

Memo

To ICPOC Commissioners
Re: NACOLE Conference
From: Stefani Carter, Chair

I attended the NACOLE Conference in Tucson AZ in October. Commissioner Pipkins and Council Liaison Harrison also were able to attend the Conference. It must be noted that the Ann Arbor Driving Equality Ordinance and Councilperson Harrison, were recognized at the opening session, in front of the hundreds of attendees from across the Country.

Procedural Justice was discussed. Police Officers who received justice on the job are more likely to show justice to the public. Accountability and reflection are important for officers. There should be considerations of Pre-escalation in that the officers should be involved with community engagement, cultural immersion and participation to understand community dynamics.

Part of what is interesting and enlightening is to hear the reports from various Oversight Commissions around the Country. As examples:

Oakland California has authority to investigate and discipline officers. Investigators are employees of the County and they review more than 500 complaints annually.

Before oversight was initiated, Phoenix had a very high number of officer-involved shootings. There was controversial Sheriff Joe Arpio - who you may have heard of. In 2018, there were 44 Phoenix Police shootings. In 2019 there was an exposure of dozens of racist posts on social media by police. These statistics led to calls for civilian oversight and in 2021, the City Code was amended to set up oversight. A Department of Justice investigation found violations including excessive force, discrimination, protected speech violations and discrimination against people with disabilities.

The Chicago Office of Police Accountability (COPA) was established after the murder of Laquan McDonald. The office has a budget of over 1.5 million dollars and has 150 employees. The Office must be notified of all firearms discharge, TASAR discharges if injury results, deaths, excessive force, search & seizures and Domestic Violence. As soon as an incident occurs, COPA releases a statement. They have a video release policy and they have also instituted a Peoples Academy. COPA also has direct access to Body Worn Camera video with no need to ask. They admit that this is "rare".

In Milwaukee, when there is a use of force incident resulting in injury, BWC video is required to be released to the family within 48 hours and to the public in 15 days of the incident.

We also heard from oversight practitioners in Eureka and Burbank California and Detroit.

Different jurisdictions are using various methods to deal with mental health issues, which admittedly require increased access to services, suffer from lack of available of health resources and clinicians and need more funding.

Also of note at the Conference was a session by Professor Clifford Stott, a leading world expert on crowd psychology, who spoke on the subject of the need for professionalism and training in the area of public order management, ie, dealing with crowd control. He stated that there is a need for national standards, a holistic approach, dedicated public order teams and better, less lethal options in dealing with crowd control on campuses and elsewhere.

There was a presentation on “Police gangs”, from oversight practitioners from California. In their jurisdiction, there had been documented instances of gangs operating within the police department. Legislation was enacted which bans gang membership and makes such membership grounds for discharge. Police departments can also initiate policies that prohibit behavior that may bring disrepute on the department or the City, and may serve to demonstrate that such prohibition of membership does not violate the 1st Amendment rights of the officers. It was urged that police departments make a shift from “warrior” mode to “guardian” mode.

Finally, there was an emphasis on training for Commissioners, with emphasis on understanding the role and responsibility of commission members, and understanding our By-laws and the ordinances that govern us. We need to understand the civilian oversight models, practices and resources, along with the context and history of policing in our community, constitutional policing and the laws and regulations governing law enforcement and personnel matters.