

**SUMMARY MINUTES FOR THE  
POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

June 14, 2016  
Greenville, NC

Chairperson Diane Kulik called the Police Community Relations Committee meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., at The Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 131 Oakmont Drive, Greenville, NC 27834.

Chairperson Diane Kulik asked for a motion for approval of the June 14, 2016 agenda.

Motion: Mr. Tim Webster  
Second: Mr. Jermaine McNair

The agenda was unanimously approved by the committee.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

Chairperson Diane Kulik asked for a motion for approval of the May 10, 2016 minutes.

Motion: Mr. Tim Webster  
Second: Mr. Lennard Naipaul

The minutes were unanimously approved by the committee.

**INTRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS / ROLL CALL:**

Chairperson Diane Kulik asked each member and staff to introduce themselves and let everyone know which district they represented.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Diane Kulik; Chairperson, At-Large	Jermaine McNair; Mayoral
Tim Webster, Vice Chair; District 5	Lennard Naipaul; District 2
Gregory Barrett; District 1	Greg Rubel; District 3

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

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**CITY STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Bill Little, Assistant Attorney; Sylvia Horne, Administrative Staff Support Specialist; Sgt. Bruce Groccia, Special Victim's Unit; Devinder Culver, Community Project Coordinator; Christine Clift, Victims Advocate; Detective Sonja Verdin, Special Victim's Unit.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

None

**OTHERS:**

Citizens

## **NEW BUSINESS:s**

Chairperson Diane Kulik introduced herself and thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting. She then called a short business meeting to order following the June 14<sup>th</sup> agenda and asked each police officer, city staff, and committee members to introduce themselves. Vice Chair Timothy Webster passed out handouts before the speakers made their presentations.

## **Guest Speaker Detective Sonja Verdin, Special Victim's Unit, Investigations**

Detective Verdin introduced herself to everyone. She stated that she worked in the Special Victims Unit with the Greenville Police Department. Detective Verdin stated that she has been in law enforcement for approximately 13 years. Detective Verdin stated that in 2015 the Greenville Police Department as a whole respond to approximately 1,394 domestic calls for service in the City of Greenville. Out of those calls, 845 became actual cases investigated by someone whether it was a patrol officer or it was passed up to the Special Victims Unit.

Detective Verdin gave an overview of what a detective does when called out to a domestic violence call and scene. The call can be received from the victim themselves, a third-party which can be a neighbor, or from received a text message.

Patrol Officer is called:

- They arrive at the scene
- Officer gathers information right from the beginning that is pertinent to the case to determine what an officer will do next
- The patrol officer takes the initial case investigation and passes it on unless there is an actual assault that they can document; if there is an assault the officer can document at the time of the call the officer can make an arrest
- The police officer will then put the subject in custody and take the subject to the magistrate's office then the court proceedings will start. If there are no signs of physical injury at all in the information passed on to a Detective so they can look at the case and further assist the police officer ( with a protective order, warrant) with documentation because there could be a pattern or cycle
- Victim themselves could actually take out a warrant if there are no such as injuries from the magistrate's office
- Detective Verdin stated that when the case gets to a Detective, they will begin pulling history of the address, review the case narrative, and how many calls for service, etc. This helps to build a case file for the detectives
- Sometimes the detective discusses the case and asks for help with the police victims advocate. Victims advocate will then reach out to the victim to determine what services she can offer them
- Detective Verdin stated that the police department uses other services like the family violence center for counseling services and training classes. They also uses the community shelter to get the victim away from the offender

## **Guest Speaker Christine Clift, Victim's Advocate, Investigations Unit**

Mrs. Christine Clift thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. She indicated to the citizen that she was not a sworn law enforcement officer. She stated that she was a civilian victim's advocate in law enforcement. She stated there are differences between

those of us who work in the law enforcement agencies and those who work in the nonprofits; one would be the confidentiality rule with the nonprofits versus law enforcement. Mrs. Clift stated her files are subject to being subpoenaed. Those files could be domestic violence protective orders, possibly victim's compensation to assist the victim, and referrals to the center for family violence prevention if the case is domestic. The services that are offered that a victim's advocate can do is also to be a good place for the victim to vent.

