

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

Chairperson Diane Kulik called the Police Community Relations Committee meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., at J.H. Rose High School, Greenville, NC.

INTRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairperson Diane Kulik asked each committee member and city staff to introduce themselves.

Committee members present:

Greg Rubel, District 3	Diane Kulik, Chairperson
Scott Snyder, District 4	Jermaine McNair, Mayoral
Carol Bass, District 5	Gregory Barrett, District 1

City Staff Members present:

Chief of Police Mark Holtzman	Kristen Hunter
Sgt. Dale Mills	Billie Jo Viverette
Devinder Culver	
Cpl. Glen Webb	

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairperson Diane Kulik asked for a motion for approval of the agenda.

Motion: Jermaine McNair
Seconded: Gregory Barrett

The agenda was unanimously approved by the committee.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chairperson Diane Kulik asked for a motion for approval of the February 13th, 2018 Minutes.

Motion: Jermaine McNair
Seconded: Greg Rubel

The minutes was unanimously approved by the committee.

MISSION AND PURPOSE OF MEETING

Chairperson Diane Kulik read the Police Community Relations Committee mission statement.

Diane thanked everyone for coming and stated that the next meeting will be April 10th at City Hall with representatives from the District Attorneys' office to discuss the court process.

Diane stated that before we get started in the discussions that two topics need to be addressed. The subject of the age of purchasing guns is at the Federal level and the subject of arming teachers is at the State level; and that is the place that change can be made. There's nothing that can be done about that tonight.

Diane recognized City Council members and Pitt County Board of Education members. She then introduced the speakers and explained that the time for questions would be after all the speakers have finished.

Chief Holtzman with the Greenville Police Department introduced himself and thanked everyone for coming. He stated that he has spoken with Dr. Lenker and Sheriff Elks but because of security reasons they could not reveal all the details of the school safety plans.

Chief Holtzman stated that there are two variables that his department is focused on. The first one being the safety measures for the school buildings; securing the access from the outside as well as safety inside the buildings. The second variable is the School Resource Officers; making sure that they have the proper training and equipment so they are prepared and ready to do their job to respond to any threat. Chief Holtzman stated that this summer they will be attending additional training to focus just on this particular issue at hand. He stated that he is confident, after meeting with the School Resource Officers, that they are prepared and understand fully what their job entails.

He stated that then there's the investigation section. He stated that they are still investigating the copycat threats that were made at South Central; and that there were also threats made to the Greenville Police Department. There is a Greenville Police officer who is also sworn in as a FBI agent and that information that is received is forwarded to the FBI office. Improvements are currently being made in the training aspects and also the investigations aspects so that the Greenville Police Department will be fully prepared in situations that may occur.

Dr. Ethan Lenker stated that the same conversation that he had with Chief Holtzman, he has had with administrative staff and maintenance personnel with the schools. And that they discussed items that they need to work on.

He stated that there are security measures that are already taking place in the schools. Twice a year there are lockdown drills which happened announced and unannounced. This is so that they can analyze what worked, what didn't, and what needs to be improved. Tornado drills are practiced occasionally, as well as fire drills, which occur twice a month. Security audits occur periodically by Pitt County security personnel and a Greenville Police officer. They then meet with the principals with any issues that need to be addressed. The school resource officers have checklists that they follow and also conduct security audits at the school that they are assigned to; as well as other schools.

He stated that they looking at schools that may need updated security measures, such as the older schools. Other things that they are looking to implement are swiper cards for students, securing entry ways where everyone has to go through the office to enter the schools, intel keys used to secure certain parts of buildings, upgrading fencing where needed, and scanning drivers licenses when kids are being checked out of schools.

He stated that they're in the process of upgrading school cameras and have discussed with the Board of Education about putting cameras on buses. He stated that they would like to have more SRO's, that they are 14 currently in the schools. After discussions with principals, he stated that the biggest security measure they know to do is to keep the school doors locked.

He stated that they are working with counselors and nurses on the mental health aspect. They are working with local agencies to schedule training for staff to better prepare them in that area. He stated he knows that there are things that we need to put in place. But he stated that they'll be working with county commissioners and general assembly members to acquire what is needed.

Sheriff Elks thanked everyone for coming to take part in the discussion. He stated that we want to know what your concerns are. He stated that it has been known that more SRO's are needed but that takes money; but the situation in Florida has changed the way people are thinking about security in the schools. He stated he thinks it's time to make our schools hard targets and we need to support the ones who are trying to make those changes, on both local and state levels. He stated that his department has training every year, with local police departments and the highway patrol units. He stated that there is a lot that they need to plan for but that he is looking forward to a partnership with the local police departments, the school board and the city governments.

Glen Webb stated that it was good to see so many young people attending the meeting. Glen stated that the idea of a bond referendum to pay for needs of the schools has been discussed. He stated that the Board of Commissioners passed a resolution to have a joint meeting with the Pitt County School board so that they can strategize together. He stated that we're very fortunate that those two groups work well together and are committed to finding resolutions to keeping the schools safe.

Glen informed everyone that when an emergency occurs and you're unable to call 911, that you can send a text to 911 instead. He stated it's the same if you were hearing impaired and needed to contact 911. He expressed the importance, however, that the first information that you should send in the text is the address. 911 can immediately start dispatching officers and as emergency personnel are on the way, receive information on what is happening, who you are and so on.

