



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Date: 1/19/2016

In Control: Criminal Justice, Public Safety and Services Committee

DEPARTMENT: Police

DEPARTMENT HEAD: William P. McManus, Chief of Police

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

A briefing on the San Antonio Police Department's (SAPD) police reform initiatives

SUMMARY:

The following memo provides an update to the Criminal Justice, Public Safety and Services Committee on the SAPD's police reform initiatives. The initiatives serve to address use of force issues and protect the civil rights of the citizens, and provide enhanced safety for officers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Recent national events involving high-profile police incidents with the public have been the catalyst for a national discussion on police reform. In reaction to these events, many police departments nation-wide have initiated reviews of their policies, procedures and training practices regarding use of force and the protection of citizens' civil rights.

In the continued effort to improve the San Antonio Police Department, to enhance transparency and the public trust, Chief McManus has taken a proactive approach to augment Department policies and training practices, specifically focusing on officers' use of force and treatment of the public. These efforts include:

- 2008 Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) Review
- 2010 Matrix Review
- 2012 Pursuit Policy Change
- 2013 Las Vegas Collaborative Reform Process Report
- 2015 Procedural Justice Training Block
- 2015 The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing - formed to identify the best means to provide an effective partnership between law enforcement and local communities that reduces crime and increases trust

- 2015 San Diego Department of Justice (DOJ) Report
- 2015 Implementation of the SAPD Open Data Initiative - allows data readily available online for public access regarding Internal Affairs formal and line complaints, use of force incidents, officer involved shooting incidents, police vehicular pursuits, racial profiling data, and Department sworn member demographics
- 2015 Procedural Justice In-Service Training for all officers at all ranks
- Body Worn Cameras

Through its proactive approach to continually implement best practices for the Department, the SAPD has engaged in several discussions with PERF representatives. These interactions have involved the movement toward changes in use of force policies and training in the attempt to give police officers better tools for avoiding unnecessary use of force, particularly deadly force.

In line with this direction, the Department began implementing a new Procedural Justice philosophy/program during its annual in-service training in 2015. Procedural Justice reflects the need for people to have an opportunity to be heard and explain their side of an incident to a police officer prior to the officer taking action. People stopped by the police want an opportunity to be heard and be treated fairly and respectfully.

Additionally, Chief McManus recently traveled to Washington D.C. and met with representatives with the Department of Justice and the PERF to exchange ideas of police reform initiatives. Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Diagnostic Center, DOJ representatives identified potential training and technical assistance opportunities for the SAPD.

SAPD representatives will attend in late January in Fort Worth a train-the-trainer training program with the Ft. Worth Police Department. Emphasis is placed on best practices regarding procedural justice. Chief McManus and Deputy Chief Treviño will also attend follow-up meetings with PERF and the DOJ in Washington D.C. at the end of January 2016. The meetings will representatives from Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), who will provide an overview of the VALOR training, which is offered to meet the need of training on de-escalation as well as tactics pertaining to procedural justice. The Chief will also review information on the juvenile resources and training offered by Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

The continued review and updating of Department policies and procedures, combined with reducing use of force incidents and providing citizens (victims and suspects) the opportunity to be heard by police, provides a level of transparency and legitimacy critical to a law enforcement agency. The SAPD has long enjoyed favorable public opinion and support throughout the community and continues to focus on building trust and maintaining its legitimacy through proactive and progressive policing practices.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Department recommends to bring forward a presentation to the full City Council at the Wednesday, January 27th B Session.