

City of Greenville

Police Community Relations Committee

6:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 11, 2025
Greenville City Council Chambers
200 West Fifth Street, Greenville, NC 27834

Committee Members Present:

Sonny Bass (Chair)	District 5
Rev. Philip Lyon	Mayoral
Stacy Ruffin	District 4
Asiya Khaatoon	District 1
Jonathan Wacker	District 3

Committee Members Absent/Excused:

Diane Kulik (Vice Chair)	At-Large
Eric Ellison/Holdover	District 2

Council Liaison Absent: Council Member, Portia Willis

Others Present:

Chief, Ted Sauls, Ex-Officio Advisor
Donald K. Phillips, Assistant City Attorney, Ex-Officio Advisor
Lt. William Stokes, Strategic Services
Devinder Culver, Community Projects Coordinator, Staff Liaison

Meeting Highlights

The meeting was officially called to order at 6:05 p.m. by the Committee Chair, Sonny Bass. Sonny welcomed everyone to the meeting and then asked Staff Liaison Devinder Culver to conduct the roll call. Roll call was conducted, and a quorum was established.

Chairperson Sonny Bass asked for a motion for approval of the agenda. Philip Lyon made the motion, and Stacy Ruffin seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Sonny Bass asked for a motion to approve the minutes for December 10, 2024. Stacy Ruffin made a motion to approve the minutes, and Philip Lyon seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously as read.

Sonny Bass welcomed new member Jonathan Wacker, and he mentioned that this would be the first and last meeting for Jonathan as he was unable to commit to be in attendance for the next four meetings. Sonny asked Jonathan to keep PCRC in mind once his retirement commitments had settled down.

Chairperson Sonny Bass then introduced Chief Ted Sauls who began by reminding the audience that police and community relationships were key for this committee. He said that they needed to be cognizant of the fact that any data that was quoted was historical as the over 200 sworn officers and approximately 50 non-sworn personnel were constantly working on solving crimes/cases.

Chief Sauls asked the audience about their biggest concerns. Traffic crashes and safety (walking at night) were mentioned. Chief Sauls said that the mission is to create a safe community. Training is crucial to maintain a safe community. This year, officers will be trained on, for example:

- subject control and arrest techniques
- driving
- rapid deployment
- firearm training
- taser training
- legal updates
- fire extinguisher
- hazmat
- ethics
- responding to traffic accidents
- the elderly
- juvenile updates

Chief Sauls stated that the theme last year was “Back to Basics,” that is law enforcement, health and wellness for employees and public safety. The theme going forward is “Customer Service.” There are so many opportunities for interactions. For example, the first interaction that the public has when they call the police is with the telecommunicators. There are 16 Telecommunicators who handle approximately 11,000 calls each which equates to approximately 176,000 customer interactions per year each one an opportunity for a positive interaction.

Chief Sauls shared some data from 2024

Crashes	-2024 – 4, 509 crashes
Fatal crashes	- 2024 – down from 9 in 2023 to 5 in 2024
Traffic Stops	- 2024 – 19,000
	- 2023 – 20,000

Chief Sauls said that GPD can make the community safer by enforcing the law e.g. speed limits, stop signs, school zones and traffic calming.

Chief Sauls stated that when we had redlight cameras at 10 intersections it resulted in a 29% decrease in crashes. When the cameras were removed the crashes increased by about approximately 29%. In response to a question about monies from the redlight camera fines/penalties, Chief said that the monies went to Pitt County Schools.

Chief Sauls pointed out that distracted driving continues to be an issue. He said that the citizens could help to reduce to reduce traffic incidents by using seatbelts, obeying speed limits, driving less aggressively and by leaving home a little earlier.

Violent Crime

Chief Sauls shared the following:

2024 – violent crime decreased by 15%

2024 - property crime decreased by 7%

The focus has been on firearm safety and crimes against people. The Chief mentioned that 700 firearms were recovered in 2024, and the emphasis is on educating citizens on responsible gun ownership and gun safety.

Chief Sauls shared that ShotSpotter, a gunshot detection system helps reduce gun violence, because it helps to: recover more shell casings because it gives a precise location of shots fired, locates more witnesses, identifies shooters faster and data from shell casings can help to link cases together. ShotSpotter is located downtown and covers a four (4) square mile area. It has halved response times to shots fired calls. GPD responded to 293 calls however, there were a total of 557 alleged shots fired, that is sounds that sounded like shots fired.

Cameras are playing a crucial part in locating, lost children, recovery of mentally challenged individuals, and have led to numerous arrests. Chief Sauls said that cameras were the single most powerful tool/device in helping to create a safe community.

Recruitment and Retention

Chief Sauls announced that he was pleased to report that GPD has closed the gap from a onetime 44 sworn officer vacancy list to 8 vacancies to date. He mentioned that based on the calls for service and population growth he had asked for additional officers in the next budget cycle. The target is to grow and eventually have 220 sworn officers based on a standard of 2.2 officers per thousand inhabitants. Currently, GPD is authorized 200 sworn officers.

Chief Sauls said would like to have a special downtown unit focused on weekend patrols, officers can then focus on gun violence and traffic safety. He mentioned that the Civilian Crash Investigators were helping to free up the sworn officers who can now devote more time to the more significant crashes.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is the biggest focus. Chief Sauls challenged everyone to bring people to the PCRC meetings and to bring their questions. He said, “we are all in this together,” this is the message that he would like the PCRC members to take back to their communities. Chief Sauls said that he would like to have a full house at each of the PCRC meetings.

Chief Sauls said thank you to everyone for their time and for being engaged.

Chairperson Sonny Bass thanked Chief Sauls for a wonderful presentation and thanked everyone for attending and invited them to the next PCRC meeting scheduled for 6:00 p.m. March 11, 2025. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Devinder Culver

Devinder Culver, Staff Liaison