

**KENT COUNTY POLICE  
ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD**

**2023 Annual Report**

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**Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**  
**Letter from the Chair**

## Kent County Police Accountability Board

Barry Byers  
Chairperson

Lamonte Cooke  
Member

Bishop Leon Frison  
Member



Nancy Grahamer  
Member

Joan Horsey  
Member

Johnnie A. Jones, III, Esq.  
Member

December 31, 2023

Ron Fithian, President  
County Commissioners for Kent County  
400 High Street Chestertown, Maryland 21620

Dear President Fithian,

In accordance with Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 and Resolution 2022-11 of the Kent County Public Laws, I hereby submit the 2023 Annual Report of the Kent County Police Accountability Board (PAB). I would be remiss if I did not recognize the members of the Kent County Police Accountability Board including the members of the Administrative Charging Committee for their dedication, professionalism, and service to our community as volunteers. In accordance with the law, we have been discharging our duties since July 1, 2022. Since our conception, time, the PAB has held public meetings, completed requisite trainings, Committee meetings, and in 2023 held two quarterly meetings with each of the County's three law enforcement agencies: Kent County Sheriff's Office, Chestertown Police Department and Rock Hall Police Department to comply with the law, fulfill our PAB duties and responsibilities as laid out by law and direction set forth in Kent County Resolution pertaining to police accountability. We have been able to partner with and collaborate with Kent County law enforcement departments to increase accountability, transparency, and hopefully engage the residents of Kent County as our partners in police accountability pursuant to need.

I would also like to thank Director Pete Landon from the Kent County Office of Emergency Services, and our Police Accountability Board Administrative Specialist Valerie Jones for their partnership and work behind the scenes to ensure the Kent County PAB fulfills its mission. Finally, I need to thank the Kent County government staff members and former consultant who worked on getting the PAB up and running since its inception, particularly Kent County Administrator Shelley Heller who helped to guide the Board at the very beginning.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to serve Kent County, and I will ensure that the Kent County PAB will continue to uphold its mission under the law, collaborate with Kent County law enforcement agencies, and our community members on police accountability and transparency in 2024.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "B. Byers".

Barry Byers, Chair

**104 VICKERS DRIVE, UNIT D • CHESTERTOWN, MD 21620**  
Valerie Jones, Administrative Specialist  
Telephone: (410) 778-7496  
Email: [accountability@kentgov.org](mailto:accountability@kentgov.org)

## **Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**

### **History and Purpose**

The Police Accountability Board (PAB) is made up of seven residents from Kent County, all appointed by the County Commissioners. To the extent practicable, they shall represent the seven [7] voting districts of the county.

To qualify, members must be a resident for at least one [1] year, be registered to vote in the county, not be active law enforcement officers, and have no prior felony convictions.

The Police Accountability Board shall:

- Hold quarterly meetings (or more frequently if deemed necessary) with heads of law enforcement agencies in the County and otherwise work with law enforcement agencies and the County government to improve matters of policing;
- Adopt rules of procedure, which may be amended from time to time, as a majority of the PAB may deem necessary and appropriate.
- Receive complaints of police misconduct filed by members of the public against a police officer who is employed within the county and forward that complaint to that officer's agency within 3 days of receipt.
- Review the outcomes of disciplinary matters considered by the Administrative Charging Committee.
- Submit an annual report (by Dec. 31st) to the County Commissioners that identifies any trends in the disciplinary process of police officers in Kent County, and makes recommendations on changes to policy that would improve police accountability.

Members are chosen and appointed by the Kent County Commissioners for four [4] year terms and may serve a second term – consecutive or not.

**Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**  
**Kent County Legal Requirements**

**RESOLUTION 2022-11**

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND**

**COMPLIANCE WITH SUNDRY REQUIREMENTS OF THE MARYLAND POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY ACTS OF 2021 AS WELL AS SUBSEQUENT LEGISLATION**

**A RESOLUTION TO INTRODUCE PROVISIONS MANDATED BY THE STATE FOR THE ALTERATION OF CERTAIN LAW ENFORCEMENT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND THE CREATION OF REQUISITE BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

FOR THE PURPOSE OF acknowledgment and adherence to state requirements regarding aspects of Chapters 59, 60, 62, and 132 Laws of Maryland 2021, collectively known as the “Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021”, and associated bills that followed. This collection of legislation, in which the General Assembly repealed the Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights and instituted a new disciplinary process for all Law Enforcement Agencies within the state, affects numerous facets of policing including the obligation that each Maryland county create a new countywide police accountability board and an administrative charging committee, and that each Law Enforcement Agency create a new trial board process – features which become effective July 1, 2022.

**RECITALS**

**WHEREAS**, the Maryland General Assembly has instituted the requirement that all counties create a new Police Accountability Board (PAB) in order to:

1. Receive Complaints of Police Misconduct filed by members of the public.
  1. Ensure that the following is included in the Complaint:
    1. The name of the Police Officer accused of misconduct.
    2. Description of the facts on which the Complaint is based
  - iii. Contact information of the complainant or a person filing on behalf of the complainant.
1. Forward the Complaint to the appropriate Law Enforcement Agency within 3 days after receipt.

**Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**  
**Kent County Legal Requirements (Continued)**

2. Appoint two (2) Civilian members to the Administrative Charging Committee and one (1) Civilian to any pertinent Trial Boards.
3. Quarterly:
  1. Hold meetings with the heads of Law Enforcement Agencies and the County Government to improve matters of policing.
  2. Review outcomes of disciplinary matters considered by the Administrative Charging Committee.
4. Annually:
  1. Submit a report to the county no later than December 31<sup>st</sup> that,
    1. Identifies any trends in the disciplinary process of police officers in the county.
    2. Makes recommendations on changes to policy that would improve police accountability in the county.

**WHEREAS**, the Act specifies that the creation of the Police Accountability Board falls to the local governing body; therefore, the County Commissioners of Kent County (the “County”) shall:

- Establish the membership for a Police Accountability Board with the following stipulations:
  - To the extent practicable, the membership shall reflect the racial, gender, and cultural diversity of the county.
  - Active Police Officers are disallowed.
- Establish the budget and staff for a Police Accountability Board and appoint a Chair who has relevant experience to the position.
- Establish the procedures for record keeping.

**WHEREAS**, the Act instructs that each county shall have one Administrative Charging Committee (ACC), to serve all local Law Enforcement Agencies within its confines (including municipalities), in order to:

1. Review the findings of a Law Enforcement Agency’s completed investigation of a complaint made by a member of the public against a police officer, including relevant body camera footage - if applicable, and circumscribed to matters covered in the complaint. [Note that the Act requires ALL Law Enforcement Agencies to deploy body-worn cameras by July 1, 2025].
  1. In executing these duties, the Administrative Charging Committee may request information or action from the investigating agency including requiring additional investigation and the issuance of subpoenas.
  2. The ACC may record, in writing, any failure of supervision that caused or contributed to a police officer’s misconduct.
2. Decide if that police officer should be administratively charged.

**Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**  
**Kent County Legal Requirements (Continued)**

1. If Charged, recommend discipline in accordance with the Law Enforcement Agency's disciplinary matrix [as developed by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission].
2. If NOT Charged, the ACC may make a determination as to whether:
  1. The allegations are Unfounded, OR
  2. The officer is Exonerated.
3. Authorize a police officer called to appear before the Administrative Charging Committee to be accompanied by a representative.
4. Issue a written opinion that describes in detail its findings, determinations, and recommendations and forward that written opinion to the Chief of the Law Enforcement Agency, the Police Officer, and the Complainant.
5. Members of the ACC shall meet once per month OR as needed.
6. Members Shall maintain Confidentiality relating to matters being considered until FINAL Disposition of the matter.

**WHEREAS**, the Act stipulates that the Administrative Charging Committee comprise the following five (5) member composition:

- The Chair of the Police Accountability Board (or another member of the PAB designated by the Chair).
- Two (2) civilian members selected by the PAB.
- Two (2) civilian members selected by the Chief Executive Officer of the county [The County Commissioners of Kent County].

**WHEREAS**, the Act decrees that serving as a member of the Administrative Charging Committee requires training on matters relating to police procedures from the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) as a prerequisite to appointment; consequently, no entrant may be seated until this training is completed to the satisfaction of the MPTSC.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF KENT COUNTY, THAT:** there shall be a Kent County Police Accountability Board and a Kent County Administrative Charging Committee to serve all Kent County, Chestertown, and Rock Hall Law Enforcement Agencies, adhering to the above Recitals and with the following provisos:

1. The membership of the Kent County Police Accountability Board shall be as follows:
  1. The PAB shall consist of seven (7) members and shall be appointed by the County Commissioners of Kent County
    1. Each member shall have been a resident of Kent County for a minimum of one (1) uninterrupted year immediately prior to application for membership.

**Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**  
**Kent County Legal Requirements (Continued)**

2. A good faith effort is to be made to attain members residing in each of the county's seven (7) election districts.
- iii. At least one member should reside within the jurisdiction of each municipality in the county with its own police department [i.e., Chestertown and Rock Hall].
1. Members serve a four (4) year term.
    1. Upon the expiration of a term, members continue to serve until a successor is appointed.
    2. Members may be reappointed for one (1) additional term (successive or not).
  - iii. Members may resign at any time by providing written notice to the County.
1. The County Commissioners of Kent County retain the authority to remove any member by majority vote, by its own initiative or the recommendation resulting from the majority vote of the PAB itself.
1. To the extent practicable, the Chairperson of the Kent County Police Accountability Board shall:
    1. Be a former sworn law enforcement officer who retired in good standing with at least a decade of service.
    2. Have experience serving in a supervisory position within law enforcement and/or have extensive knowledge of policing, police practices, disciplinary issues, and the criminal justice system.
  - iii. Have been a resident of Kent County for two (2) years immediately prior to appointment to the PAB.
1. Qualifications for all PAB members:
    1. Members Shall have a criminal background check prior to appointment; thenceforth, they shall be bound by the Kent County Code of Ethics [Chapter 29, Code of Public Laws].
      1. Prior felony convictions result in automatic ineligibility.
      2. Members convicted of a felony while serving a term must report the conviction to the County Commissioners of Kent County and resign.
      3. Convictions of the following misdemeanors result in automatic ineligibility:
        1. Perjury
        2. Violent Crime
        3. Any other misdemeanor carrying a maximum sentence in excess of one (1) year.
    4. Members Shall be registered voters of Kent County.

**Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**  
**Kent County Legal Requirements (Continued)**

2. Members Shall maintain Confidentiality relating to matters being considered until FINAL Disposition of the matter.
2. The County recognizes that the ACC cannot perform its mandate without the MPTSC instituting and providing both the requisite training and the new disciplinary matrix.
  1. Hence, the first order of business to be conducted upon the inaugural assembly of the new Kent County Police Accountability Board Shall be the selection of three (3) members for the Kent County Administrative Charging Committee.
    1. The Chair of the PAB is to designate themselves or another member of the PAB to the Charging Committee.
    2. The full PAB will select two (2) other members for the ACC.
  2. The County Commissioners of Kent County shall subsequently appoint the remaining two (2) members of the ACC forthwith.
  3. Training for the five (5) ACC members will then be provided when the MPTSC makes it available.
- III. Proper public notice and necessary transparency of all meetings of the Police Accountability Board as well as the Administrative Charging Committee shall comply with the Maryland Open Meetings Act.
  1. All Meetings of the PAB and ACC are to be open meetings.
  2. If a meeting is to be closed, it must be in accordance with the Maryland Open Meetings

ADOPTED: June 28, 2022

**Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**  
**Police Accountability Board Membership**

Police Accountability Board

(Term 4 years)

Barry Byers, Chair, 12/31/2026	Joan Horsey, 12/31/2026
Johnnie Jones, 12/31/2026	Leon Frison, 04/18/2027
Kay Pritzlaff, 03/14/2027	LaMonte Cooke, 04/18/2027
Nancy Grahmer, 12/31/2026	

Date indicates expiration of term.

**Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**  
**PAB Meetings Procedural Rules**

**KENT COUNTY POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD**

**RULES OF PROCEDURE**

**SECTION 1. Board Meetings.**

1.01. Commencement and Voting

- (a) The Commission shall meet at the call of the Chairman or a majority of its members.
- (b) A quorum consists of at least a majority of its authorized members.
- (c) An affirmative vote of at least a majority of its authorized members shall be necessary for any action of the Commission.

1.02. Except as otherwise provided in these Rules, the Commission shall meet in open session and maintain minutes of its meetings.

1.03. The Commission shall meet in closed session whenever it is considering a Complaint until a final determination is made regarding disposition of the Complaint.

**SECTION 2. Confidentiality.**

2.01. General Rules.

- (a) Except as set forth in paragraph 2.02, following the filing of Complaint the proceedings, meetings and activities of the Commission in connection with the Complaint shall be conducted in a strict confidence.
- (b) Except as set forth in paragraph 2.02, the Commission, its agents or employees, the Complainant, and the Respondent may not disclose any information relating to the Complaint, including the identity of the Complainant and the Respondent.

2.02. Exceptions.

- (a) Confidentiality does not apply to referral or release of information to a prosecuting authority.

# Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report PAB Meeting Minutes

February 22, 2023

February 22, 2023

A meeting of the Kent County Police Accountability Board was called to order at 3:30 p.m. with the following present: Barry Byers, Chairperson, and members: Johnnie Jones, Nancy Grahamer, Joan Torsey, Thomas Davis, Shelly Schofield.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, and Charles Mills, Accountability Officer, were also present.

## STAFF REPORTS

Charles Mills discussed confidentiality statements and collected them from members present at the meeting.

## INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Barry Byers started with introducing himself and all members present did the same.

## RULES AND PROCEDURES

Chair Barry Byers discussed Chairing the Board, rules, and procedures for meetings.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Meeting scheduling was discussed.

Board member nametags were discussed.

## CLOSED SESSION

The meeting went into closed session to discuss personnel issues.

## MOTIONS

Immediately following the closed session, there was a motion made, seconded, and unanimously passed by all members present to appoint Shelly Schofield to the Administrative Charging Committee moving her from the Police Accountability Board.

There was another motion made, seconded, and unanimously passed by all members present to appoint Thomas Davis to the Administrative Charging Committee moving him from the Police Accountability Board.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

Police Accountability Board  
Open Meeting Minutes February 22, 2023  
Page 2 of 2

## GOOD OF THE ORDER DISCUSSION

Chair Barry Byers discussed "ride-alongs" for Police Accountability members.

Chair Barry Byers discussed local police directives for filing complaints with local law enforcement departments. There was concern for outdated procedures that needed to be consistent with the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021. Accountability Officer Mills stated that he would ensure copies of local law enforcement department complaint policies and procedures would be provided to Board members.

There was further discussion of virtual meetings in the future.

Chair Byers and Accountability Officer Mills discussed the next planned meeting of the Kent County Police Accountability Board to be held on March 13, 2023, at 1 p.m. in the County Commissioners of Kent County hearing room.

## MOTION TO ADJOURN

There was a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed by all members present to adjourn the February 22, 2023, Kent County Police Accountability Board open meeting at 4:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Walter F. "Pete" Landon  
Director

Approved:



Barry Byers, Chairperson  
Kent County Police Accountability Board

# Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report PAB Meeting Minutes

## August 2, 2023

August 2, 2023

A meeting of the Kent County Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee was called to order at 3:00p.m. with the following present: Barry Byers, Chair, and members: Lamonte Cooke, Pastor Leon Frison, Nancy Grahmer, Joan Horsey, Johnnie Jones, Kay Pinder Pritzlaff, Thomas Davis, Gary Di Vito, Severn Miller, and Shelly Schofield.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, Sheriff Dennis Hickman, Chief Ron Dixon, Chief Bill Dempsey, and Pete Landon, Director of OES were also present.

### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Barry Byers reminded members of confidentiality regarding Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee issues. Chair Barry Byers started with introducing himself, all members present, and guests did the same.

### RULES AND PROCEDURES

Chair Barry Byers discussed Chairing the Board, rules, and procedures for meetings.

### STAFF REPORT

Pete Landon discussed the Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee being moved under OES for logistics and liaison with County Commissioners of Kent County.

The Accountability Officer Consultant and Administrative Support positions were discussed and are in various posting, recruiting, interviewing and hiring processes by Kent County HR.

Pete Landon discussed the 2024 Police Accountability grant that was applied for and funding received by the County Commissioners of Kent County.

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

Meeting scheduling was discussed.

### OLD BUSINESS

Police Complaint processes were discussed and there was a motion made, seconded and passed to have all Kent County law enforcement departments (Kent County Sheriff, Chestertown Police department, Rock Hall police department) consolidate complaint forms, procedures and digital accessibility.

Police "ride-alongs" were discussed with Chair Barry Byers suggesting that all Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee members who were not former officers consider riding along with the law enforcement departments in Kent County.

Business Cards and laptop computers for members and member table name cards were discussed.

Police Accountability Board

Police Accountability Board  
Open Meeting Minutes August 2, 2023  
Page 2 of 2

### NEW BUSINESS

Pete Landon discussed his conversation with the MPTSC regarding Administrative Charging Committee member training informing members that Kent County training status was acceptable at this time and that there is no scheduled training scheduled in the future. The MPTSC was made aware that Kent County preferred regional training instead of travel to MPTSC in Sykesville.

Trial Boards were discussed including the composition, and funding of the same. All members were requested to forward possible interested Judge's to recommend to the County Commissioners of Kent County.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

### GOOD OF THE ORDER DISCUSSION

Chair Byers discussed the next planned combined meeting of the Kent County Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee to be held on September 6, 2023, at 3 p.m. in the County Commissioners of Kent County hearing room.

### MOTION TO ADJOURN

There was a motion made, seconded, and unanimously passed by all members present to adjourn the August 2, 2023, Kent County Police Accountability Board meeting at 4:47p.m.

Respectfully submitted.

  
Walter F. "Pete" Landon  
Director

Approved:

  
Barry Byers, Chairperson  
Kent County Police Accountability Board

# Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report PAB Meeting Minutes

September 6, 2023

September 6, 2023

A meeting of the Kent County Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee was called to order at 3:00p.m. with the following present: Barry Byers, Chair, and members: Lamonte Cooke, Pastor Leon Frison, Nancy Grahmer, Joan Horsey, Johnnie Jones, Kay Pinder Pritzlaff, Gary Di Vito, Severn Miller, and Shelly Schofield.

Pete Landon, Director of OES was also present.

## CALL TO ORDER

Chair Barry Byers reminded members of confidentiality regarding Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee issues.

## RULES AND PROCEDURES

Chair Barry Byers discussed Chairing the Board, rules, and procedures for meetings.

## STAFF REPORT

Pete Landon discussed the appointment of Valerie Jones, Administrative Specialist that will be very shortly. Pete advised that Valerie will be staffing future meetings.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Meeting scheduling was discussed.

## OLD BUSINESS

Police Complaint processes were discussed consolidation of all Kent County law enforcement departments complaint forms, procedures, and digital accessibility. A consolidated form will be presented to the PAB for adoption at the October meeting.

Police "ride-alongs" were discussed with Chair Barry Byers requesting that all Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee members who participate in ride-alongs report the same. The time duration for each scheduled ride alongs be limited to 2 hours.

Board members received table nameplates. Business cards will not be issued to members.

Trial Boards were discussed including the composition, and funding of the same. All members were requested to forward possible interested Judge's to recommend to the County Commissioners of Kent County via Pete Landon. Members were also requested to consider civilian appointments to the Trial Boards. Trial Board members must receive training to sit on a trial board.

Police Accountability Board  
Open Meeting Minutes September 6, 2023  
Page 2 of 2

## NEW BUSINESS

Chair Barry Byers discussed the meeting schedule for the PAB. Barry Byers recommended both the PAB and ACC meet quarterly.

Motion made and seconded for the PAB and ACC to meet every three months (quarterly). The motion was passed unanimously.

The next meeting will be in December but Pete Landon stated that he will hold the room available.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

## GOOD OF THE ORDER DISCUSSION

Chair Byers discussed the next planned combined meeting of the Kent County Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee to be held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 3 p.m. in the County Commissioners of Kent County hearing room.

## MOTION TO ADJOURN

There was a motion made, seconded, and unanimously passed by all members present to adjourn the September 6, 2023, Kent County Police Accountability Board meeting at 3:27p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Walter B. "Pete" Landon  
Director

Approved:  
  
Barry Byers, Chairperson  
Kent County Police Accountability Board

# Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report

## PAB Meeting Minutes

November 1, 2023

November 1, 2023

A meeting of the Kent County Police Accountability Board was called to order at 3:00p.m. with the following present: Barry Byers Chair, and members: Lamonte Cooke, Pastor Leon Frison, Nancy Grahmer, Joan Horsey, Johnnie Jones, Kay Pinder Pritzlaff.

Pete Landon, Director of OES and Valerie Jones, Administrative Assistant were also present.

### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Barry Byers called the meeting to order. Pete Landon introduced Valerie Jones. The September 6, minutes were read. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously passed to approve the minutes.

