this was a good idea.

Miles Haynes spoke about what the legislative agenda is and how it works. Council and the City is in constant communication before the Golden Triangle Day where it is presented. Proctor spoke about lobbyists, funding, and programs. Hayes spoke about consultants at the city and state level.

Mr. Sam thanked everyone for their support during the loss of his wife.

**Meeting Ended:** 2:18

**Next Meeting:** October 17, 2024 at 1:00 pm in the BPD Training Classroom

**Minutes Taken by:** Emma Nelson/ Community Outreach Coordinator  
Beaumont Police Department/Administration Division