

**“ONE ANNAPOLIS:
Moving Forward As We Continue To
Reimagine A Collaboration With Public Safety And Public Service”**

Backdrop

Since Saturday, June 13, 2020, I have had the opportunity to speak and communicate at length with our Mayor Gavin Buckley; Ward 6 Alderman DaJuan Gay, Chair, City Council’s Housing and Human Welfare Standing Committee; David A. Jarrell, City Manager; and Chief Edward C. Jackson, Annapolis Police Chief. Taking into consideration all of our perspectives and input, generally, we have collectively determined that this position paper serves as a launching point for “ONE ANNAPOLIS: Moving forward as we continue to reimagine a collaboration with public safety and public service”.

Introduction

Our country’s long and storied history of systematic and oppressive racism and injustice is very well documented.

The evidence of that has peaked and has been inextricably borne out over the past 3 weeks throughout the world.

The bottom line: Our obligation, as legislators and elected officials, as well as City leadership, is to address these societal ills in a manner that is just and fair to everyone in our city of Annapolis.

As we continue along our Mayor’s trajectory of “ONE ANNAPOLIS”, we are “moving forward as we continue to reimagine a collaboration with public safety and public service”.

Annapolis Police Department, General

Our Annapolis City Police Department (APD) was established 150 years ago—in 1867. Gratefully, much has changed over these past 153 years.

Most recently, in 2019, when our City made the decision to hire a new Police Chief, we first gathered wide-ranging input from our residents, evidenced by 4 very public and very engaged City-wide forums. This information and input was vital—much of it centering around the need for appropriate “community policing”. In other words, as it has been described, in a nutshell, policing that works with the community that it is mandated “to protect and serve”. From this very intensive process, Retired Baltimore City Police Department Colonel and Coppin State University Sociology Professor Edward C. Jackson was chosen. Mr. Jackson’s very impressive record and resume clearly braided with what our residents requested—to serve as the leader of a department that is mandated “to protect and serve”. (See a copy of Chief Jackson’s resume attached.) Chief Jackson was sworn in on July 31, 2019. Chief Jackson has made it perfectly clear—by his words and by his deeds—that he is committed to this community service philosophy.

Annapolis Police Department, Community Outreach/Public Service, and Budget

And equally, it should be noted that Chief Jackson stepped into a position that was well entrenched in braiding “public safety” with “public service”, likewise, recognizing that no police department is without its flaws and imperfections.

Here are a few examples—

For the past 7 years, our Annapolis Police Department has provided gratis, i.e., free, summer camp experiences and opportunities to thousands of our City's children who would not have otherwise been afforded such experiences and opportunities—activities from fishing to boating to recreation to arts and crafts to day trips and everything else in between.

For over 3 years, our Department has been providing free weekly tutoring services to our children in our City's community centers.

For over 3 years, our Department has been visiting our City's schools, during the day, in our schoolhouses, and presenting Character Counts educational sessions to our children.

In January 2019, the City Council's Public Safety Standing Committee added to its monthly agenda 2 items: "Spotlight!" and "Did You Know?", which allows our 3 public safety Departments to publicly provide our residents with information as it relates to "kudos" from our residents and others to our staff for "going beyond the call of duty", and highlighting new initiatives being instituted by our Departments that support our residents, respectively.

Also, in January 2019, the Annapolis Police Foundation (APF), a 501c3, was founded, where its mandate is: "Supporting and Funding Initiatives to Build Stronger Relationships Between the Community and the Police Department". So far, the APF has provided over \$10,000.00 in scholarships to students who may not necessarily have the highest GPA (grade point average), but who have solidly displayed leadership and character traits that are definitely scholarship-worthy.

And our Police Department works hand-in-hand with our other City Departments as we continue to serve the public, e.g., our Office of Emergency Management, Fire Department, Recreation and Parks Department, etc., as well as with our County's Health Department—again, braiding "public safety" with "public service". For example, during our City's Business Recovery efforts, the City has utilized the services of our area's CERT (Citizens Emergency Response Team) as Ambassadors as they gently engage our downtown patrons and encourage them to wear face coverings. This "public service" effort has been widely applauded.

Our officers welcome the opportunity to assist with City-wide food giveaways and other community outreach events, especially during this Covid-19 pandemic.

During fiscal year 2020, our police department's budget allocation for community outreach/public service was \$_____.

Annapolis Police Department – An Update

So continuing to build upon this mandate to "protect and serve", Chief Jackson likewise, has quickly instituted other supporting and additional initiatives.

Policy and Legislation

And with this mantra, is a commitment to continue to review policy and legislation that will enhance our mandate "to protect and serve", and to braid "public safety" with "public service" as well as health. Of course, we will be relying heavily upon our Office of Law for guidance, headed up by our City

Attorney Mr. Michael Lyles.

