



DeKalb County Government

Manuel J. Maloof Center
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Agenda Item Substitute

File #: 2023-0558
File Status: Action

12/10/2024

Public Hearing: YES NO

Department: Board of Commissioners - District 6

SUBJECT:

Commission District(s): All Commission Districts

To Adopt a Resolution Establishing a Police Civilian Review Board in DeKalb County, GA to Review and Investigating Certain Complaints Against the DeKalb County Police Department (DKPD) and its Employees.

Information Contact: Commissioner Edward C. "Ted" Terry

Phone Number: 404-371-4909

PURPOSE:

This proposed resolution establishes a DeKalb County Police Civilian Review Board purposed to review and investigate certain complaints against DKPD and its employees. Police civilian oversight of law enforcement agencies can transform organizational culture in a positive way. Changes in technology, widespread access to the Internet, smartphones, 24/7 access to continual loops of news and organized activism are just a few of the factors nudging law enforcement toward the future of Police Civilian Review Boards. These factors, combined with the complex societal issues with which the police are asked to deal with are creating an atmosphere ripe of change.

NEED/IMPACT:

DeKalb County Government respects, appreciates, and supports DKPD and its employees. In a continued effort to model best practices, establishing a Police Civilian Review Board joins neighboring cities and counties surrounding the metro-Atlanta area to mitigate raised concerns among residents of incidents of police brutality and excessive use of force and highlighted the need for greater transparency and accountability. Establishing a Police Civilian Review Board will provide a mechanism for the community to hold law enforcement accountable for their actions, provide a platform for transparency, promote trust between the community and law enforcement, and assist as an important educational community resource.

The Civilian Review Board's primary responsibility would include reviewing and investigating certain complaints against the police department and its employee.

Policing has changed and feedback from existing communities that have Police Civilian Review Boards see foundation shifts of boosts in morale, an increase in hiring of diverse candidates, and an overall perception of law enforcement and public safety, and the responsibility citizens have in maintaining it.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal impact not known at this time.

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9/26/2023

RECOMMENDATION:

To adopt the attached resolutions to establish a DeKalb County Police Civilian Review Board and authorize the chief executive officer to execute all necessary support and documents.

A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD FOR THE DEKALB COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

WHEREAS, DeKalb County is committed to fostering positive relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve; and

WHEREAS, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), through its certification process, includes civilian panels to review police department performance on community engagement, which is widely recognized as a best practice for promoting transparency, accountability, and community trust in law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has established various advisory and oversight boards, such as the Watershed Billing Advisory Board, the Parks and Recreation Board, the Community Councils, and the SPLOST Oversight Committee, to enhance transparency, accountability, and public trust in county operations; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a year-round, full-time Community Advisory Board (CAB) for the DeKalb County Police Department would align with CALEA best practices and provide a consistent platform for ongoing community input, supporting a long-term framework for transparency and accountability that transcends changes in leadership, whether at the level of the Chief of Police or the Chief Executive Officer; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Community Advisory Board is to serve as a collaborative, non-enforcement-oriented sounding board, providing constructive feedback on community concerns, policies, and engagement strategies to the police department, thus enhancing the relationship between the DeKalb County Police Department and the communities it serves; and

WHEREAS, the Community Advisory Board will operate in an advisory capacity only, without investigative or disciplinary powers, and will focus on fostering communication, mutual understanding, and engagement between the police department and the community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners hereby establishes a Community Advisory Board (CAB) for the DeKalb County Police Department, with the following provisions aligned with the appointment processes and structure of other county advisory boards:

- 1. Establishment and Purpose:** The Community Advisory Board is hereby created to serve as a structured forum for continuous community input on police department policies, engagement initiatives, and public safety practices, ensuring long-term accountability and promoting trust in DeKalb County policing.
- 2. Appointments:** The CAB shall comprise members appointed through the same process used for the SPLOST Oversight Committee and other county advisory boards, with appointments made by the Board of Commissioners and the CEO. Appointees shall represent a diverse cross-

section of DeKalb County's communities and bring knowledge, experience, and commitment to fostering constructive community relations.

3. Meetings and Structure: The CAB shall convene regularly with police department leadership to discuss relevant issues, review engagement strategies, and provide non-binding feedback and recommendations. Meetings shall be open to the public to promote transparency and inclusivity.

4. Reporting and Feedback: The CAB shall report periodically to the Employee Relations and Public Safety (ERPS) Committee of the Board of Commissioners, summarizing discussions, community concerns, and any recommendations for consideration. Reports will also be made publicly available to enhance community awareness and involvement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners directs the Law Department to develop the specific structure, membership criteria, and operational guidelines for the Community Advisory Board and to present this implementation plan for final approval by the Board of Commissioners.

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 20__ by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners.