



CITY OF FORT WAYNE

THOMAS C. HENRY, MAYOR

Executive Summary

On June 18, 2020, Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry announced the “Moving Forward Together” Action Plan to address public safety and racial justice and created the Mayor’s Commission on Police Reform and Racial Justice. This Commission is comprised of members representing a cross-section of the community—private and public sectors, non-profit and faith groups, and grassroots organizations. The Commission has been led by Councilwoman Michelle Chambers and Fort Wayne United Chairperson/Fort Wayne Boys and Girls Club President/CEO Joe Jordan. The findings are presented herein for Mayor Henry and Fort Wayne Common Council.

Vision Statement: *The Commission on Police Reform and Racial Justice’s purpose is to help create positive and meaningful change that brings forth racial equity and peace to all Fort Wayne residents, especially those who are Black, people of color, or marginalized, to ensure everyone is respected, appreciated, and valued.*

Mission Statement: *The Commission on Police Reform and Racial Justice, through community dialogue and engagement, will provide recommendations and feedback to the Administration and Fort Wayne Common Council on policies, practices and procedures related to the City of Fort Wayne’s public safety division.*

Through meetings and information gathering, there are three primary areas of recommendations: Race Relations, Communication, and Transparency. There is significant overlap in these areas. The Commission has concluded that collaboration is key to a strong community, and that all members of the community must commit to collaboration for the City to succeed. Believing that the foundation of collaboration is mutual trust, the Commission’s recommendations reflect a desire for Fort Wayne to be strong in building, maintaining, and repairing trust.

Brief Summary of Race Relations Recommendations

- Conduct reconciliation/acknowledgement conversations between the FWPD and the community, using a facilitator to foster a multi-faceted conversation. [Through Fort Wayne United live sessions we will be addressing this topic but only after the litigation is complete.](#)
- Foster and maintain a culture of racial understanding, requiring certain trainings like diversity and implicit bias and United Front workshops for all officers and staff.
- [We currently do programming with United Front and Procedural Justice. Our entire department is currently viewing all of the Diversity and Inclusion training through Police One. Respectively, all of our officers have been through at least a 2-hour presentation of Procedural Justice. Both are part of ongoing training. We implemented Dare to Lead Leadership training as well to focus on having better interpersonal communication skills and difficult conversations. Dare to Lead’s program purpose is the following: The DTL program will dig deeper into the Officer’s commitment to becoming a high performing law enforcement leader by rumbling with the four skills of courage. Daring leaders are self-aware, know how to have hard conversations, they hold themselves and others accountable, build trust and lead with empathy and connection. They](#)

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understand the importance of emotional literacy and awareness, take smart risks that lead to innovation, reset quickly after disappointments and setbacks and give and receive feedback, especially when it is tough. 12 officers have completed this training and we are scheduling another 16 to go through sometime late Spring or early Summer.

- Enhance recruitment policies and procedures and compensation package, establishing a community task force to assist with diversity recruitment.
- The Fort Wayne Police Department has started a new Recruiting Team made up of 6 main recruiters as well as 6 alternates. There are also approximately 8 other officers to help if needed. They have just undergone training on expectations and on the new app called Interview Now. We will be implementing this app to help track candidates and give better feedback on how to improve, should they be eliminated at a certain point as well as to stay in communication with the candidate throughout the process should they request that.
- We will also be partnering with City Life to establish some programming to get those in underrepresented groups to begin thinking about a career in policing. We have had a meeting with Nygel Simms who will be helping us in this endeavor. Gregory Smith-Causey from FW United will also be assisting us with kids in athletics in the school system to get them thinking about a possible career in LE. We will also be looking at partnering with other community outlets to improve recruitment of those in underrepresented groups.
- The Fort Wayne Police Department has also entered 30 x 30 Initiative to improve the number of women in policing as well as in command positions. The 30×30 Pledge is a series of no- or low-cost actions police agencies can take to improve the representation and experiences of women in sworn positions in all ranks. These actions reflect what police leaders, researchers, and industry experts have indicated are critical to:
Understanding the current state of a department with regards to gender equity;
Understanding factors that may be driving disparities; and
Developing and implementing strategies and solutions to advance women in policing.
Agencies who sign the 30×30 Pledge have agreed to:
Take measures to increase the representation of women in all ranks of law enforcement;
Ensure that policies and procedures are free of all bias;
Promote equitable hiring, retention and promotion of women officers; and
Ensure their culture is inclusive, respectful, and supportive of women in all ranks and roles of law enforcement.
- Currently, Police Department and City Administration are in negotiations for an increase to the basic recruit pay. We feel that this will encourage quality candidates and place us in a more competitive place for wages and benefits for cities our size.
- Involve community leaders in outreach opportunities to raise community awareness. Having community forums/conversations, with these leaders as facilitators, can help build, maintain, and repair trust.
- Fort Wayne United and Procedural Justice are two programs that help us build understanding. We are having more interaction with the new Diversity and Inclusion Director at PFW, Dr

Marteze Hammonds who attended the PJ class on April 16. Also, a full implementation of quadrant policing will help to continue community oriented policing in a more targeted approach to increase our community commitment.

