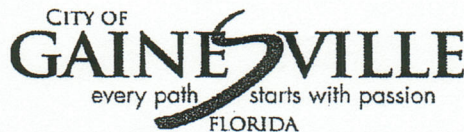


**LEGISLATIVE #**

**100003C**



# Memo



**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission  
**From:** Russ Blackburn, City Manager  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 13, 2010  
**Subject:** Gainesville Police Department Focus Group Update

---

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the work of the Gainesville Police Department Organizational Review Focus Group (Focus Group). The Focus Group was appointed by me with input from the City Commission in the summer of 2009. The main goal of the Focus Group was to provide citizen feedback and suggestions to the Gainesville Police Department command staff and me. The Focus Group together with the GPD command staff examined the fundamental systems and procedures of the Police Department. Concurrent with the appointment of the Focus Group, the City Commission approved engaging the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) to conduct an in-depth analysis of the Police Department.

A key component of the Focus Group's work over the last several months has been for the Group to provide input to the NOBLE consultants, and to provide suggestions to GPD on how to implement various recommendations which have been formulated to improve the performance of the Police Department. Representatives of NOBLE visited Gainesville almost monthly during their engagement. On each visit, the NOBLE representatives met with members of the Focus Group to discuss their findings and to solicit the reaction and recommendations of the Focus Group. The partnership between GPD, the Focus Group, and NOBLE, which was generated through the preparation of the NOBLE Report, helped to create a very useful analysis with recommendations to improve the Department's systems, policies, procedures, and practices.

A second significant element of the Focus Group's attention during the last nine months has been to review the need for and models for establishing a structural process for soliciting ongoing citizen input on the service and activities of GPD. For many years, some members of our community have suggested that the City consider establishing a citizen's review board. Several cities in Florida have established similar bodies whose primary function is to investigate allegations of improper actions by police officers. However, other models for partnerships between citizens and a police department exist throughout the country that could be considered as beneficial to the City of Gainesville. The Focus Group reviewed all of the major models and considered the advantages and disadvantages of each one. As part of the assessment of the citizen's review board, the Focus Group received an update on changes to the State Statute that had been adopted which dramatically impact the authority of citizen review boards. Florida Statute mandates that only a sworn law enforcement officer of the agency which employs the law enforcement officer can investigate an officer for wrong doing and that citizens can no longer participate or be involved in an ongoing investigation. The citizen review boards which existed within Florida prior to the adoption of this Statute have revised their mission and procedures to comply with the Statute.



The Focus Group also considered options which were more advisory in nature and which can be configured in an infinite number of structures. After completing the review, members of the Focus Group recommended to me that a Citizen Advisory Council be established under the authority of the City Manager. It was their suggestion that this Council be composed of a diverse group of individuals who are representative of the community.

The Citizens Advisory Council will be tasked with the following major responsibilities when requested by the Chief of Police and/or the City Manger; review and advise the Police Chief on personnel policy and procedures, review and advise the Police Chief on training issues and review and advise the Police Chief on closed administrative investigations. The focus on reviewing closed administrative investigations reflects the authority that could be exercised by a citizen's group under the State Statute. It is my anticipation that the Citizen's Advisory Council would review selected closed Internal Affairs investigations and provide recommendations to the Police Chief to address trends or major issues which were identified through the investigation. Under the Police Officers' Bill of Rights and the State Statue regarding the investigation of sworn law enforcement officers, no additional discipline can be taken against an officer as a result of a closed investigation.

Members of the Focus Group recommended that the Citizen's Advisory Group Council be composed of seven (7) members. As a body appointed by the Manager, the actions of the Commission will be subject to the Sunshine Law, meetings of the Group would be noticed and open to the public. I anticipate establishing a Citizen's Advisory Commission (CAC) within 60 days. As I begin the process of appointing individuals to the CAC, I will seek your input on individuals whose appointment would help to build a strong, effective Commission. The GPD Focus Group has provided a valuable service to GPD, the community, and to me.

It was the consensus of the Focus Group that their input, review of the NOBLE Report, and their recommendation to establish a Citizen's Advisory Commission finalized their work. I appreciate the suggestions from the Mayor and Members of the Commission, and the individuals that provided excellent information and participation on the Focus Group. If you have an opportunity, please thank the members of the Focus Group for their service to the City of Gainesville.

RB/rs

Copy: Chief Tony Jones  
Focus Group Members: Bob Cohen  
Bruce Delaney  
Mark Goldstein  
Theresa Harrison  
Nora Kilroy  
Adkins Warren  
Rosa B. Williams