Mrs. Clift stated that she does not always know what her day will be like..... her day is based on who walks through the front door and says I want a restraining order, or my husband assaulted me. Sometimes there may be 3 to 5 cases submitted to the judge. When she takes a victim into her office, Mrs. Clift helps the victim to decide on what services they are eligible for; or to see if the victim(s) are eligible for anything she can assist them with or even if they need counseling. Whatever best fits their needs, Mrs. Clift offers the services to them.

Mrs. Clift stated that if a victim discusses with her that they had been sexually assaulted, they could go to the Real Crisis Center, but most of her victims usually go to the family violence prevention center since they encompass so many things with domestic violence. Mrs. Clift stated that there are different forms of domestic violence: financial, verbal, sexual, and physical. She said a lot of domestic violence forms she see is mostly verbal. This form is harder to take before a judge and say Judge..... We need a restraining/protective order because of the words. Mrs. Clift stated that the words could be the most hurtful sometimes. The victim's bruises will heal, but the marks and the scars the victims have in their mind detracts from their self-esteem and to their physical appearance. Mrs. Clift stated domestic violence can be and is a cycle.

Mrs. Clift stated there are some intricacies of what she does on her job that are really hard to go into details and list out everything she does. Mrs. Clift stated that all of her victims are different, so what she does for each person is different. What she does for one victim, she may not do for another victim. Everyone has special needs.

Another thing Mrs. Clift talked about was seeing victims repeatedly, because once a victim is victimized it is so easy for them to go back into another abusive relationship. Unfortunately it is called their comfort zone because the victim does not know anything else.

### **Guest Speaker Judge Gwyn Hilburn**

Judge Gwyn Hilburn introduced herself and stated that she was one of the district court judges in Pitt County. She informed the citizens that there are 10 million children a year that are exposed to domestic violence. She stated that if one child is exposed to domestic violence in a year that is too many. She stated that the judges see the results of that exposure and it comes through the child's life when they become older. Judge Gwyn Hilburn stated that there are two cycles of domestic violence in her view. That is the cycle were a young boy see their father abusing the mother and girls seeing their mother not responding and taking the abuse. The boys grow up into men who are violent with their wives or girlfriends and the young girls grow up to become young women who accepts that violence is normal. Another type of domestic violence is a cycle where a woman has been abused and she is leaving the relationship. Then they go into another abusive relationship. Or the woman goes back to the same relationship. Most of the times the reason may be that the woman needs food on the table, lack of

education or the woman doesn't have a job that pays good and needs help paying the bills. Judge Gwyn Hilburn stated that some churches teach that divorces are such a bad thing. And whatever goes on in the marriage a couple should not get a divorce. Embarrassment is another reason for staying in the relationship.

Judge Gwyn Hilburn stated that early in the morning the judges have first appearances. All the judges go down to the detention center and every one who was arrested the night before comes to court. Their rights are read to them and they are asked if they need a lawyer. With domestic violence cases Judge Gwyn Hilburn has to set the offenders' bonds. The question is asked is this person a danger to persons and property, or is the person likely to show up in court and weighting those things judges select in the amount of money that will get the offender to court and make the offender not a danger to persons or property. So the judges will set a bond and in setting the bond, the judges find out a lot about the offenders history. Judge Gwyn Hilburn stated that if a person had never been in for domestic violence before and the offender has a good job and wants to get out and work and want to support his family, it will be lower bond than a person who has several domestic violence issues and cases. Judge Gwyn Hilburn stated that the judges set the bond, tell the offenders when their court date is, appoint an attorney if they need one, and then later in the day the judges have domestic violence court. After the court first appearances, then the judges have Ex parte hearings. Ex partes are received from the victims advocate (Christine Cliff). Ex parte means a person can go to a judge all by themselves never tell the other person that they are going and get an order against the person. When the judge gives an Ex parte order that means the judge tells the victim that she is worried about her and judge gives the victim an order that says the offender is not to contact the victim, he is not to come and see the victim, he is not to assault the victim, or threaten the victim, or interfere with the victim in any manner. Decisions are made such as: the victim can have the house back and the offender will have to move out until the hearing and the judge decides who will have the house for a year. The children will stay with the victim, but the victim will need to allow the offender to visit the children. Or the offender can take one of the dogs and the victim can take the other dog. The offender cannot go to the victim's job, nor can they go to the children's school, or yes the offender can go to the children's school he just can't take the children out of school. There are decisions that the judges have to put together to make it easier for the victim and offender to function while the Ex parte one-sided order is in effect.

