

**Public Safety Advisory Commission – Columbus, GA**  
Monthly Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 2/18/2021  
**Location:** Virtual Meeting  
**Start time:** 4:05 PM  
**Adjournment time:** 5:10 PM  
**Next meeting:** March 18, 2021 at 4:00 PM  
**Meeting Recorder:** Annalisa Shelling

**Members Present:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Rohwedder, Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Donald Watkins
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pete Temesgen, Vice-Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stan Swiney
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Byron Hickey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lisa Branchcomb
<input type="checkbox"/> Scott Taft	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alexander King
<input type="checkbox"/> Belvin Millner	

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**Minutes**

Mr. David Rohwedder welcomed everyone and opened the February 2021 Meeting at 4:05 PM. The January 2021 minutes were approved. 1<sup>st</sup> Motion – Donald Watkins, 2<sup>nd</sup> Motion – Byron Hickey.

**Update on Pay Study** – David has not heard back from Senator Randy Robertson. He will try to reach Senator Robertson again. Stan Swiney has a call in to Mr. Edwards and is waiting to hear back from him. The Columbus Police Department has approximately 105 sworn vacancies. Pay compression was discussed and was identified as an issue. David requested that Donald get a copy of the resolution about OLOST.

**Social Media** - Alexander King is developing a Facebook page for the commission. He requests that each Public Safety Advisory Member send him your name, a photo, current/retired occupation, district you represent on the commission and a short bio about yourself and why you enjoy being on the commission. His email address is [alexander.king444@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.king444@gmail.com)

**Meetings** - Is the commission ready to meet in person again? The idea was mentioned to possibly have citizens come and speak for the last 20 to 30 minutes of the meetings. Different members of the commission suggested locations to have the meetings. Stan Swiney suggested the Milton Lockette Community Room at the Public Safety Building. Lisa Branchcomb suggested libraries in the Columbus area. David said that he would begin to search for locations, and it was suggested that we keep in mind that locations must be equipped to handle meetings. Also, it is very important to remember Social Distancing Guidelines.

**Budget -** There is no separate line item in the city budget for the PSAC. David mentioned considering asking the City Council to allow for a budget for the Public Safety Advisory Commission.

**Project -** Suggested that the PSAC commit to participating in at least one large project yearly.

**Press Conference -** The recent Press Conference by law enforcement about the recent crimes was mentioned, and David asked for opinions on this Press Conference. Byron Hickey stated that he feels that Chief Blackmon and Sheriff Countryman inherited these problems from years ago. Byron stated that the Columbus Police Department used to have a Gang Task Force, several Crime Prevention Units, Juvenile Diversion Program, and the Conditional Discharge Program. These programs were disbanded. Byron suggested that pastors be contacted to see if they could assist with some of the violent problems in the area. He stated that he would personally contact Pastor Adrian Chester. It was stated that people are afraid to come forward to talk about incidents and the public needs to be reassured that information is confidential.

**Crime Stoppers -** The Crime Stoppers program was mentioned, and it was suggested that possibly the Columbus Police Department could get involved to check on the status of the reward funds and get this program active again.

**Meetings with Law Enforcement -** The suggestion was brought up that David and other members of the PSAC try to meet with Chief Blackmon and Sheriff Countryman monthly. It was suggested that Byron Hickey, Stan Swiney or Scott Taft also attend these meetings since they have prior law enforcement experience.

**Next Meeting:** March 18, 2021 at 4:00 PM / Virtual Meeting  
Invitation emailed by David Rohwedder

David thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 PM.