



## POLICE ADVISORY BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING

The Police Advisory Board (PAB) Workshop Meeting was held on June 18, 2026 at 6:05 p.m. at the Dover Police Department in the James L. Hutchison Public Assembly Room with Chief Thomas A. Johnson, Jr. presiding. Members of the PAB in attendance were Miss LillyRose Granger, Miss Ayrue Lin, Mr. Waverly DeBaux, Dr. Katera Moore & Ms. Dominique Dixon. Rev. Dr. Carol Boggerty, Dr. Chanda Jackson, Ms. Melynda Cameron, & Dr. Charlisa Holloway-Edelin were absent.

Sergeant Ian Thompson (Dover Police Department) also attended.

Chief Thomas A. Johnson, Jr. called the meeting to order and informed attendees that a recording device was in use for the purpose of ensuring the accuracy of the meeting minutes. He asked all participants to be mindful that the proceedings were being recorded. Chief Johnson then welcomed those present and thanked them for their interest in the Dover Police Advisory Board. He explained that both the Board Chair and Co-Chair were unavoidably absent and, as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board, he would preside over the meeting to ensure compliance with parliamentary procedures. He clarified that he does not have voting authority and cannot cast a tie-breaking vote.

Chief Johnson noted that the meeting began at approximately 6:05 p.m. because a quorum was not present at the scheduled start time. Once a quorum was established, he provided an overview of the Board's purpose and authority. He explained that the Board was established pursuant to Delaware state law enacted in 2023 and operates under the oversight framework of the Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission within the Delaware Department of Homeland Security. He further stated that all police departments in Delaware are required to participate in a police accountability or advisory board structure.

Chief Johnson explained that the City of Dover transitioned its former Police Chief's Advisory Committee into the current Police Advisory Board to comply with the state statute. As a result, the Board now operates under formal public meeting requirements, including compliance with Delaware's open meeting laws, publication of meeting minutes, and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requirements.

Chief Johnson outlined the Board's role and responsibilities, noting that it does not address police officer disciplinary matters or allegations of criminal misconduct. He explained that disciplinary matters fall under the authority of the Chief of Police and City administration, while allegations of criminal conduct are investigated by the Delaware Department of Justice, Division of Civil Rights and Public Trust. He stated that the Board's primary focus is on matters involving police policy, procedures, practices, training, and community concerns regarding police operations and the implementation of new technologies.

Chief Johnson also explained the procedures for public comment. He stated that public comment is offered at the beginning of meetings to provide residents an opportunity to address the Board. He reminded attendees that, under Delaware public meeting laws, the Board may not discuss matters that are not included on the published agenda. He noted that concerns raised during public comment that are not on the agenda may be considered for inclusion on a future agenda to allow for proper public notice and discussion. Following these remarks, he opened the floor for public comment.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Ms. Ada Morris addressed the Board regarding Senate Bill 249, which had recently passed the Delaware Senate and was pending consideration by the House. She expressed concerns about the potential impact of the legislation on public safety within the City of Dover, particularly during large community events and gatherings. Ms. Morris

noted that Dover hosts numerous events that attract residents and visitors and questioned how the proposed legislation might affect the safety of families and children in public spaces.

Ms. Morris specifically raised concerns about the possibility of increased exposure to drug-use paraphernalia in public areas and the potential for children to encounter discarded items associated with substance use. She stated that proper disposal of such materials was a significant concern and emphasized the importance of maintaining clean and safe public spaces during community events and daily activities.

Ms. Morris also expressed concerns regarding the allocation of resources related to the legislation. She suggested that funding could be directed toward housing assistance, shelter services, employment opportunities, hygiene resources, and other support services for individuals struggling with substance use disorders. While acknowledging that many individuals facing addiction may have experienced trauma and require assistance, she questioned whether providing additional harm-reduction supplies was the most effective approach and advocated for greater emphasis on recovery and supportive services.

Ms. Dawn Mejia, a lifelong Dover resident, addressed the Board regarding concerns about prostitution and public safety issues in the downtown area. Ms. Mejia stated that after observing increased prostitution activity while driving through downtown on Mother's Day, she became concerned about the impact on the community and the safety of residents. She shared that she began posting videos on social media to raise awareness and better understand why many residents feel unsafe. Through her research, she learned about pending legislation, including Senate Bill 249, and met with the Mayor to discuss community concerns. Ms. Mejia expressed frustration with what she described as a lack of accountability among agencies and officials and stated that she wanted to become more involved in supporting both the community and local law enforcement. She voiced concerns for the future safety of residents and families and encouraged greater public involvement and support for law enforcement efforts.

