

Village of Wellington

*12300 Forest Hill Blvd
Wellington, FL 33414*



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 28, 2018

6:30 PM

Wellington Community Center Grande Ballroom

Public Safety and Education Committee Joint Meeting

I Call to Order

Mr. Barnes called the meeting to order, noting that it was a joint meeting of the two committees.

II Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was observed after the roll call.

III Roll Call

Mr. Barnes introduced himself, Mr. De La Vega, Ms. Edwards, and Ms. Aldrich. He noted that it would be a joint meeting of the Education and Public Safety Committees. He asked Ms. Aldrich to call the roll for both Committees.

Ms. Aldrich asked all members present to state their names for the record.

Education Committee members John Webber, Shelly Albright, Donna Baxter, Ruthann Retterbush, Beth Gillespie, Marcia Hayden, and Francine Nelson were present.

Public Safety Committee members Jacqueline Hutman, Cherie McBrayer, Ernie Zimmerman, Matt Kurit and Ron Herman.

Mr. Akther and Mr. Weil were absent.

IV Opening Comments

Mr. Barnes stated that he would facilitate as this was a joint meeting of the Committees, following the agenda as presented with comments at the end of the meeting.

V Approval of Agenda

Mr. Barnes asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Webber made a motion, seconded by Ms. Baxter. Motion was approved unanimously to approve the agenda as presented, with Mr. Akther and Mr. Weil absent.

VI New Business

A. [EC-065](#) SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr. Barnes explained that the meeting had come together through an interest by both committees to have a joint meeting to discuss common interests and agendas and had been planned well in advance of the incident at Parkland. The agenda was a combination of issues previously discussed as being important to both Committees along with the added agenda item related to school safety which included a look at traffic circulation on and off school property and other general operational safety issues. Public comment would be welcomed and anyone wishing to speak was asked to complete a comment card.

A larger coordinated meeting between the Village and the PBC School Board would be scheduled to discuss school safety issues community wide.

Mr. Barnes recognized Mayor Gerwig, Councilman Drahos, Councilwoman Siskind, Vice Mayor McGovern, Councilman Napoleone, Representative Matthew Willhite and District Representative Marcia Andrews. Also in attendance were Darren Edgecomb, Palm Beach Central High School; Cara Hayden, Wellington High School; Blake Bennett, Wellington Landings; Anne Clark, Polo Park; Dr. Eugina Smith Feaman, Emerald Cove; Maria Vaughn, Wellington Elementary; Michelle Johnson, Equestrian Trails; Edilia De La Vega, Panther Run; Gayle Pasturcyk, Elbridge Gale; Betsy Cardozo, New Horizons and from the District offices, June Isa from Safe Schools, Chief Leon and Major Cano, Palm Beach County School Police; Vivian Greene, Instructional Superintendent, Ed Tierney, Secondary Instructional Superintendent.

Ms. Andrews spoke regarding recent input received from the schools regarding their safety related needs and areas of concern. They were looking at the oldest schools County wide including the Acreage, Royal Palm Beach and the Glades. Additional school police officers would be hired for the upcoming school year.

Discussion included the various methods being undertaken to harden and make all schools in the County safer for staff and students, recently approved funding to complete school safety projects and the addition of dedicated public safety officers. Chief Leon with the Palm Beach County School Police provided information on their duties and responsibilities as well as District Policy and mandates related to safety drills and

procedures. He also provided information on a newly released Student Protect App which allowed students a method of anonymous reporting to PBSO.

Ms. Isa, part of the Palm Beach County School District Support Team, reported on health counseling for students and the availability of positive behavior support which allowed for the reteaching of student expectations. The School District would receive \$3.9 million dollars from the State for mental health. The department consisted of over 80 staff that worked on areas such as bullying prevention, positive behavior support, student code of conduct and expulsions.

Comment cards:

Representative Willhite reported that funding had been approved for additional mental health counselors. He had voted for a bill that would allocate \$400 million to encompass the various aspects of school safety and hardening, resource officers, mental health and the Parkland Memorial. The Marjory Stoneman Douglas Act would provide \$7 million for the addition of 75 school police officers. He implored the school board to have an emergency meeting to go into contract with local police agencies or the sheriff's department to be able to put officers in the schools that have an immediate need.

Cynthia Higgins, 31 year resident and Wellington teacher, spoke about the difficulty in getting assistance for students with mental health issues. Oftentimes parents were initially uncooperative.

Veronica McCue, resident and SAC member, read a prepared statement regarding the use of schools as polling locations.

Marcella Montesinos, Wellington resident since 1989, spoke about a NY Times article she had read regarding an interaction between Nikolas Cruze and a 7th grade peer student mentor. She voiced her concerns related to social media use by students and questioned Chief Leon about the presence of live cameras in the schools.

Dana Perez, Royal Palm Beach resident with a son attending a Wellington school, inquired about funding for school hardening, specifically bullet proof doors and windows. She also inquired about the source for the funding for the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas Act. Representative Willhite provided a response.

Lt. Shaivitz spoke briefly about the Sheriff's Office Fusion Center who's staff was partially responsible for researching social media information.

He introduced Ken Noell and Sandy Sissin with PBSO Behavioral Services.

Sandy Sissin, Licensed Clinical Therapist with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Behavioral Services for approximately three years. She stated that they currently employed five therapists with varying certifications including addictions, anger management, trauma, childrens needs, adolescent services, work experience in the prison system. They worked in pairs alongside sworn law enforcement. The mission of the Department was to identify mentally ill members of the community who might be at risk for violent behaviors, stepping in to do prevention and crisis intervention.

Ken Noell stated that he was one of four Detectives offering various investigative skills and levels of experience that worked as a team along with social workers, the court system, the public defenders office, the State Attorneys office local law enforcement and the school board and conducting assessments and home visits. PBSO had implemented the Division in 2013. They along with law enforcement correctional officers and 911 dispatchers all attended crisis intervention training.

Mr. Webber brought up the ongoing issue of traffic around the schools, noting specifically Wellington Elementary and Wellington Landings.

Mr. Barnes responded that the Village continued to actively coordinate with the schools on a regular basis to attempt to find solutions together with PBSO and the School Board's administration. An upcoming road project planned for the area of Big Blue Trace would hopefully address some of the issues at that location.

Chief Leon also responded that they continued to work with the schools and the School Board to address issues at the various schools including circulation, parking and poor parent behavior during pickup and drop off times.

B. [EC-068](#)

BULLYING

Mr. Barnes stated that the last two items on the agenda under New Business would be addressed together, Bullying and Student Altercations On/Off Campus.

Ms. Isola reported that incidences of bullying had decreased.

Chief Leon spoke regarding release of the Student Protect App which provided students a means for anonymous reporting of bullying and other issues.

Lt. Shaivitz spoke briefly regarding complaints of youth in area shopping plazas creating a nuisance on bicycles and loitering at area businesses. Inconsiderate but not criminal behaviors were difficult to address from a law enforcement standpoint. He stressed the importance of utilizing the PBSO non-emergency number of 688-3400 for reporting.

Mr. Barnes invited Dr. Rodriguez to make some final comments. He thanked everyone for the opportunity and stated that safety was paramount. He thanked all of the principals and school district staff for their attendance. He also thanked the Village for a successful partnership.

Mr. Barnes stated that staff would follow up with the individual committees at their regular meetings and coordinate with the School District for a larger community forum.

C. [EC-069](#)

STUDENT ALTERCATIONS ON/OFF CAMPUS

This item was addressed under agenda Item 8B.

VII Public Comments

VIII Closing Comments

IX Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm