

## CITY OF ABERDEEN ♦ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW: KIRK BANE

**Stakeholder:** Kirk Bane, Deputy Chief  
City of Aberdeen Police Department  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 30, 2022 | 1:00pm-2:00pm | Conversation via Cell Phone  
**WM Team:** Lauren Good, Project Manager  
**City Staff:** None Present

### STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION

Deputy Chief Kirk Bane began his career with the Aberdeen Police Department in 1997 after receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Safety and Risk Management from Virginia Commonwealth University. Deputy Chief Bane graduated from the Harford County Sheriff's Office Academy in June 1998 and was assigned to the Patrol Division. In August 1998, he was assigned to the Special Operations Unit and was tasked with narcotics interdiction and gang suppression. In July 2000, he earned the rank of Detective and was assigned to the Criminal Investigations Division where he investigated a myriad of cases including homicides, robberies, arsons, rapes, and white-collar crimes. He was promoted to Corporal in October 2001 and assigned to the Patrol Division as a shift supervisor where he remained through his promotion in April 2005 to Sergeant. In July 2006, he earned the rank of Detective Sergeant and was placed in charge of the Criminal Investigations Division. In this capacity, he oversaw criminal investigations, internal investigations, crime scene processing, and the Special Operations Unit. He remained in this position until he was promoted to Lieutenant in March 2011 and placed in command of the Patrol Division. In July 2014, he was promoted to Captain and named the Deputy Chief of Police. In this capacity, he oversees the Field Operations Division, which includes Patrol, Traffic, K-9, and School Resource Officers.

In October 2013, the municipalities of Aberdeen, Bel Air, and Havre de Grace formed the Harford County Municipal S.W.A.T. team, a multi-jurisdictional team that Bane spearheaded and currently serves as Commander. Bane had been a member of the Aberdeen S.W.A.T. team since 1998 and a Team Leader since 2000. He received several awards throughout his career from City, County, State, and federal levels and in 2002, was named Harford County Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. After serving in the Aberdeen Police Department for 25 years, Deputy Chief Bane is retiring in 2022.

### DISCUSSION TOPICS

#### **CAN YOU PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT'S STRUCTURE—DEPARTMENTS, DIVISIONS, ETC. IS THE PATROL AREA STRICTLY WITHIN ABERDEEN CITY LIMITS?**

- The Patrol Division is the largest. It has 4 shifts with 24/7 operation that handles all calls for service, traffic complaints, other complaints. These are what the public thinks of as the "typical" day-to-day police officers.
- The Criminal Investigations Division handles all cases that are more serious (beyond what the Patrol Division handles). They also handle all crime scene processing, property and evidence collection and storage, and internal investigations.
- The Administrative Division handles records processing and storage, communications (dispatchers), vehicle maintenance,

equipment, uniforms, grants, applicant processing/background investigations for new hires, etc.

- The Department's service area generally consists of the City limits. The Criminal Investigations Division typically goes outside

of those limits (also special operations). They will go beyond City limits if something starts in the City but needs to be pursued outside or when the Department receives a request from other agencies asking for assistance (County/Havre de Grace).

**WE'VE HELD MULTIPLE VISIONING SESSIONS AND CONDUCTED A COMMUNITY SURVEY. ONE ITEM THAT WAS BROUGHT UP WAS A PERCEPTION OF CRIME WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. ARE THERE AREAS OF THE COMMUNITY WHERE YOU'RE SEEING A TRUE "CRIME" PROBLEM OR IS THIS A PERCEPTION ISSUE?**

- This is more of a perception issue than an actual crime issue. When he first started with the Department, there were drug and gang issues that are not present today, as well as problem properties that have new tenants or owners.
- He and the Department are proud of the City's low crime statistics now but, historically, the area was "crime ridden." Reputation is often difficult to change and there is always a segment of the population or generations that think Aberdeen is what it was 15-20 years ago, which is not the case

anymore.

- The City has won awards for being safest in the State.
- The City's biggest issues aren't considered "major crimes." They are theft (biggest complaints are Walmart shoplifting) and domestic assaults; other types of crimes are pretty consistent across the board.
- There have been no homicides within City limits in the past several years. Shootings do occur from time to time, but they are by no means a regular occurrence.

**WHERE ARE PLACES THAT SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS ARE MOST CRITICAL? WHAT ARE THEY?**

- At one time, Aberdeen had the worst intersection in the County as far as crashes but they have done a lot to alleviate the engineering issues behind them
- Along Rt. 40, there is a lot of traffic and a lot of pedestrian traffic, which is why this location is where the Department tries to do a lot of speed enforcement. Outside of the City, the speed limit is 55, which drops to

40/30 within City limits. The street is two lanes in each direction with wide shoulders. The nature of businesses in the area is that they produce a lot of foot traffic. Unfortunately, there are probably 2-3 pedestrians struck/killed each year. The area from Rt. 22 to Walmart is the worst; there is little to no foot traffic beyond this area.

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT TYPES OF SERVICES THE CITY SHOULD CONTINUE TO FUND OR CONSIDER FUNDING TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF VARIOUS GROUPS WITHIN ABERDEEN?**

- From the Police Department side, the Department already does more than other municipalities in the County; there is not much more or additional programs that the Department could be doing.
- Chief Trabert is always open and willing to give something a shot.

- A civilian employee was brought on as a liaison to downtown businesses; this employee is also used as an advocate for the homeless and mental health—there are numerous mental health clinics in a 2-3 block radius.
- The City doesn't really have a well-

established parks and recreation program. Aberdeen relies on volunteers, which has been problematic over the past several years due to claims of embezzlement, people not getting along, etc. Kids don't have programs or sports to get involved in—those that are available are located outside the City and not

everyone has the ability to get to these other places. It would be beneficial for the City to have a better Parks and Recreation association, or at least someone on City staff to coordinate/manage/oversee volunteers to ensure there are things to do.

**DOES THE PD HAVE A NEED FOR NEW OR EXPANDED FACILITIES? WHERE AND WHAT KIND?**

- The Department has outgrown the space they are currently using. Half of City Hall is the Police Department; the other half is the rest of City Administration. It is likely true that City Administration has outgrown their side too. Renovations are needed to the Police

Department side to keep up with changes to the profession. The Department has been in the building for approximately 22 years. Rooms that were initially larger closets were turned into offices because of personnel expansion.

**COULD YOU PROVIDE THE CITY'S CRIME STATISTICS (AND HOW FAR BACK DO THEY GO)? ARE THEIR FORMATS IN MORE OF AN EXCEL/PDF OR IS ANY OF IT AVAILABLE IN A GEOGRAPHIC FORMAT (E.G., HEATMAP)?**

- Crime statistics are broken down by month.

These can be provided by Jen Liberto.

**WHAT INTERACTIONS ARE THERE (IF ANY) WITH THE HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (OR OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES)?**

- Typically, the Department doesn't have a lot of engagement with Aberdeen Proving Ground because it's a federal installation—they have stricter laws and separation between the base and outside. Jurisdiction

typically ends at the gate.

- The Department does Interact with Havre de Grace, Harford County, and State Police frequently, especially for major incidents and when additional manpower is needed.

**WE UNDERSTAND THAT CODE ENFORCEMENT IS HANDLED BY THE APD. ARE CODE ENFORCEMENT ISSUES A PROBLEM FOR THE CITY? WHAT ARE THE MOST PREVALENT COMPLAINTS? DO YOU HAVE STATISTICS THAT COULD BE PROVIDED?**

- Code Enforcement is the biggest problem Aberdeen Police Department has in the City.
- People within the City don't seem to understand what the Code really is. They think that if they don't like something that it can just be cited.
- Most frequent complaints are vegetation, trash, and cars, with vegetation being the biggest actual code enforcement issue.
- Code Enforcement used to fall under Planning

and Community Development; Aberdeen Police Department took it over in late 2016 (approximately). Since this change, the City has had four different Code Enforcement Officers.

- Code enforcement is a long process—it might take upwards of a month to actually show action. For something to have more teeth, need to get elected officials involve – differing opinions on what this means.

Meeting Notes:

Lauren Good, Project Manager

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