

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

**Date:** 1/20/2022  
**Location:** Virtual Meeting  
**Start time:** 4:00 PM  
**Adjournment time:** 5:00 PM  
**Next meeting:** February 17, 2022  
**Meeting Recorder:** Annalisa Shelling

**Members Present:**

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Rohwedder, Chair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Donald Watkins  |
| <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Belvin Millner         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alexander King  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Taft             |   |

**Others Present/Visitors:**

Guest Speaker – Pastor Adrian Chester – Greater Beallwood Baptist Church

**Minutes**

The January 2022 Meeting started at 4:00 PM. Mr. David Rohwedder welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr. Alexander King made a motion to approve the December minutes and Mr. Stanley Swiney seconded the motion. The December 2021 minutes were approved.

Pastor Adrian Chester of Greater Beallwood Baptist Church was the Guest Speaker. He spoke about the importance of citizens knowing who they can turn to for assistance in their neighborhoods. He mentioned that with lack of trust it is almost impossible for citizens to feel comfortable talking with people and sharing information. He mentioned that Sgt. Angela Florence of the Crime Prevention Unit is very visible in the community and has trust of citizens.

Pastor Chester stated that it may be important to focus on smaller quantities of people to get a greater quality of results.

**Community Policing** - Mr. Rohwedder mentioned Community Policing. He brought up the question “How can the Columbus Police Department and Muscogee County Sherriff’s Office repair broken trust?” He stated that there is a blatant disrespect for Law Enforcement Officers. Two points were discussed – (1) Some people do not want to be

involved in any lawful situations. (2) Some people do not care about the law. They only care about street credit.

Mr. Rohwedder mentioned that Mr. John Anker will be running for Mayor. He stated that Mr. Anker came and spoke to a meeting of a group of attorneys. He also stated that it may be a good idea for member(s) of the PSAC to go to a City Council Meeting and ask, “What are y’all doing and what can be done?”

Stanley Swiney mentioned the possibility of checking on the Cure Violence Program. The contacts for this program are Cedric Hill and Reggie Lewis.

**Zohannon Gang YouTube Video** – Mr. Byron Hickey sent a link to this video to the PSAC Members. This video was approximately one hour long, and showed Zohannon gang members in the Columbus, Georgia area. These individuals appeared to be in their teens or possibly early twenties. Almost all of the individuals in the video had firearms. This video was in broad daylight. It was mentioned that some individuals possibly turn to the gang lifestyle because they have no family or parental guidance.

Mr. Rohwedder brought up the following question, “What are some things that Public Safety Officers, the Chief of Police, the Mayor, and the City Councilors can do to improve Columbus?” He mentioned that he would like the PSAC to go before city council to discuss concerns. He feels that we as a commission, could be doing a lot more.

Mr. Byron Hickey stated that he was born and raised in Columbus. He stated that things that worked for him as child such as Playground / Retention Teachers, Arts & Crafts, Boys Club, etc. were cut out over the years. He suggested businesses offering more partnerships for young people to make money legally and honestly.

Mr. Hickey stated that what we saw in that video was very disturbing. He feels that law enforcement needs to aggressively get out there and confiscate the weapons and run ballistics. He feels that the Columbus Police Department needs to immediately have the Gang Task Force again. He feels that this is an urgency in our community. He stated that if this type of behavior was occurring anywhere other than the East or South Zip Codes that this would be considered a state of urgency by others.

**Survey Update** – Mr. Rohwedder mentioned that after the last meeting he found out that the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) would be conducting their own survey among FOP Members. He stated that he was interested in learning about this survey and seeing the results.

Mr. Hickey stated that he would like to invite the FOP President, Lt. Ralph Dowe, to speak to the PSAC. Mr. Rohwedder stated that he would like to invite Randy Robertson and ask him to share the FOP survey questions with the PSAC.

Mr. Hickey stated that he would reach out to Lt. Ralph Dowe and Retired Police Major Russell Traino to ask them to speak to the PSAC. He stated that he would ask Lt. Dowe to get in contact with Mr. Rohwedder.

Meeting adjourned at 5:26 PM.

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**Next Meeting will be held February 17, 2022, at 4:00 PM. This will be a virtual meeting.**

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