Brief Summary of Communication Recommendations

- Create a communication strategic plan to increase resources to better serve the community, including a public relations assessment of what the communication needs are and what the community is requesting.
- This is high on our agenda but will require funding of about \$50,000. Strategia is the group the department has selected and they have provided a reduced rate for us from their regular rate.
- Communicate the good work of the FWPD and the effective nature of FWPD policing and policies related to national programs like #8 Can't Wait.
- #8 Can't Wait has been implemented and is currently on our website. We are currently working on language translation for items on the website. We also have been working with Amani services to help facilitate a language day for those whose first language is not English. Covid restrictions have halted this but we are looking to pick up again once restrictions are loosened.

Brief Summary of Departmental Transparency Recommendations

- Support the expansion of the Board of Public Safety to 5 civilian members, the majority of who should not have a background in public safety, and provide them appropriate trainings.
- Ensure that information from the Board of Public Safety is accessible and searchable to the general public and create an annual report summarizing Board decisions. [These are items the BOS will have to agree to do.](#)
- Increase public understanding of Internal Affairs through a further review of the disciplinary process and an awareness campaign of rules and regulations and the whistleblower policy.
- [The Fort Wayne Police Department would be willing to produce training about IA for public forums. These should help reduce the confusion and help build understanding as to just what it is that IA does.](#)
- Work with community partners to better identify social service providers and gaps in service. Have officers utilize 211 or on-staff social workers to properly and effectively direct resources.
- [The Fort Wayne Police Department has received a grant to incorporate two social workers into our HART program for addiction and recovery. The grant has been signed and we are in the process of taking applications currently to fill the two positions. Victims Assistance is also another area that is overlooked as a source for social service. The organization assists many within our community with finding services that they may need.](#)
- Enhance transparency of recruitment process. Specifically, why candidates may not make it through the process. Also, exploring ways to increase the number of successful diverse candidates and expanding applicant options. This will require dedicated financial resources.

- The Fort Wayne Police Department has been working with various groups in the community to increase applications of persons of color. We have also just put together a recruiting team. The team consists of 12 Officers that will be used to help in the recruiting process and to help mentor those in the process. We have purchased Interview Now, an application hardware system to help with more direct access during the application process from the applicant to a recruiter. They can chat via text or phone through the app and our recruiters can have better access through bulk texting of applicants.
- Support a culture that allows officers time to appropriately process traumatic events to ensure good mental health. This may include the hiring of additional officers to allow appropriate respite time.
- Currently, FWPD does allow time off for traumatic events. Where we are lacking is with everyday issues that plague everyone. Minimum counts are strict and although personal days are labeled as such, we are still held to minimum counts and unable to use them as emergency time off. Hiring additional officers should help with this issue but it will never be solved completely. We also are exploring other officer wellness idea to add for our officers. We understand this job is stressful and we look to community partners to help us find ways to have officers destress. Three Rivers Yoga Foundation puts on a HERO YOGA for first responders. This is a free yoga class that is held weekly to assist in meditation and relaxation. Gym reimbursement by the city of up to \$400 helps officers as well. Peer support and EAP programs are utilized within the department and as we collaborate with various groups throughout the community we look to bolster these programs immensely.
- FWPD will be applying for a Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant that supports the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) program. If awarded, programs funds will be used to enhance the Department's current peer mentoring mental health and wellness programs. The grant will help increase awareness of effective mental health and wellness strategies and increase the skills and abilities of law enforcement.
- Body-worn cameras are integral to trust with the citizens. Work to outfit every officer with a working and operational camera. Also, provide regular, public reports on implementation timeline as well as advocate for legislative changes to address challenges of the body-worn camera.
- ALL uniformed officers will be outfitted with cameras. This will come in phases even though the Fort Wayne Police Department along with City Council has allotted funds to pay the renegotiated price for body cams. Phases of officers from every quadrant will be outfitted for body cams as we move into full implementation. We expect at least 100 officers this year will be wearing cameras by the years end with others following shortly thereafter. We will be moving as expediently as possible to get all officers outfitted.

The Commission believes that greater focus on these three areas will begin the transition to strengthening trust between the community and the FWPD. This will require everyone, police and civilians, to be committed to working to foster meaningful collaboration for a stronger community.