Now within a week or 10 days offender gets to court. By that time the husband has usually been notified. The judges sit down and decide if domestic violence truly occurred in the home. This process is a hearing, most offenders do not want to say..... Yes I committed domestic violence, because there are two things going. The offender probably has an assault warrant so there is a criminal track then they will have domestic violence protective order which the judge will be hearing between 7 to 10 days. So the judges will have to have a hearing generally speaking in the civil context, because the offender is not going to admit to domestic violence in the civil context when it can be used against them in the criminal context. So a lot of times the offender will not say anything. They will take the Fifth Amendment or just not get up on the witness stand. At that point it is very likely that the victim gets a one year order that says: for a year no contact, no assault, threatening, no harassment, no going to the residence. It can be renewed for another year at the end of one year. Judge Gwyn Hilburn stated that this is the civil side. A lot of times is the civil case is continued to be heard with the criminal case. The same judges that do the civil cases do the criminal cases. At that point the

offender may be charged with the assault on a female. The female could be charged with an assault, communicating threats or any number of criminal actions that might be pending. The judge resolves the cases often in the criminal court. Judge Gwyn Hilburn stated because the court has such good DA's and good defense attorneys and the victim and the offender wants to sit down and really work out what is best for the family. Judge Gwyn Hilburn stated that in the criminal stage, the judge either finds the offender guilty or not guilty. She stated that the burden of proof is different; is beyond a reasonable doubt in criminal court and that is a high burden. She stated that the burden in civil court is less difficult. If the judge doesn't find the offender guilty of the criminal part, the judge can still find the offender responsible and place a one-year restraining order against the offender if it's warranted. Judge Gwyn Hilburn stated if the order doesn't fit the statute, the judges don't get to make up the statutes as they go along. The statute tells the judges what a victim is, tells what domestic violence is, and the judges are supposed to apply it. The questions are asked: does this plaintiff fit the victim definitions? Does this action fit the definition of domestic violence, does the defendant fit the personal relationship that is described in this statute? If these definitions don't fit in the statute, the judge cannot offer an order for protection. Judge Gwyn Hilburn stated it is really hard when you can't offer an order and you know you really, really want to give the victim protection. But the State has a legislature that is made up of human beings who cannot think of everything and every possible definition of a victim and defendant and every possible definition of domestic violence. Lastly Judge Gwyn Hilburn gave one last statistic of children suffering through domestic violence.

Nancy Ray, a magistrate of Pitt County spoke briefly on the process of an incident (domestic violence) and also a (48 hours holding time) and the time that it appears before the Judge.

#### Public Expression and Questions

The citizens asked several questions, and made comments and concerns regarding child abuse, child neglect, domestic violence verbal threats, witnessing domestic violence, removing the victim or the offender from the residence, finding a safe place (Angel Cops), and using judgment calls.

Chairperson Diane Kulik ask for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Mr. Tim Webster

Second: Mr. Gregory Barrett

The next meeting is on September 13, 2016. Meeting place will be announced at a later date.

ADJOURN – 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Horne  
Administration Bureau Secretary  
Greenville Police Department  
Document (#1031356)