### RULES AND PROCEDURES

### STAFF REPORT

The Accountability Officer Consultant position was discussed, and is in various posting, recruiting, interviewing, and hiring processes by Kent County HR.

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

Meeting scheduling was discussed PAB quarterly meetings have been confirmed.

### OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed.

### NEW BUSINESS

1. Police "ride-alongs" were discussed with Chair Barry Byers confirming interest of all PAB members. Barry has reached out to Dennis Hickman regarding ride-alongs and requested each session be an hour in duration. Barry reiterated the process of each member contacting the KCSO directly and scheduling their ride-along.
2. The final draft of the Kent County Consolidated Complaint against Police Personnel Report was discussed. Johnnie Jones expressed concern about the need for complaints to be filed anonymously. Pete Landon voiced there may be an issue with proper investigation of complaint without proper identity of all persons involved. Barry moved forward with the motion to approve the form. The was seconded, and unanimously passed by all members present.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

### GOOD OF THE ORDER DISCUSSION

Barry suggested a December 6, 2023, meeting of both the ACC and PAB. Valerie to send meeting requests and reminders.

Open Meeting Minutes November 1, 2023  
Page 2 of 2

### MOTION TO ADJOURN

There was a motion made, seconded, and unanimously passed by all members present to adjourn the November 1, 2023, Kent County Police Accountability Board meeting at 3:32pm.

Respectfully submitted.

  
Valerie H. Jones  
Administrative Assistant

Approved:

  
Barry Byers, Chairperson  
Kent County Police Accountability Board

# Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report

## PAB Meeting Minutes

December 6, 2023

December 6, 2023

A meeting of the Kent County Police Accountability Board was called to order at 3:00p.m. with the following present; Barry Byers, Chair, Valerie H. Jones (PAB Admin), Thomas Davis, Bill Dempsey (Chief of Police Rock Hall), Gary Di Vito, Pastor Leon Frison, Kay Pritzlaff Ronald Dixon (Chief of Police Chestertown), Nancy Grahmer, Joan Horsey, Severn E. S. Miller Dennis Hickman, (Sheriff Kent County), Johnnie A. Jones III, Esq., Valerie Jones (Administrative Assistant) and Pete Landon (Director Kent County OES).

### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Barry Byers called the meeting to order. The November 1, minutes were read. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously passed to approve the minutes.

### RULES AND PROCEDURES

#### STAFF REPORT

The Accountability Officer Consultant position was discussed, and is in the hiring processes by Kent County HR.

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

The next meeting will be both a PAB and ACC meeting on January 3. Quarterly meetings will follow.

### OLD BUSINESS

1. Police ride-alongs were discussed. Barry reiterated the process of each member contacting the law enforcement agencies directly and scheduling their ride-along. Pete Landon reminded the board of the need for all information regarding ride-alongs to be forwarded to Val Jones, for record retention.
2. Sheriff Hickman (Kent County), Bill Dempsey (Chief of Police Rock Hall), and Ronald Dixon (Chief of Police Chestertown) confirmed the implementation of the new PAB Complaint form.

### NEW BUSINESS

1. Pete Landon asked the board and law enforcement representatives to think about how transparency can be further improved with the community and to present those ideas to the board. Nancy Grahmer mentioned the positive results of the "National Night Out" campaign, that was stopped during covid.
2. Gary Divito mentioned his discussion with a member of the Queen Anne's County ACC regarding the rules and resolutions they have implemented and suggested Kent County do the same. Pete Landon mentioned Kent County ACC already has rules and resolutions that are currently available to view on the PAB webpage. The ACC may discuss if changes are needed to Kent County resolutions with the caveat, the Kent County Commissioners would need to approve any changes.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. Johnnie Jones expressed his thanks for the support law enforcement provided on Halloween, especially in the community of Coventry Farms.
2. Nancy Grahmer shared her ride-along experience with the board. She was very happy with her experience and very complimentary of D/S Griffiths knowledge and professionalism.

### GOOD OF THE ORDER DISCUSSION

### MOTION TO ADJOURN

A was motion made, seconded, and unanimously passed by all members present to adjourn the December 6, 2023, Kent County Police Accountability Board meeting at 3:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Valerie H. Jones  
Administrative Assistant

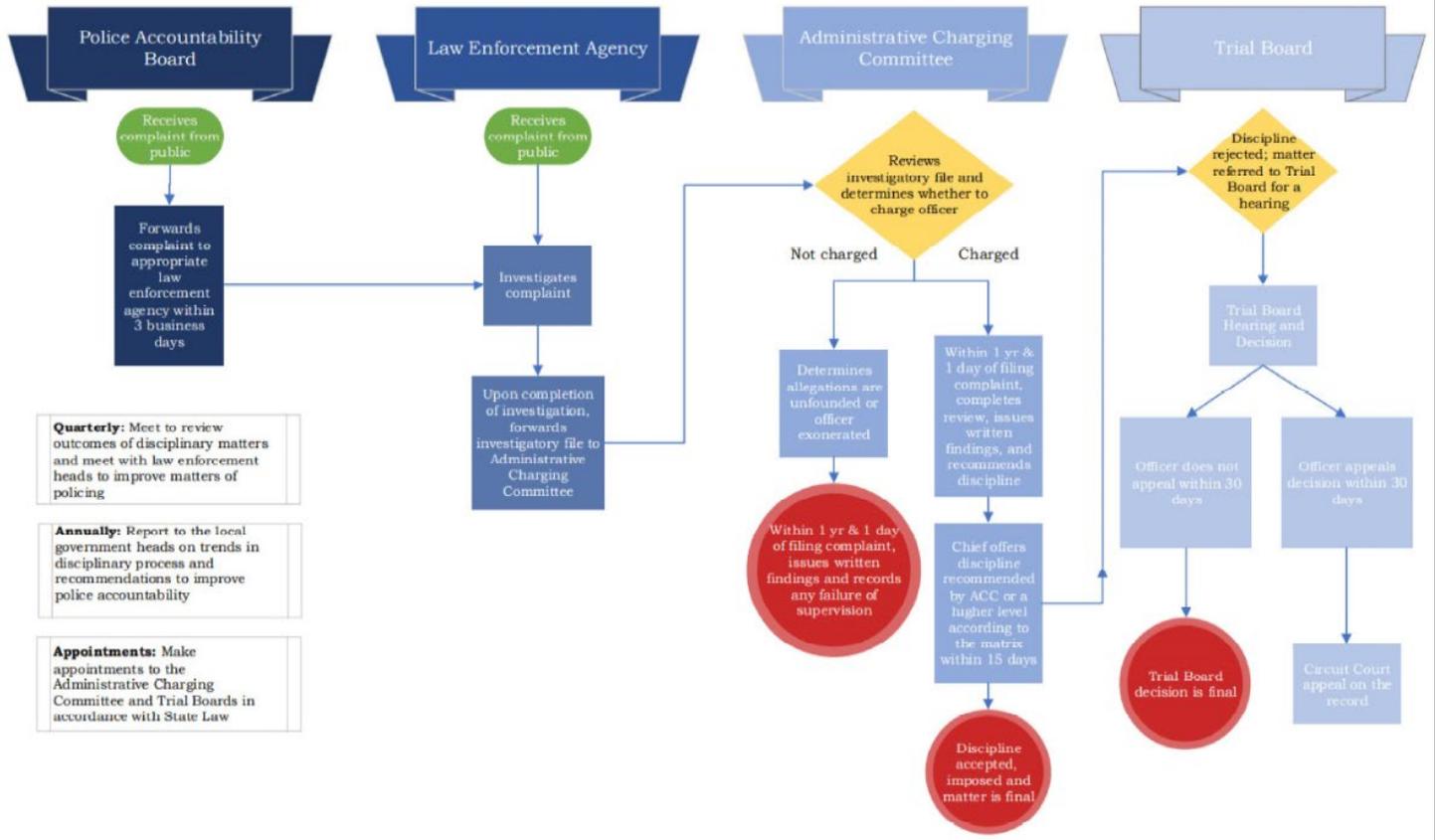
Approved:



Barry Byers, Chairperson  
Kent County Police Accountability Board

# Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report

## PAB Process Flowchart



- Quarterly:** Meet to review outcomes of disciplinary matters and meet with law enforcement heads to improve matters of policing
- Annually:** Report to the local government heads on trends in disciplinary process and recommendations to improve police accountability
- Appointments:** Make appointments to the Administrative Charging Committee and Trial Boards in accordance with State Law

**Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**  
**Administrative Charging Committee Membership**

Administrative Charging Committee

(Term 4 years)

Barry Byers, 12/31/2026	Severn E.S. Miller, 5/8/2027
Thomas Davis, 12/31/2026	
Shelly Schofield, 12/31/2026	
Gary Di Vito, 5/8/2027	

Date indicates expiration of term.

## **Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**

### **ACC Overview**

The Administrative Charging Committee (ACC) reviews the findings of a Law Enforcement Agency's completed investigation, or any complaint made by a member of the public against a police officer, including relevant body camera footage - if applicable, and circumscribed to matters covered in the complaint.

The ACC will decide if that police officer should be administratively charged.

1. If charged, recommend discipline in accordance with the Law Enforcement Agency's disciplinary matrix [as developed by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission].
2. If NOT Charged, the ACC may make a determination as to whether:
  1. The allegations are Unfounded, OR
  2. The officer is Exonerated.
3. Authorize a police officer called to appear before the Administrative Charging Committee to be accompanied by a representative.
4. Issue a written opinion that describes in detail its findings, determinations, and recommendations and forward that written opinion to the Chief of the Law Enforcement Agency, the Police Officer, and the Complainant.
5. Members of the ACC shall meet once per month OR as needed.
6. Members Shall maintain Confidentiality relating to matters being considered until FINAL Disposition of the matter.

There have been no reviews of completed law enforcement investigations or complaints required or performed by the public by the Administrative Charging Committee of the Kent County Police Accountability in 2022 or 2023.

## **Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**

### **Trial Boards**

The Trial Board adjudicates matters for which a police officer or deputy is subject to discipline. The Trial Board meets when the decision of the Police Chief or Sheriff is appealed by an officer.

As required by law, the Trial Board includes 3 members - an active or retired administrative law judge, or a retired district or circuit court judge, appointed by the County Executive; a civilian who is not a member of an administrative charging committee, appointed by the Police Accountability Board; and a police officer of equal rank to the accused officer, appointed by the Chief of Police that employs the officer subject to the complaint. A separate Trial Board will be convened for each incident and only when requested by the officer.

