

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

POLICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

April 30, 2025

In Person: City Council Chambers, 220 S. Main Street, Newark, DE 19711

In Attendance: Chief Mark Farrall, Newark Police Department
Lt. Gregory D'Elia, Newark Police Department
Frank Gillette, Newark Resident
Andrew Weber, Newark Resident
Megan Kelly, Chief Justice, University of Delaware Student Government Association

Absent: Angela Tsionas, Business Owner
Rabbi Jeremy Weisblatt, Campus Director, UD Hillel Kristol Center for Jewish Life
Dr. Freeman Williams, President, NAACP (Newark Chapter)

Guests: Deputy Chief Kevin Feeney
Eric Harrington, Mental Health Case Manager
James Ziereis, University of Delaware Student Government Association

1. Welcome and Roll Call

Chief Farrall provided an update regarding the Main Street fatal vehicle/pedestrian collision that occurred on April 29, 2025. Chief Farrall will attend a meeting tomorrow, May 1, 2025, with the city, DelDOT, University of Delaware representatives and state legislators to discuss road improvements on Main Street.

Megan Kelly said the community is interested in immediate change and inquired regarding the timeline to install speed tables on Main Street. Chief Farrall said he is unable to provide a timeline for installation. Chief Farrall said they would need to review drainage and may need to relocate utilities as well. Ms. Kelly said students are interested in more police presence to provide more pedestrian security. Chief Farrall said at this time they haven't been able to discuss this. Chief Farrall said the speed data does not show excessive speeds. DC Feeney said our CAD data only dates back to 2007. We reached out to DelDOT for data prior to 2007. Chief Farrall said one of the challenges that exist is these crashes are outliers and how do you perform enforcement to prevent this type of accident from reoccurring. Chief Farrall is interested to hear from the elected officials, DelDOT and any information that may come from the meeting tomorrow.

James Zieries introduced himself to the committee to replace Ms. Kelly. He is a sophomore at the University of Delaware and is studying chemical engineering, legal studies minor in history.

Mr. Ziereis asked for clarification regarding what shopping center the car originated from. Chief Farrall confirmed it was Newark Shopping Center. Mr. Ziereis asked how the police department correct false news. Chief Farrall said one way the police department handles this would be to disseminate accurate information as soon as possible.

Mr. Gillette said no amount of public safety can prevent a suspect fleeing from police.

Mr. Weber asked if there has been data on how the bump outs installed on Main Street have improved safety. Chief Farrall is unsure whether DelDOT has this data. Chief Farrall said the bump outs will provide traffic calming with parked cars along the street.

2. Overview of Behavioral Health Unit

Eric Harrington introduced himself as an employee of Christiana Care and is the Mental Health Case Manager working for the Newark Police Department since December of 2024. He has resided in Delaware for two and half years, he is originally from Philadelphia where he has worked in the behavioral health field. Prior to accepting this position, he was a supervisor at Horizon Health on the community case management team.

a. Power Point Presentation presented by DC Feeney and Eric Harrington. “Promoting Public Safety Through Compassionate Response”

i. What is the behavioral health unit?

1. Established to provide a specialized compassionate response to behavioral health crisis.
2. Created through the federal connect and protect grant administered by the Delaware Criminal Justice Council.
3. The City of Newark contracted with Christiana Care Health System, the Center for Community Health and Empowerment.
4. Includes a supervisor from the Administration Unit and dedicated Mental health Case Manager.
5. CIT trained officers are assigned to all units throughout the department.
6. Emphasizes de-escalation, support and service connection over enforcement.

ii. Goals of the BHU

1. Reduce unnecessary arrests, repeat calls for service and use of force involving individuals in crisis.
2. Promote diversion from the criminal justice system.
3. Court 40 diversion program
 - a. Identifying individuals that may be incarcerated and connecting them to resources.
 - b. In the very early stages of this program.
4. Strengthen collaboration with community organizations, service providers and healthcare partners.
5. Support officers and community members through training and a compassionate approach.

iii. How the BHU Operates

1. Operates as a follow-up model during and after police encounters.
2. MHCM coordinates with officers to identify individuals needing services.
 - a. DC Feeney said from 1/1/25 through end of March, 213 calls for service have been identified as individuals involved in a mental health crisis or substance abuse. DC Feeney said Mr. Harrington has handled 108 cases within 3 months.
3. CIT officers respond across all shifts and units.
4. Focus on voluntary engagement and linking individuals to treatment and support.
5. Follow-up efforts help prevent repeat crises and reduce calls for service.
6. Actively monitors referrals and ensures ongoing continuity of care.
 - a. Mr. Harrington said his role is two-fold and consists of early intervention and follow-up.

- b. He receives referrals from CIT officers and will follow-up within 24 hours of receiving a referral typically by phone. If unable to follow-up via phone both he and the Community Engagement Officer will conduct an in-person follow-up. Mr. Harrington will then connect the individual to community resources (voluntary) in an effort to prevent future calls for service. Mr. Harrington said a benefit to being a Christiana Care employee is he has access to a platform called Unite Us. This platform allows input of the individuals information and sends their information to thousands of agencies to pick up the case to provide assistance. Mr. Harrington will keep an individual case for 6 months to work on building a rapport with the individual. DC Feeney said he has been a tremendous asset and resource to our organization.

