

**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL  
DIVERSITY COALITION COMMITTEE  
January 26, 2022  
6:00 P.M.**

A Regular Meeting of the Diversity Coalition Committee (DCC) was held via video/teleconference on January 26, 2022, pursuant to the provisions of Government Code Section 54953 (as amended by AB 361).

**CALL TO ORDER**

Facilitator Abdelnour called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Samona Caldwell  
Pam Dutch Hughes  
Kia Gaines  
Harshan Jeyakumar  
Diana Phillips  
Lupe Reyes  
Todd Sahara  
Jon-Stephen Scott  
Kenyetta Suggars  
Christopher Wilson  
Lisa Wong

Facilitator: Fred Abdelnour

City Staff: Carl Charles, Interim Chief of Police

There was 0 member of the public in attendance.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

There was no public business from the floor.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

a. Presentation from the Interim Police Chief

Carl Charles, Interim Chief of Police shared his background and that he worked for the Downey Police Department for 29 years, of which he served as Chief of Police for six years. He retired in 2018.

The Facilitator provided Chief Charles with a list of questions from the DCC Members.

Chief Charles shared that it would not benefit the discussion to compare Downey Police Department (DPD) to Signal Hill Police Department because each city is unique particularly the vastly different demographic and population.

Chief Charles shared details on how reasonable force was trained within the DPD. The leadership team within DPD stressed the importance of treating everyone with dignity and respect. One of the main training programs was simulation training. The DPD purchased a simulator, which is a large trailer with a movie screen and projector inside. The simulator contained thousands of scenarios. Each officer was required to go through the simulator at least four times per year. This program helped the officers be prepared and use the lowest force necessary. All uses of force were documented and reviewed for appropriateness. Officers involved in above average events involving use of force over a year, would be monitored and retrained based on need.

Chief Charles provided details relating to mental health evaluation prior to employment, during an officer's career or after significant events at DPD. During the hiring process, DPD applicants were evaluated by a psychologist concerning mental health and suitability for employment as a peace officer. The DPD did not have regularly scheduled mental evaluation set on a calendar. After exposure to a traumatic event, officers were required to debrief as a group with a mental health professional and were offered the opportunity to speak individually with that same professional as well. In the case of an officer involved shooting, they are required to be assessed by a mental health professional before returning to active duty. In the area of mentally challenged community members, first and foremost, the DPD stressed de-escalation. The DPD also made extensive use of mental health professionals riding along with patrol officers. In situations that those professionals were not in harms way, they were allowed to take the lead in interacting with the mentally challenged community member. DPD also instituted a special needs sticker program. The stickers were available at the DPD and were asked to be placed on the front window of a home or back window of a car. These stickers would alert the officer that an occupant may have special needs and instructions may not be easily understood.

A DCC Member asked if there was any discussion or thoughts about changing the policy to conduct regularly scheduled mental evaluation of officers to avoid a significant event. Evaluations after events are too late.

Chief Charles shared that he doesn't think that would be a negative. Maybe put evaluation markers on a career at the five-year mark or the 10-year mark for the purposes of reassessing. This topic has not been discussed within the circles of chiefs of police or anywhere else. Chief Charles shared that he isn't sure why it isn't done, but mental health evaluations are confidential. During the hiring process, the DPD can require that as a condition of employment.

A DCC Member asked for more information about the program at DPD that allowed mental health professionals to ride along with patrol officers.

Chief Charles shared that the program was a Los Angeles County Chief's initiative, which consists of 52 Chiefs. The Los Angeles County Chief received a grant from the State, who supplied funds to allow psychologists to ride with officers. Each territory was given an amount based on size. The DPD partnered with Los Angeles County Mental Health to develop a schedule. In DPD there was a mental health professional riding with an officer almost every day. Initially officers were asked to volunteer to participate, but the program was so popular that they didn't need volunteers. Officers wanted the mental health professional to ride along. When a call came in relating to mentally challenged individual, they would have that car respond to that call.

Chief Charles shared details relating to additional training for officers. Officers are required to attend a minimum of 24 hours of training every two years based on POST requirements. Officers are allowed to pick their interests, to an extent, based on their assignments. Trainings may consist of drug and alcohol recognition, accident investigation, asset forfeiture, community-based policing and leadership. From an agency standpoint, the DPD provided training that everyone must participate. DPD training includes de-escalation techniques, defensive driving, active shooter, first aid/CPR, workplace harassment, tools for tolerance, mandatory training in cultural diversity and mental health awareness training.

A DCC Member asked how effective these trainings were and what were the outcomes.

Chief Charles shared that it would be hard to equate each training to a specific outcome. As it relates to de-escalation training once the training was conducted regularly, the DPD saw a drop in uses of force. Chief Charles shared that the most important thing was to never lower standards on the front end, which is the hiring process. Once that standard is lowered, problems begin to occur. Keep standards high during the hiring process. For example, if applicants saw combat or were deployed, they were asked to wait two years before they are hired as officers. This allowed the applicants time to acclimate. During that waiting time, they would be given civilian position.