There have been no Trial Boards in Kent County convened by the Kent County Police Accountability Trial Board in 2022 or 2023.

## **Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report Training and Professional Development**

### Maryland Open Meetings Act

Maryland's Open Meetings Act is a statute that requires many State and local public bodies to hold their meetings in public, to give the public adequate notice of those meetings, and to allow the public to inspect meetings minutes. The Act permits public bodies to discuss some topics confidentially. The Act's goals are to increase the public's faith in government, ensure the accountability of government to the public, and enhance the public's ability to participate effectively in our democracy. (Taken from the Maryland Office of the Attorney General)

### Kent County PAB and the Open Meetings Act

Maryland Open Meetings Act compliance as well training is mandatory because the PAB is designated as a public entity. The PAB is subject to the OMA and must designate at least one employee, officer, or member to receive training on the OMA requirements to help ensure compliance with the law. Administrative Specialist Valerie Jones participated in the training and is the Board's OMA representative. Additional PAB members will be encouraged to attend OMA training in 2024.

### **Community Outreach Activities**

In 2023, Chair Barry Byers encouraged PAB as well as ACC members to register for law enforcement ride-alongs with the Kent County Sheriff's Office, Chestertown Police Department and Rock Hall Police Department. To date, several members have gotten exposure to policing in Kent County while being able to discuss the PAB mission, goals and objectives while being able to experience patrol, calls for service, policies and procedures utilized and followed by patrolling law enforcement officers.

In 2024, PAB as well as ACC members will likely have the opportunity to observe and participate in scenario-based police judgmental training provided by the Kent County Sheriff's Office.

# Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report

## Complaint Process

### Establishment of the Kent County Consolidated Complaint Against Police Personnel

The PAB worked with Kent County Sheriff Dennis Hickman, Chestertown Police Chief Ron Dixon and Rock Hall Police Chief Bill Dempsey to create a county-wide consolidated and consistent manner for citizens to lodge a complaint against any law enforcement department member on the PAB, KCSO, CPD and RHPD webpages. The consolidated form is web-based, fillable and automated to ensure ease as well as convenience for a Complainant to direct their concerns to the PAB or appropriate police department. Additionally, citizens may call the Kent County Police Accountability Hotline on (410)778-7496 regarding police officer complaints.




**Kent County Consolidated  
Complaint Against Police  
Personnel Report**

**1. INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have a complaint against any Kent County Sheriff's Office, Chestertown Police Department, Rock Hall Police Department employee or against any Kent County law enforcement department itself, you may report your complaint by completing this form, emailing, mailing or delivering it in person to any of the below Kent County law enforcement departments or the Kent County Police Accountability Board:

Kent County Sheriff's Office 104 Vickers Drive, Unit B Chestertown, MD 21620 (410)778-2279  <input type="checkbox"/> sheriff@kentgov.org	Chestertown Police Dept 601 High Street Chestertown, MD 21620 (410)778-1800  <input type="checkbox"/> dixon@chestertownpolice.com	Rock Hall Police Dept. 558 1/2 North Main St. Rock Hall, MD 21661 (410)639-7222  <input type="checkbox"/> bdempsey@rockhallmd.gov	Kent County Police Accountability Board 104 Vickers Drive, Unit D Chestertown, MD 21620 (410)778-7496  <input type="checkbox"/> accountabilityofficer@kentgov.org
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If you would prefer, you may call the Police Accountability Board directly on (410) 778-7496 and ask to speak with the Accountability Officer directly about your complaint. The information you provide will help investigate your complaint. The appropriate law enforcement agency or the Police Accountability Board may contact you for additional information and eventually will respond to you with the results of the investigation of your complaint.

EMPLOYEE NAME	RANK (If known)	DEPARTMENT	ID NUMBER (If known)
2. YOUR NAME		3. YOUR HOME ADDRESS	
5. YOUR RESIDENCE TELEPHONE		4. YOUR CELL PHONE NUMBER	
6. YOUR WORK ADDRESS		7. YOUR WORK TELEPHONE	
8. WITNESS' NAME		9. WITNESS' ADDRESS	
10. WITNESS' TELEPHONE			
11. WITNESS' NAME		12. WITNESS' ADDRESS	
13. WITNESS' TELEPHONE			
14. DATE OF INCIDENT		15. TIME OF INCIDENT	
16. LOCATION OF INCIDENT			
17. DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT (attach additional sheets if necessary)			
18. REPORT RECEIVED BY		19. DATE	
20. TIME			
21. METHOD OF RECEIPT <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Delivery			
22. ASSIGNED TO		DATE	
		Investigation Case Number	

KCPAB Form #001 Revised September 2023

There have been no police officer complaints received digitally, via telephone, mailed or received in person by the PAB to date in 2022 and/or 2023.

**Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**  
**Law Enforcement Departments**



104 Vickers Drive, Unit B, Chestertown, MD 21620  
Phone: 410-778-2279 Fax: 410-778-7488 Mobile: 410-708-0607

Contacts:

<https://sheriff.kentcounty.com/contact.html>

Policies:

<https://sheriff.kentcounty.com/publicinformation.html>



Police Chief Ron Dixon  
601 High Street, Chestertown, MD 21620  
Phone: 410-778-1800 Fax: 410-778-1828

Contacts:

[cpd@chestertownpolice.com](mailto:cpd@chestertownpolice.com)

Policies:

<https://townofchestertown.com/chestertown-police-department/>



Police Chief Bill Dempsey  
5585 Main Street, P.O. Box 367  
Rock Hall, MD 21661  
Phone: 410-639-7222 Fax: 410-639-2455  
E-mail: [Rockhallpd@Rockhallmd.com](mailto:Rockhallpd@Rockhallmd.com)

**Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report**  
**Police Disciplinary Process Activities in Kent County**

The Kent Sheriff's Office, Chestertown Police Department and Rock Hall Police Department were asked to provide disciplinary trends including but not limited to the below reporting parameters for calendar years 2022\* and 2023:

Police Complaint Specifics

- Total number of complaints received or department generated.
- Total number of complaints Investigated.
- Total number of investigations resulting in charges.
- Total number of complaints, investigations and charges resulting in trial boards.

Police Complaint Type Received

- Harassment
- Excess Force
- Discrimination
- Failure to Intervene
- Failure to Identify [criminals, witnesses]
- Improper Language or Conduct
- Retaliation
- Criminal Activity

2022\*: Kent County Sheriff and Rock Hall Police Department reported no disciplinary matters however:

*Chestertown Police Department*

- Total number of police misconduct complaints: 3
- Type of police misconduct complaints: Failure to obey an order, allowing a prisoner to escape and alleged unbecoming conduct.
- Total Number of police misconduct complaints investigated: 3
- Total Number of police misconduct complaints resulting in administrative charges: 2
- Total Number of police misconduct complaints resulting in criminal charges: 0
- Total Number of police misconduct complaints resulting in Trial Board: 0

\*The Kent County Police Accountability Board was not operationally functioning in 2022.

**Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report  
Police Disciplinary Process Activities in Kent County (Continued)**

2023\*\*: Rock Hall Police Department reported no disciplinary matters however:

*Kent County Sheriff*

- Total number of police misconduct complaints: 1
- Type of police misconduct complaint: Violation of criminal statute
- Total number of police misconduct complaints investigated: Investigated by outside agency.
- Total number of police misconduct complaints resulting in administrative charges: Deputy suspended and later resigned.
- Total number of police misconduct complaints resulting in criminal charges: Pending further action by the Office of the State’s Attorney for Kent County.
- Total number of police misconduct complaints resulting in Trial Board: Deputy resigned.

*Chestertown Police Department*

- Total number of police misconduct complaints: 1 Internal
- Type of police misconduct complaints: Leaving prisoner unattended
- Total number of police misconduct complaints investigated: 1
- Total number of police misconduct complaints resulting in personnel counseling: 1
- Total number of police misconduct complaints resulting in criminal charges: 0
- Total number of police misconduct complaints resulting in Trial Board: 0

\*\*The Kent County Police Accountability Board was not operationally functioning for a portion of 2023.

**2022 and 2023 Police Disciplinary Trends in Kent County\*\*\***

- Total number of police misconduct complaints: 5
- Total number of police misconduct complaints investigated: 5
- Total number of police misconduct complaints resulting in administrative charges/counseling: 4 (1 sworn personnel suspended and resigned).
- Total number of police misconduct complaints resulting in criminal charges: 0 (1 pending possible further action by the Office of the State’s Attorney for Kent County)
- Total number of police misconduct complaints resulting in Trial Board: 0

Percentage of police conduct complaints resulting in investigation and charges: 80%

Percentage of police conduct complaints that were unfounded after investigation: 20%

**Kent County Police Accountability Board - 2023 Annual Report  
2022 and 2023 Police Disciplinary Trends in Kent County (Continued)**

Percentage of police conduct complaint investigations, charges that resulted in Trial Board: 0%  
Percentage of police conduct complaints and/or investigations that involved the PAB or ACC:  
0%

\*\*\*The Kent County Police Accountability Board was not operationally functioning in 2022 and for a portion of 2023.

**Recommendations to Improve Police Accountability in Kent County**

The Kent County Police Accountability Board since its inception, and in collaboration with the Kent County Sheriff's Office, Chestertown Police Department as well as the Rock Hall Police Department, has collectively believed that improving policing accountability and transparency involves measures such as:

- Consolidate and create a county-wide complaint process for all law enforcement.
- Implementing body cameras procurement, training, and assignment to all personnel.
- Continued interaction between police and independent oversight boards.
- PAB and ACC coordination with law enforcement related to complaint/investigation reviews in the event of complaints involving the public.
- Regular personnel complaint and discipline audits.
- Future community engagement initiatives.
- Enhancing officer training on de-escalation and cultural sensitivity can contribute to better outcomes.

While most, if not all, of the above measures have already been experienced, it is important to remember that the Kent County Police Accountability Board consistently reinforces the belief that Kent County Police Accountability Board remains seven residents from Kent County, representing the seven [7] voting districts of the county. The PAB will hold quarterly meetings (or more frequently if deemed necessary) with heads of law enforcement agencies in the County and otherwise work with law enforcement agencies and the County government to improve matters of policing. Additionally, the PAB will continue to receive complaints of police misconduct lodged by our citizens, against any police officer who is employed within the county and forward that complaint to that officer's agency within 3 days of receipt. The PAB will review the outcomes of any disciplinary matters considered by the Administrative Charging Committee and will submit this annual report to the County Commissioners that identifies any trends in the disciplinary process of police officers in Kent County.

Finally, the Kent County Police Accountability Board will continually make recommendations on changes to policy that will improve police accountability and transparency in Kent County.