

## Tuesday Topics – Summary September 1, 2020

Topeka Police Chief Bill Cochran spoke on Zoom at our September 1, 2020, Tuesday Topics. With 46 people attending the Zoom meeting, this was our largest Zoom meeting. Interest was high in Chief Cochran's presentation, "What Defunding Police Means in Topeka."

According to Chief Cochran there has been zero talk in Topeka about defunding police. The governing body and Topeka residents are supportive of the police.

Police respond in many roles. There has been discussion about reallocation of funds that need to be available for to pay for social workers. Police receive calls from families regarding behavior issues that need a social worker's support. Situations may involve homelessness or domestic violence. Police fulfill that role as they are on duty 24/7. The TPD has a Crisis Intervention Team and has a partnership with Valeo to provide social work support.

Other partnerships include the city and county as well as Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services (KDADS). These partnerships work to provide a crisis interventionist who works directly with the police and can deal with possibly unstable situations. \$100,000 has been carved out of the TPD budget to pay 100% of the salary of a crisis responder.

No-knock warrants haven't been used in Topeka for a long time. Such warrants are dangerous to both police and people in the home. Judges are reluctant to order no-knock warrants. Chief Cochran is not opposed to an ordinance that would codify no-knock warrants and limit them to situations involving children and not allow them at night. It's sound business to keep everyone safe.

Chokeholds should only be used for police self-defense. They are not used in Topeka, so it's not a issue; however, chokehold use should be codified. There is a difference between policy and law. It's easy to change policy, but to change law requires many steps to be taken. Policies need to be monitored and kept up to date.

Chief Cochran took the remainder of his time to answer questions.

*What is community policing?* The whole approach is to establish trust by being involved in the community and having police serve on different boards.

*Is there collaboration?* The TPD collaborates with the Center for Peace and Justice on how to reduce gun violence and how to improve the life of people involved with family violence and works daily with the Topeka Rescue Mission, Valeo, and Family Service and Guidance.

*What about defending an officer charged with use of excessive force?* It depends on whether it is misconduct or a criminal charge. Misconduct may result in counseling, referral to the bureau officer under whom the officer serves, or the independent police auditor may get involved and then talk with the city manager. In the case of a criminal charge the officer is placed on administrative leave, an administrative investigation is conducted plus a criminal investigation from an outside agency (KBI).

*What about racial bias-based training?* This is required by the state of Kansas and involves culture-competency education, community collaboration, and knowing the people you are working for. The TPD does a lot of training (40 hours of professional development). Racial profiling is included in the academy and how personal biases affect your judgment. When asked who does the training, Chief Cochran said the trainer is a member of the department who is well-versed in teaching. They also have outside instructors. hear from the community who have had police interactions and outside

sources. He added that it's in the heart, no matter the training. The human element comes into play. What is working well with community collaboration? Valeo is working well but needs to be more robust. More money is needed to have someone or more than one person available for a crisis. It takes a community. The Center for Safety and Empowerment needs support to address human trafficking. As a society we set people up for failure. We need support systems – a safety net for people coming out of prison. They need jobs – people willing to hire them. We need to look at how to reintegrate them back into society. It takes a community.

What other procedures does the TPD use? We look at state level to decide what police can do. Ordinances are a city issue. State law involves the district attorney, the legislature and input from the municipalities.

Is the sheriff in agreement with no-knock warrants and choke holds? We talk. Some things we agree on, others not. We have different responsibilities.

What about BLM and PLM? These are separate conversations and the agendas don't align. It's possible for people to help and give and take. Police reform happens all the time. The outcry comes louder and wants quick change when something like Minneapolis happens. I don't like saying we have two sides. We need to come together. Topeka is different than Portland or New York. The Midwest has a different temperament.

What is the status of the Citizens Review Board? The conversation is ongoing. Let your city council hear your feelings.