Chief Charles shared that DPD's efforts to build community partnerships included the creation of a full-time civilian position called the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator. This person was assigned the responsibility to develop neighborhood watch groups. At the time of the Chief's retirement in 2018, Downey had over 150 neighborhood watch groups. The coordinator would also assist with group meetings and provide resources relating to the topic of interest. The coordinator facilitated the DPD's participation in national night out, tip a cop, and several other community-based programs. Another aspect of community outreach was the recruiting efforts particularly toward racial diversity. The goal was to be as diverse

as possible to mirror the makeup of the community. Unfortunately, certain groups are not interested in law enforcement as a profession, particularly African Americans and Asian Americans. The DPD made a point to participate in career fairs in minority communities, conducted outreach to both high schools and college, and advertised on social media.

A DCC Member asked if the DPD keeps data or participation information about community involvement in the events hosted by the DPD. Is there a goal for participation from community members for each event?

Chief Charles shared that there is a debrief following every event to outline participation and areas where it could have been done better. There is an estimated attendance record for each event.

Chief Charles shared the DPD complaint process. Complaints are filed in person, in writing, online, or by phone and may be anonymous. Depending on the type of complaint, the complaint would be assigned to the officer's supervisor if it was minor or to a professional standards internal affairs unit if it was severe. The complaint would be investigated and sent to a lieutenant for review and to develop a finding. There are four types of findings: Sustained, which means it was true; not sustained, which means it couldn't be proven one way or another; exonerated, which means it was true but within policy; and unfounded. Once a determination was made, the entire investigation would be sent to the division commander, usually a captain. The captain would provide a recommendation and send all details to the Chief of POLICE.

A DCC Member asked how did the DPD balance the privacy of the officer and letting the public know about the outcome.

Chief Charles shared that it's a personnel issue and must be kept confidential. All that can be told to the complainant is that the matter was sustained, not sustained, exonerated or unfounded. It's important to be as transparent as possible with the community so there is a level of trust.

A DCC Member asked about complaints, it seems very much internal. Are there any programs that allow a third party to review complaints in a more objective way?

Chief Charles stated that in some allegations like rudeness or minor use of force, they are more appropriately handled by the agency. When a third party is involved, the agency may not have knowledge of the third party's quality of work. Officer involved shootings and other serious complaints are handled by the Sheriff's Department and District Attorney's office.

Chief Charles left the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

b. Regular Updates from Police Department to City Council

A DCC Member shared that he couldn't obtain additional information on this topic but would like to keep this on the agenda for the next meeting.

A DCC Member wanted to ask Chief Charles what programs he plans to integrate into the Signal Hill Police Department. Does the mental health grant program still exist? There needs to be some additional follow-up.

c. Community Survey Update

The Facilitator shared that the Deputy City Manager is scheduled to participate in the next DCC meeting and will provide additional information.

The Facilitator shared that the information received from the survey company regarding sources of resident information includes multiple sources of data, but no specific sources.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

a. Education

A DCC Member shared that most of the trainings shared by Chief Charles were POST required and others were voluntary. Additional trainings focused on racial inequities would be significant.

The Facilitator referred the DCC back to the Race and Equity Framework to provide the goals and targets for the DCC. The DCC needs to remain focused on what the Framework has outlined as our tasks. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has impacted some of these things.

A DCC Member said that the community survey will provide us with important information that will help guide the DCC to provide the necessary recommendations.

b. Facilitation

A DCC Member asked if the DCC submits a decision package for additional officer trainings or mental health professionals' involvement, will the Chief be part of the review process?

c. Continuous Improvement

A DCC Member asked about additional involvement opportunities for DCC and Signal Hill Police Department at community events.

The Facilitator shared that the Deputy City Manager will share opportunities in the next DCC meeting.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

a. Minutes of the Following Meeting

Regular Meeting of January 12, 2022

Recommendation: Approve.

It was moved by DCC Member Wilson and seconded by DCC Member Caldwell to approve the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried 11/0.

### **COMMITTEE NEW BUSINESS**

A DCC Member asked about developing recommendations and creating a preliminary draft of recommendations for the City Council. There should be a working group created to focus on developing a worksheet of recommendation in preparation for DCC meetings.

The Facilitator will create a working group focused on developing the recommendations.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by DCC Member Dutch Hughes and seconded by DCC Member Wilson to adjourn the meeting.

Facilitator adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m. to the next regular meeting of the DCC to be held on Wednesday, February 9, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., via video/teleconference. Instructions to participate in the meeting will be provided on the meeting agenda.

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Facilitator