

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
WORKGROUP TO STUDY GUN VIOLENCE

Draft Minutes

June 12, 2024

- Members Present

Perry Paylor, Deputy State's Attorney
Barry L. Stanton, DCAO for Public Safety
George A Nichols, Jr., Assistant Sherriff
Zachary O'Lare, Deputy Chief
Mike Ebaugh, Major, Police Department
Elana Belon-Butler, Director, Family Services
Carlesa Peterson, Assistant Director, Social Services
Dr. Matthew Levy, Health Officer
Krystal Oriadha, Council Member District 7
Tyrone Collington Sr., Chief, Police Chief's Association
Juanita Agnew, The Jayz Agnew Foundation

- Members Absent:

Lisa Reynolds, The Secretary of Juvenile Services
Melissa Pryce, The Public Defender
Terence Clark, Director, Department of Corrections
Dr. Tyreese McAllister, Ayanna J. McAllister Legacy Foundation

- Others Present:

Carolyn White-Washington
Jakob Welford
Rafael Sanchez-Cruz
Sola Ogunranti
Stephanie Beckman
TI Martin
Woodie Kessel, UMD-Progress
WUSA9

- Staff Present

Sandra Eubanks, HHSPS Committee Director
Rhonda Riddick, HHSPS Committee Aide
James T. Walker-Bey, Public Service Aide
Melody Arrington, EWD Committee Aide
Rita Lassiter, Communication Specialist

Tech Support

- Welcome, Introduction & Opening Remarks

Council Member Oriadha called the first regular meeting of the Workgroup to Study Gun Violence to order at 11:02 PM on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.

Council Member Oriadha opened the meeting, stating that all virtual meetings will be recorded and archived on the website for transparency. The Zoom sessions are open to participation by the public. However, nonmembers aren't allowed to speak unless space is made available for them to do so.

Council Member Oriadha introduced herself and requested that the members introduce themselves, sharing background information relevant to their roles on the task force. She shared that she represents the 7th Councilmanic District and is a Gun Violence Study Workgroup member.

She further stated that she has personally encountered gun violence in her district. Because of that, she indicated that gathering all stakeholders to explore the root causes is crucial to finding meaningful solutions. The workgroup's goal is to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders to generate comprehensive recommendations to mitigate the tragedies occurring too frequently in Prince George's County.

- Review Enabling Legislation (CR-011-2024/CR-075-2023)

Council Member Oriadha reviewed the legislation establishing the Gun Violence Study Workgroup to assist the county in examining violent gun crimes. This workgroup will cover various topics, including the causes of increased gun violence, its effects on our communities, and the examination of homicide, violent crime, attempted murder, gun violence crime, and gun violence injuries within the county. The aim is to provide possible solutions, suggest programs, and propose legislation to reduce gun violence.

The stakeholders are representatives from the State Attorney, DCAO for Public Safety, Sheriff, Police Department, Family Services, Juvenile Services, Social Services, Public Defender, Health Department, Department of Corrections, Police Chief's Association for Prince George's County, and a community-based non-profit that works on gun violence prevention and reduction.

- Presentation: Gun Violence Statistics – Police Department

Deputy Chief Zachary Olare provided a briefing on Prince George's County gun violence statistics. He discussed yearly comparisons of violent gun crimes (so far this year, compared to last year), violent crime trends, homicides, gun use, gun recoveries, and arrests. The data pertains to areas under the responsibility of the Prince George's County Police Department and does not include municipal agencies. Municipal numbers are included for those areas with police departments, but the primary focus is on the county police department. The areas in the County

with the highest crime rates are close to the D.C. line, where the population density is higher and is, therefore, where the Police Department focus is.

Q&A Session

Council Member Oriadha opened the floor for the members to ask questions and provide comments.

Carlesa Peterson, Department of Social Services, commented on the heat map and thanked the presenter for providing it because it shows the spread of gun violence. This observation reinforces the need for the workgroup to find solutions.

Council Member Oriadha inquired about the lock switches, how they are purchased, and whether using them is more of a national practice than local to our region.

Deputy Chief Olare indicated that many of these items can be bought online and then added to guns. Additionally, instructional videos on YouTube show how to do this, allowing anyone to convert a firearm into a fully automatic handgun.

Council Member Oriadha asked if Glock Switches are being tracked due to increased frequency and if this trend is more national than local.

Deputy Chief Olare explained that it is a national trend and stated they have started experiencing it more frequently in the county. This has prompted them to track polymers, which they began tracking a few years ago when it became prevalent, and Glock switches to monitor trends. Deputy Chief Olare indicated that they have observed a noticeable increase in these devices over the past few months.