Community Outreach/Public Service

Here are a few examples—

In February 2020, our Chief developed and began presenting an Informational and Lecture Series, now entitled “Conversations with the Chief”, on various issues, such as the Constitution, the use of force policy, a Civilian Review Board, and the Chief’s vision for the Department, among other topics. These topics are ever-expanding, and will include public schools education information in the future.

Civilian Review Board

A Civilian Review Board is being established, but first, once we carefully and fully determine what would be the most successful model for our City.

“Braiding” Public Safety with Public Service

Our County’s Crisis Response Team is a valuable example of how we braid “public safety” and “public service”. The Director and Police Lieutenant have headed-up a nationally recognized and renowned team, for over 10 years, that is second to none.

So approximately 2 years ago, recognizing that domestic violence affects the entire family structure, our City Police Department assigned a Detective and a female Officer specifically to address these incidents and issues—personnel who have the expertise and the credentials to address these issues, not only from a law enforcement/public safety perspective, but from a societal and public service and health perspective.

Reaching out and meeting our officers “where they are”

Much more pronounced than ever, over the past 3 weeks, neighborhoods all over our country are demanding that our law enforcement agencies respond to citizenry demands, especially from our African-American communities. We must not overlook the fact that with any new endeavors, there will be some hesitation, and even fear—fear of the unknown—among those who are charged with carrying out these expanded and novel duties. We recognize that, and suggest that such a one-on-one and candid dialogue be encouraged between our Chief and any officer that has any trepidation. As we follow the mantra that “we meet our neighbors where they are”, likewise, we must “reach out and meet our officers where they are” and respond to them in kind. Their initial discomfort level in carrying out these new duties may actually result in a comfort level where they can find and cultivate new and innovative ways of delivering “public safety and public service” to our residents. Moreover, we are hopeful and confident that these expanded duties will be an outlet for some of our officers who have valuable “hidden talents” just waiting to be tapped and utilized and that will certainly benefit our communities. These new duties can certainly bring a level of ingenuity and transformation to our police department and can make us an “on the map” model for the world to see and follow. Bottom line: How and where does each officer see himself/herself in this new and ever-evolving and changing police dynamic?

And so, Annapolis is here to appropriately respond—based upon our “public safety and public service” initiatives already in place, prior to Mr. George Floyd’s murder, and as we continue to develop new initiatives and programs.

Officers' Education and Training

Also, in order to appropriately respond to these expanding roles, our officers must continue to be properly educated and trained. And again, we must continue to review policy and legislation that will enhance our mandate "to protect and serve", and to braid "public safety" with "public service" as well as health. Of course, we will continue to rely upon our Office of Law for guidance, headed up by our City Attorney Mr. Michael Lyles.

For example, we are looking at reinstating reimbursement for officers who seek to pursue higher education, but only in certain disciplines and majors—ones that reflect our "protect and serve" mandate, e.g., sociology, psychology, social science, health, etc.

Otherwise, accountability cannot be reasonably expected.

Police Cadets

Over the past several years, the Cadets within our police department have become increasingly visible. These young persons, between the ages of 18-20, oftentimes, are officers "in waiting". Because this program is a very valued part of our department, our Chief has indicated his desire to enhance the Job Description for our Cadets; therefore, in this vein, our Chief will be scheduling a meeting with our Human Resources Manager and our Human Resources Administrator/Deputy regarding the same.

And again, with this responsibility, is a commitment to continue to review policy and legislation that will enhance our mandate "to protect and serve", and to braid "public safety" with "public service" and health. And this includes training initiatives as well.

Enhanced relationship building between our officers and our residents

And most importantly, braiding "public safety" with "public service" and health enhances and expands upon the positive relationships that develop between our residents that we serve and the officers that serve our residents. For example, as a result, our residents should feel much more comfortable and confident in communicating with our officers when it comes to the quality of life in their neighborhoods.

NEW: Embedding and braiding our professional clinicians with our officers within APD

As we continue with adequately training these officers, we will be actively initiating and braiding our professional health clinicians within our police department—certainly a new and novel approach to public safety and community policing. Liking it to our nationally renowned Crisis Response Team in our County, these newly embedded clinicians will be working hand-in-hand, as co-responders, with our officers to meet the needs of our residents—specifically, but not exclusively, mental health, substance use disorder, and job training, including the vocational trades, with an emphasis on our 17-30 year old population. This allows our residents to start on the road toward receiving the services that they need right there on the spot. And most importantly, hopefully, these professional clinicians will have some background in law enforcement—they will be the key—in that they will be quite capable of understanding the officers' perspectives, the officers will respect the clinicians' dual knowledge and background, and these clinicians will be able to "teach" our officers new sets of important skills.

Over the past several months, APD Sgt. Nicole Vaden has been embedded within our County Police Department and their Crisis Response Team for the purpose of gaining knowledge regarding their

operations, and to bring back this expertise to our City. We are anxiously awaiting Sgt. Vaden's return back to our City, armed with everything that can be helpful to our City, especially as it relates to public safety and public services.

We are confident that each professional—clinicians and officers—will learn mightily from the other.

Combining these appropriately trained officers with our professional health and education clinicians within our police department will certainly benefit our entire City. Our officers will be confident in their new abilities which will assist them in performing at their highest level.

And again, our residents will feel much more comfortable and confident in communicating with our officers and clinicians when it comes to the quality of life in their neighborhoods.

Alderman Gay and I agreed that this “braiding” would be a pilot program and that it will be reviewed after one year from the time of implementation.

Funding

And with this responsibility comes the demands for the necessary funding from our City as well as our residents' support.

City Mobile Wellness Vehicle and Funding

Over the past 2 years, our City has contemplated varying scenarios and the best and most ideal ways of providing the necessary health and wellness services to the residents in our communities. Several suggestions have been made over time, including initially, forming a 4-person Unit within our Mayor's Office—“Office of Human Services and Violence Prevention”, staffed by a physician, navigation specialist, peer support specialist, and administrative assistant. However, the funding for this Unit proved to be unavailable. Since the summer of 2019, including meetings with our State Health Department leadership, our City's Fire Department, and more recently, with our new County Health Officer and at his professional suggestion, we agreed that a retired EMS vehicle could be retrofitted to serve as a “mobile health/wellness vehicle”—akin to the County's Mobile Wellness Vehicle—but of course, on a much smaller scale. The City is in the process of purchasing a “retired” vehicle from our Eastport Volunteer Fire Company, which will be retrofitted to serve as our City's “mobile wellness vehicle”.

As we are all aware, the County received \$101 million from the federal government for Covid-19 related expenses and initiatives. The City received \$4.25 million of these funds from the County.

What we all continue to hear, over and over again, by the most respected medical and health professionals: That persons who are most susceptible to contracting Covid-19 are persons with either 1) high blood pressure, 2) diabetes, or are 3) obese. And the messaging is not only focused on the adults, but it starts with our children as well. For example, exercise, healthy eating, healthy cooking, etc., are vital. And even sufficient sleep and rest wards off obesity. The 3 main health components to follow are: Eating, Exercise, and Diet. The Pyramid of Health is: Exercise/Physical Activity, Healthy Diet/Nutrition, and Rest/Sleep. Bottom line: Regular exercise and the consumption of a healthy diet together with having enough rest are the main three components of health which can lead you to a host of benefits, including increased energy, happiness, and even a long life.

Therefore, the cost of retrofitting this vehicle, and any associated costs, will be part of these Covid-19 funds.

Publicity

And all of our efforts should be widely publicized regularly to our residents and to the general public, via our various media and social media platforms—including narratives and photographs. “Yes, something good happened today.”

Updates/Monitoring

Our Mayor and City Council, as well as our Public Safety Standing Committee and our Housing and Human Welfare Standing Committee, will be looking forward to monthly reports from each of our 3 public safety teams as we monitor their process and their progress.

Pending Legislation and Amendment, and Funding

Alderman Gay has prepared an amendment for our Monday, June 15, 2020 City Council meeting. The amendment will be amended to reflect this position paper. I have agreed to be a co-sponsor of this amendment. Again, we will continue to rely upon our City’s Office of Law for guidance, which is headed up by City Attorney Michael Lyles.

It is my understanding that Alderman Gay’s legislation is supported by available funding in the amount of \$100,000. This also includes maintaining our partnership with our County’s Crisis Response Team; however, now in the role of a consultant (rather than delivering direct services as they currently do and have in the past) for \$10,000.

Annapolis’ History

With all of this being said: We are constantly reminded to reflect upon our history here in Annapolis. And two iconic figures readily come to mind here in Annapolis: Our Author Alex Haley’s statue at the base of City Dock, with its very powerful and profoundly significant presence; and our U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall’s statue, our Maryland son, as Annapolis serves as our State Capital. With this historical backdrop, this should be our impetus in moving forward with this imperative collaboration.

Conclusion

We continue to be encouraged and energized as we embark upon “ONE ANNAPOLIS: Moving forward as we continue to reimagine a collaboration with public safety and public service”—with perspective, performance, and purpose.

Thank you for your support.

**Prepared and Submitted by—
Rhonda Pindell Charles, Esq., Alderwoman, Ward 3
Chair, Public Safety Standing Committee, Annapolis City Council**

June 14, 2020