3. Newark Police Department 2024 Annual Report

Chief Farrall provided each PAC member with a copy of the 2024 Newark Police Department annual report.

a. Summary

- i. Chief Farrall said the report provides a summary of each unit and the highlights throughout the year. It includes notable trainings attended, community events, crime statistics and comparisons from previous years, awards, etc. The annual report provides a comprehensive overview of the department. The annual report is published on the City of Newark Police Department website.
- ii. Chief Farrall asked PAC members to review the annual report and feel free to ask questions and provide feedback.

4. Overview of Immigration Policy

- a. Chief Farrall has met with some state legislators to explain the Newark Police Department's stance and policy on immigration policy.
- b. A copy of the Newark Police Department's General Order No. 41.3.C, Special Arrest Situations Diplomatic & Legislative Immunity Military Deserters/AWOL was provided to PAC members.
- c. A copy of the IACP Immigration Enforcement Addendum policy fact sheet was provided to PAC members.
 - i. This policy provides guidance to state and local law enforcement on immigration law and what local and state police agencies can/can't do. Chief Farrall said the NPD policy has been we are not in the business of enforcing immigration law. Our job is to protect everyone within the community regardless of citizenship status. As a result, we have always ensured those lines are not crossed.
 - ii. Chief Farrall pointed out on the fact sheet it states the federal government has recently added more than 500,000 immigration-related warrants to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) immigration Violator File (IVF). Chief Farrall said if an individual is run through the system and they have an immigration warrant, it will come up in the system that the individual is wanted, however they are wanted on an immigration warrant but an immigration warrant is not something local or state law enforcement can enforce. This fact sheet has been disseminated to police officers. If an individual is wanted on an immigration warrant, the officer must research to determine if it's a criminal warrant or solely an immigration warrant. The NPD policy General Order No. 41.3.C, Special Arrest Situations Diplomatic & Legislative Immunity Military Deserters/AWOL, page 6, I. states, "Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) places administrative warrants in NCIC. These administrative warrants are civil in nature and do not meet the Fourth Amendment's probable cause requirements. These warrants are not reviewed by a judge and do not authorize entry into private spaces or the arrest of individuals by Newark Police Officers".

1. Officers shall verify the nature of the warrant (civil or criminal) and the individual's identity.
2. Officers shall not detain, or arrest individuals based solely on ICE administrative warrants.
3. Officers should inform ICE of the individual's location and charge the status with our agency.

5. SOAR Mascot Update

- a. Lt. D'Elia said he took the Police Advisory Committee's advise and created a slow unveiling of the mascot to involve and engage the public. A mascot naming contest was held at local city elementary schools. A committee was formed consisting of police officers, PAL board members and chose the mascot name. Three girls from Downes Elementary School won the naming contest. Lt. D'Elia said they worked with the Downes Elementary School to unveil the mascot with media. This was first public event was the City of Newark Parks and Recreation easter egg hunt.
- b. SOAR is being trained with the original Philly Phanatic.
- c. Promotional items are being purchased for giveaways at events (ex: SOAR stickers, SOAR gibibits for CROCS, etc.). The next mascot event is scheduled for Saturday, May 3rd at Captain Blue Hen Comics for free comic book day.

6. Community Engagement Ideas

- a. Lt. D'Elia provided an update regarding community engagement items:
 - i. Free Comic Book Day at Captain Blue Hen Comics
 - ii. Fishing with First Responders – City of Newark Parks and Recreation
 - iii. Bike to School
 - iv. Bike Rodeo – Downes Elementary School
 - v. Unlocks the Light – Sean's House
 - vi. Prom Promise presentation
 - vii. Independence School Charity Run
 - viii. Christ the Teacher School – Fun Run
 - ix. Cops and Rodders Car Show – Ronnie Williams Foundation
 - x. Memorial Day Parade
 - xi. George Wilson Center – Friends of School Hill Juneteenth Celebration
 - xii. Fusion Foundation Charity – Bail or Jail?
 - xiii. Bowling with Pilgrim Baptist Church
 - xiv. Chief Farrall said the department has received federal funding to create the Community Engagement Unit and stated it has proven to be an asset within the community. Chief Farrall asked PAC members to reach out if they have community engagement suggestions.
 1. Mr. Weber has witnessed the Aetna truck pull competition with first responders, which is a very engaging event.

7. Open Discussion

- a. Lt. D'Elia said some minor upgrades are planned with the PAL trailer. Including purchasing a new Nintendo Switch and paint the wood paneling.
- b. Mr. Zierys suggested removing invasive species from one of the local parks and wondered if this could be considered. Lt. D'Elia will look into this.
- c. Chief Farrall said this would be Ms. Kelly's last meeting. Chief Farrall said she would be missed and thanked her for being a part of the committee.

8. Adjournment

- a. Chief Farrall would like to schedule the next meeting within the next three months with the plan to continue quarterly meetings.