Council Member Oriadha asked if, despite the decrease in fatal shootings, there is an increase in crimes being committed with guns.

Deputy Chief Olare indicated that carjackings with firearms are down, and non-fatal shootings are also down. However, first-degree assaults involving firearms have increased compared to last year, and robberies involving firearms are slightly up as well. Therefore, he wasn't able to conclusively say that more crimes are being committed with guns.

Regarding data victims, are they predominantly juveniles, or are they more spread across different age groups?

Deputy Chief Olare indicated that based on the total number of homicides in the county this year, which stands at 48, only six victims were juveniles. This means that 80 to 90 percent of our homicide victims are adults. This trend is similar to other crimes as well. Victims of carjackings are typically adults, and while some school-age individuals are victims of robberies, most robberies are crimes of opportunity involving adults. For the next meeting, Deputy Chief Olare will provide more detailed victimology data for gun-related crime.

Options for Presentations

Council Member Oriadha inquired about the workgroup's preference for future presentations.

Ms. Peterson suggested data on the correlation between mental health diagnoses and gun violence. Is there a connection between the two?

Mr. Barry Stanton, DCAO for Public Safety, suggested a briefing on the impact of gun-related cases in emergency rooms, discussing the types and frequency of these cases and their impact.

The State's Attorney's Office can provide information on the significant level of prosecution regarding gun cases.

Chief Collington mentioned that acquiring mental health-related data poses challenges due to the absence of a mandate for psychiatric evaluations when individuals are arrested for handgun offenses. He suggested that legislation may assist in requiring psychiatric evaluations with gun violence offenses.

Ms. Elana Belon-Butler suggested a Department of Juvenile Services presentation regarding their recent juvenile crime data.

Council Member Oriadha suggested a presentation from Family and Social Services about what services are available for communities and stakeholders impacted by gun violence.

Dr. Levy, the Health Officer, suggested that representatives from a Violence Interrupter Program present before the workgroup. Council Member Oriadha suggested the Hope in Action Program, which had a small Violence Interrupter pilot program that was not as large as D.C. Still, we could invite a D.C. representative or someone from a neighboring jurisdiction.

Mr. Barry Stanton, DCAO for Public Safety, suggested contacting the Community Relations Office, which oversees this Program. They will be able to present what the program entails and how the interrupters influence gun violence in Prince George's County.

Ms. Butler suggested hearing from "CINDS," Children in Need of Support, under the Children, Youth, and Families Division. The Department of Juvenile Services funds this program and works closely with the program to support at-risk youth who have had contact with DJS.

Major Ebaugh of the Prince George's County Police Department indicated that the department is hiring a Victim Witness Coordinator to be assigned to the Major Crimes Division.

Deputy Chief Olare of the Prince George's County Police Department has agreed to present at our next meeting on their efforts to combat crime and provide specific data on juvenile crime across districts.

Deputy State's Attorney Paylor has agreed to present at our next meeting on the State's Attorney's Office's prosecution of gun crimes.

- Election of Co-Chair of the Workgroup

Deputy State's Attorney Perry Paylor agreed to be the Co-Chair with Council Member Oriadha.

- Selection and Composition of Sub-Groups

Council Member Oriadha asked for suggestions for subgroups, indicating that we will follow up with an email asking you to reveal your top subgroup choices. We'll provide a window of time for you to make your selection. If you don't choose a subgroup, we will assign one based on your expertise and the agency or group you represent.

Each subgroup will meet at least once offline, so your total commitment will be two monthly meetings: one with the whole group and one with your subgroup. As you choose the subgroup you'd like to join, please remember that each subgroup will need a leader to help coordinate the meetings. Member Oriadha and Workgroup members offered the following suggestions for subgroups:

Programs and Initiatives

State and Local Policy Changes

Gun Violence Root Causes

Public Safety

School Violence

Teenagers/Adolescents

Violence Prevention

Program Services & Prevention

Public Safety, Law Enforcement, and Prosecution

Policy and Legislation

Mental Health and Diversion Impact

Survivor's Support

- Future Meeting Dates

The Workgroup to Study Gun Violence is scheduled to meet virtually on the third Wednesday at 11:00 AM. The next meeting is on July 17, 2024, at 11:00 AM.

Council Member Oriadha recapped by saying that we will send a follow-up email with all the details about the standing meetings, the meeting link, and the subgroup options for selection. Additionally, you must indicate which subcommittee group you would like to join.

The email will also include a summary of the presentations and a request for feedback on any additional presentations you would like to see or topics we may have missed.

- Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:02 PM.