Chief Johnson thanked Ms. Mejia for her comments and advised that additional discussion could take place offline following the formal meeting.

Ms. Michelle Walls, a newer Dover resident who has lived in the city for approximately one year, also addressed the Board regarding ongoing quality-of-life and public safety concerns in the downtown area. Ms. Walls stated that she and her husband chose to move to downtown Dover believing the area was undergoing revitalization efforts. She described numerous issues experienced near her residence, including public urination, drug activity, discarded needles and drug paraphernalia, individuals passed out near her home, and police activity related to nearby drug incidents. Ms. Walls stated that these experiences have negatively impacted her perception of the neighborhood and expressed concern about the lack of improvement in conditions. She further asked for guidance regarding when residents should contact police in response to issues such as loitering, drug use, or individuals trespassing on private property.

Chief Johnson advised Ms. Walls that residents should contact law enforcement whenever they have a public safety concern. It was explained that police rely on community reports to identify areas requiring proactive patrol and resource deployment. Residents were encouraged to contact 911 whenever they feel unsafe or observe concerning activity, and were assured that such calls are appropriate and welcomed by law enforcement.

Resident Reginald Daniel addressed the Board regarding concerns related to drug activity, addiction, and law enforcement response within the community. Mr. Daniel stated that he has previously attended City Council meetings and community events involving police officers and emphasized the importance of addressing social determinants of health, addiction treatment, and long-term support services for unhoused individuals. He noted

that, as community health workers, there is an understanding of the need for treatment and supportive resources; however, he expressed concern regarding how the community and law enforcement address individuals involved in the selling, distribution, and manufacturing of illegal narcotics.

Mr. Daniel referenced prior conversations with law enforcement officers in which concerns were raised regarding a “catch and release” cycle involving repeat offenders. He contrasted those concerns with recent law enforcement activity involving multiple raids conducted throughout Dover and questioned whether more permanent enforcement actions were being taken against those responsible for larger-scale drug activity. Mr. Daniel also referenced comments made during City Council meetings regarding known open-air drug activity and expressed confusion about the apparent disconnect between ongoing enforcement efforts and community perceptions that the same criminal activity continues. He requested clarification regarding how law enforcement efforts are addressing the root causes and sources of illegal drug distribution within the city.

In response, Chief Johnson thanked Mr. Daniel for his comments and advised that additional discussion and clarification regarding enforcement efforts and related concerns could take place following completion of the formal meeting agenda and announcements.

#### **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Mr. Waverly DeBaux moved to accept the Agenda, seconded by Ms. Dominique Dixon and unanimously carried.

\*Prior to the vote to adopt the following meeting minutes, Ms. Rebecca McNamara, Office Administrator and Assistant to the Chief of Police for the Dover Police Department, stated that Chairperson Dr. Chanda Jackson requested that meeting minutes be placed on the agenda for approval at the next scheduled meeting, regardless of whether the meeting is a workshop meeting or a full board meeting. This process was established to ensure minutes are reviewed and approved in a timely manner rather than delaying approval.

#### **ADOPTION OF MARCH 19, 2026 MEETING MINUTES (TABLED AT MAY 21, 2026 MEETING)**

Miss Lillyrose Granger moved to accept the March 19, 2026 Meeting Minutes, seconded by Mr. DeBaux and unanimously carried.

#### **ADOPTION OF APRIL 16, 2026 WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. DeBaux moved to accept the April 16, 2026 Workshop Meeting Minutes seconded by Ms. Dixon and unanimously carried.

#### **ADOPTION OF MAY 21, 2026 MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. DeBaux moved to accept the May 21, 2026 Meeting Minutes seconded by Miss Granger and unanimously carried.

#### **CITIZEN COMPLAINTS – Nina Shahin/POLICY REVIEW – PROCEDURAL NOTICE 61.1 CRASH INVESTIGATION**

The Board reviewed and discussed a citizen complaint submitted by Ms. Nina Shahin regarding a motor vehicle collision report completed by a Dover Police Department patrol officer. It was explained that Ms. Shahin’s concerns stemmed from a private property collision in which insurance companies later assigned liability percentages between the involved parties. Ms. Shahin believed the officer did not properly investigate the collision or fully follow departmental crash investigation procedures, which she felt contributed to the insurance company assigning her a portion of fault. The complaint had previously been reviewed by the Dover Police Department Office of Internal Affairs, which determined that the officer acted in compliance with departmental policy and that no procedural violations occurred.

During discussion, Board members reviewed Dover Police Department Procedural Notice 61.1 regarding crash investigations and raised questions concerning the absence of a detailed accident diagram within the materials provided to the Board. It was clarified that the document included in the packet was an exchange information form rather than a full collision report. Department representatives explained that because the incident occurred on private property, involved minor damage, and did not involve injuries or vehicle towing, departmental policy did not require completion of a full accident report. The purpose of the exchange form was described as providing involved parties with the necessary information to proceed through their respective insurance companies, which independently determine liability and fault percentages. It was further explained that the Dover Police Department does not determine civil liability or insurance fault determinations related to collisions.

Board members discussed the importance of having complete information available when reviewing citizen complaints and expressed concerns regarding potential misunderstandings by complainants about police reporting procedures and insurance determinations. Department representatives advised that body-worn camera footage and in-car camera footage were reviewed during the Internal Affairs investigation and confirmed that the officer exited the vehicle, spoke with both parties involved, and accurately documented the vehicle involved in the collision. It was reiterated that the officer's actions were found to be consistent with departmental policy and that no additional collision report existed beyond the exchange information form already provided.

The discussion expanded into broader concerns regarding public understanding of accident investigations, police discretion, and communication between the Department and complainants. Department representatives explained that officers document observations, collect identifying information, and investigate potential traffic violations when applicable; however, insurance companies independently review reports and determine fault allocations. Examples were provided illustrating the role of officer discretion in deciding whether citations are issued during traffic collisions, particularly in situations involving conflicting statements, lack of witnesses, or varying circumstances surrounding the collision.

Several Board members emphasized the need for clearer communication with complainants and members of the public regarding accident reporting procedures, the distinction between police reports and insurance determinations, and what information may or may not exist following private property collisions. Suggestions were made to develop a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document explaining Dover Police Department accident investigation procedures and reporting practices. Additional discussion included the possibility of creating informational or educational materials, including a potential public information video, to help residents better understand accident investigations and reporting processes.

Board members also discussed the importance of clearly informing complainants that they may attend Board meetings and speak regarding their complaints. It was suggested that future correspondence to complainants include more explicit language advising them of the opportunity to appear before the Board and provide additional information or comments regarding their concerns. Department representatives advised that communication had been made with Ms. Shahin regarding the meeting date and that prior discussions had occurred informing her of the process and opportunity to attend.

The Board reached consensus that future workshop discussions should focus on improving communication procedures, developing informational materials related to accident investigations, and establishing clearer follow-up practices regarding citizen complaints. Department representatives advised that they would begin exploring development of an FAQ document for future Board review and would communicate the Board's concerns and recommendations to the Chair and Vice Chair for further consideration.

## **MEMBERSHIP – APPOINTMENT RECOMMENDED BY MAYOR CHRISTIANSEN - JORDAN DAVIS – DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT**

The Board was advised that communication had been received from Mayor Robin Christiansen regarding the appointment of Mr. Jordan Davis of Delaware State University to serve as the student representative on the Advisory Board. It was stated that the Board received a formal letter of endorsement from Mayor Christiansen ratifying Mr. Davis' appointment to the permanently designated Delaware State University student seat on the Board.

Board members were informed that Mr. Davis would fill an existing position within the Board's rotational appointment structure, with the term scheduled to expire on May 31, 2027. It was further noted that Delaware State University retains the authority to designate both its staff and student representatives for service on the Board.

A motion was made by Mr. DeBaux to accept the appointment of Mr. Jordan Davis as the Delaware State University student representative to the Board, seconded by Ms. Dixon and unanimously approved. Following the vote, Mr. Davis was welcomed as the official Delaware State University Student Body Representative to the Advisory Board and invited to take his seat with the Board.

Chief Johnson, for the benefit of those in attendance, explained that when the Dover Police Chief's Advisory Committee transitioned into the City of Dover Police Advisory Board, the Board assisted the Delaware State University Police Department in complying with new state law requirements by incorporating DSU representation into the Board structure, two positions are permanently designated for representatives from Delaware State University, including one student representative and one staff representative. Mr. Jordan Davis was formally recognized as the official DSU student representative, while Dr. Charlisa Holloway-Edelin, the designated staff representative, was noted as absent due to a prior commitment.

Mr. Davis thanked the Board, Delaware State University, and University representatives for the opportunity to serve and stated that he looked forward to serving as a member of the Board. Board representatives welcomed Mr. Davis and expressed enthusiasm regarding his appointment and future participation.

## **COMMUNITY CONCERNS REGARDING POLICING**

Miss Ayrue Lin brought up homelessness, housing instability, community perceptions of policing, police-community relations, and public safety concerns within the City of Dover. Concerns were raised regarding increasing homelessness and youth homelessness throughout Delaware, including questions about the effectiveness of outreach efforts and the Dover Police Department's HOPE program. A request was made for data regarding the outcomes and effectiveness of these programs and related outreach initiatives. Department representatives advised that the Behavioral Health Unit, which consists of a police officer and a licensed clinical social worker, oversees many of these initiatives and would be best equipped to provide the requested information. It was agreed that the matter would be placed on a future workshop agenda for further discussion.

Additional discussion centered on whether increased national attention surrounding police brutality and use-of-force incidents has impacted community perceptions of law enforcement within Dover. In response to questions posed on behalf of a local educator, Department representatives acknowledged that nationally publicized incidents and viral social media content can influence public perception of policing at the local level, even when incidents occur in other jurisdictions. It was noted that officers can sometimes feel unfairly associated with the actions of officers in unrelated agencies despite having no involvement in those incidents. At the same time, it was

emphasized that community members are entitled to their own perspectives and concerns regarding law enforcement interactions.

Questions were also raised regarding whether the Dover Police Department has experienced allegations of excessive force or police brutality. Chief Johnson acknowledged that complaints involving use of force are regularly received and reviewed. It was explained that the overwhelming majority of complaints are determined to be exaggerated, unfounded, or unsupported by evidence; however, the Department also uses complaint reviews as opportunities to identify potential policy concerns or training needs when appropriate.

Chief Johnson further explained that all serious use-of-force incidents involving significant injury are independently reviewed by the Delaware Department of Justice, and it was stated that the Department has consistently been cleared by the Attorney General's Office following those reviews.

The discussion further explored the general perception of the Dover Police Department within the community. Chief Johnson described the agency as a younger department with many recently hired officers who bring a more community-oriented and service-focused mindset to policing. Board members and attendees discussed differing public perceptions of police presence and engagement, with some expressing that while officers are visible within the community, there are concerns that interactions can sometimes appear disengaged or lacking in meaningful connection with residents. Others noted that the community's desire for greater engagement from officers may itself reflect a generally positive relationship between the Department and residents compared to jurisdictions where fear or distrust of police is more prevalent.

Board members and attendees also discussed the realities and tensions present during police interactions, including traffic stops and community encounters. Participants acknowledged that both officers and residents may approach interactions with uncertainty or apprehension due to broader societal concerns, previous experiences, or the unpredictability of encounters. Department representatives emphasized that officers must prepare for potentially dangerous situations while also striving to maintain professionalism, communication, and respectful interactions with the public. It was noted that many positive police interactions occur daily but often do not receive the same public attention as negative incidents shared through social media.

The conversation later shifted to ongoing public safety concerns in downtown Dover, including concerns related to youth activity, nightlife, community responsibility, and police presence. Questions were raised regarding responsibility for addressing issues occurring downtown and whether sufficient police presence and community engagement efforts exist in those areas. Additional concerns were expressed regarding public misconceptions about Police Athletic League (PAL) programming and broader community-police partnerships. Due to time constraints and the complexity of the topic, Department representatives advised that a more detailed discussion would occur following the meeting and recommended that the topic also be placed on a future workshop agenda to allow for more comprehensive public discussion and participation.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Dixon reported that there will be a Capital School District Board Meeting on July 15, 2026 at 6:15 p.m.

#### **TRAINING FOR NEW MEMBERS**

Due to time constraints, Dr. Katera Moore moved to table the training for new members, seconded by Miss Granger and unanimously carried.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 pm