He stated that the Pitt County Board of Commissioners would be following up with the school board with discussions about funding. He stated that the commissioners are not over the school board; but that their job is to support them and the schools. He said you may see the bond referendum in November; or you may see the county commissioners work independently. He said that they'll be working closely with state and federal officials. He stated he wanted to clarify the job descriptions and requirements of SRO's, because some do not full understand. He stated that SRO's are certified, trained police officers. They have been through the same training and are fully sworn law enforcement officers. My job is to take notes and take the concerns back to the board.

Diane asked Glen to explain the bond referendum to everyone. Glen stated that the bond would possibly be a 1 penny tax increase, which would cost approximately \$30 per year,

depending on the price of your home. It would bring approximately \$1.1 million in to the schools system, if that is what is specified on the bond. It can only be used for what is specified on the bond, and nothing else.

Diane opened up the question period and explained that to be fair to everyone, only one question per person.

The first question was if there are 14 school resource officers, how many are assigned to each school? Dr. Lenker explained that out of the 14 school officers, three high schools have two and the other 8 are spread out to middle schools. He stated that there are resource officers at 11 schools. He stated that about 1.2 million is spent for those 14 officers.

The next question was are there any programs or training for dealing with approaches, prejudices awareness, for helping students feel more connected with adults? Dr. Lenker stated that there were more social workers hired this year, which brought the total to 16 for all the schools. He stated but still that puts each social worker handling 2 to 3 schools. But there are counselors in all the schools.

It was asked why some schools today are considered soft targets, because in past years, there weren't any problems with guns at schools? What is the difference between now and then? Sheriff Elks stated when we say soft targets, it means not being able to protect yourself. He stated that in today's society violence is already presenting itself. The news coverage of crimes that everyone can see sometimes lead to copycat crimes. He stated that society is a lot different now with social media, crime waves, and crime rates.

It was asked to Dr. Lenker if schools were investing in practices to restore the relationships between students and teachers. Dr. Lenker stated that we are currently working with other school systems on developing such practices.

It was mentioned by one citizen that the mental health system is broken, that there is lack of communication between students and adults. She stated that everyone needs to work together, which is an issue in itself right now. Another citizen stated that we don't need more social programs that parents need to teach their children at home. Dr. Lenker stated that we do work with mental health programs right now. A representative from Integrated Family Services stated that the first thing is recognizing the signs. She stated that they work with the community; they offer parenting classes; they offer mental health assessments for the kids as well. She stated that we do get calls for assistance from the schools and from law enforcement. We go out and do an assessment to see how we can help the kids.

It was asked to Dr. Lenker, if funding was not an issue, what is your wish list of needs for the schools? What would you like to see done to harden these soft targets? Dr. Lenker stated that it has been discussed with the Board of Education that we need several items, as we discussed earlier. We need 2nd set of doors placed in schools when going to the office, as well as better camera systems in buses and in the schools; get buzzer systems in place. We have schools that students have to travel from one building to another, unlike the newer schools where everything is located inside of one building. We added swiper cards in Grimesland where teachers and students can use when traveling from place to place.

What are buzzer systems? Dr. Lenker stated in most of the K – 8 schools, you have to hit a buzzer to be allowed in the building. Once you hit the buzzer, staff talks to you through a speaker to find out why you're there and to let you know to have an ID ready once you enter the building. We have four schools that do not have this system.

Keith Cooper with The Benevolence Corps stated that he has spoken with Mark Johnson, State Superintendent, who stated that questionnaires will be sent out to everyone. He also stated that Mark said that he is against arming teachers; but that he wants to acquire funding for more SRO's in the schools.

One citizen expressed her concerns on what mental health training is there for teachers, because there have been issues with teachers making bad choices. She wanted to compliment the Greenville Police Department on how they handled the shooting at the movie theater. She stated she was there with her family and was impressed on how they handled the situation.

The next question was what are the kids, at all ages, being told to do in emergency situations? Dr. Lenker stated that the teachers talk to the kids in the classrooms, at their level on what they should do. They talk to them about where they should go, what they should do, for what is appropriate for each age group; as well as having lockdown drills.

One citizen stated he was deeply concerned about the 26 schools that do not have SRO's in the schools, and wanted to know where is the funding from the traffic cameras going. Dr. Lenker stated that the money is in the bank because we're not able to spend it.

Glen Webb explained that the lottery money is designated and has to go to capital projects. And then it funnels through the county, to the schools that are being built and the expansions. So that money goes where the state designates where it has to go.

Dr. Lenker wanted to clarify his statement concerning the traffic cameras fund. He stated that they were told not to spend that money because of the lawsuits that have been filed against that program.

It was asked which was safer, buzzers or metal detectors. Dr. Lenker explained that there is a policy in place where they can use metal detectors in the high schools, as well as bringing in trained K-9s, but policy states that it has to be done randomly.

A student asked how and when students can express their opinions and concerns on issues in the schools. A teacher from J.H. Rose stated that each school has a Student Government Association where all students can attend the meetings and discuss their concerns. She stated that the SGA at J.H. Rose meets the last Friday of every month at 7:30.

Diane asked the PCRC members for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jermaine made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8 pm.