



Charles County Sheriff's Office

Charles County, Maryland

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LA PLATA, MD 20646

301-609-6400



Troy D. Berry
Sheriff

An Internationally
Accredited Agency

January 16, 2024

Reuben Collins, Esq.
President
Charles County Commissioners

Ralph Patterson
Vice-President
Charles County Commissioners

Gilbert Bowling
Commissioner, District 1

Thomasina Coates
Commissioner, District 2

Amanda Stewart
Commissioner, District 3

Re: Charles County Police Accountability Board 2023 Report

Dear Commissioners:

Recently, the Charles County Police Accountability Board ("PAB") transmitted to you their annual report for 2023. The PAB is required to report to you on "any trends in the disciplinary process of police officers in the county" and to make "recommendations on changes to policy that would improve police accountability in the county." Md. Code Ann., Pub. Safety §3-102(a)(4).

I have reviewed the report and believe it is important for me to provide some additional context to their report and respond to some of the statements and recommendations made. Toward that end, please find a copy of the report with responses from the Sheriff's Office highlighted in yellow.

In its current form, the Police Accountability Act poses a great many challenges for law enforcement and the community. The PAB has highlighted some of those challenges, including

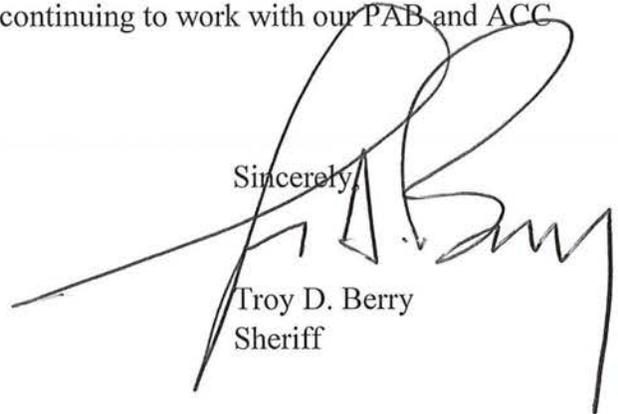
such important issues as determining the meaning of “police misconduct.” Other challenges are out there but have not yet been faced by Charles County law enforcement. For example, there is a requirement that action by the Administrative Charging Committee (“ACC”) occur within one year and one day. Criminal investigations or proceedings involving an officer frequently take more than a year; an officer accused of a crime but acquitted by a jury will avoid any possibility of administrative discipline.

Charles County has been at the vanguard when it comes to implementing the Police Accountability Act. Charles County was, I believe, the first county to establish an ACC. The Charles County ACC was the first to receive cases, and the first to issue reports and charging documents. The Charles County Sheriff’s Office was the first agency in the State to convene trial boards under the Police Accountability Act. Charles County, therefore, has been the first county to directly confront the shortcomings of the Police Accountability Act.

I wish to recognize the hard work of our Administrative Charging Committee. They have worked diligently to review dozens of investigations, some of which involved lengthy reports and accompanying videos and audio tracks. I also wish to thank Assistant Deputy County Attorney Danielle Mitchell who has been instrumental in securing administrative law judges and a retired judge to serve on trial boards.

I am ready and willing to work with the Commissioners and our Delegation to improve the Police Accountability Act. I look forward to continuing to work with our PAB and ACC throughout 2024.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Troy D. Berry', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Troy D. Berry
Sheriff

Cc: Mr. David Saunders
Chairman
Charles County Police Accountability Board

Mr. Guy Black
Chairman
Charles County Administrative Charging Committee