

Chico Police Department  
Police Community Advisory Board

**Wednesday, November 10, 2021**

8:00am – 9:30am



**Police Classroom ~ 1460 Humboldt Road**

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**Group Agreements**

- Be Respectful • Stay Fully Present • Speak and Listen from the Heart • Expect and Accept Non-Closure •
  - Hold the Complexity of Other's Experiences Without Judgment • Maintain Confidentiality •

**AGENDA**

- I. Opening Remarks – Chief Madden
- II. Approval of Minutes
- III. Training Wrap Up – Gloria Halley & Tray Robinson
- IV. Communication & Messaging – Julia Yarbough & Tom van Overbeek
- V. Schedule of Future Topics
  - a. December – Report Review
  - b. January – Support Service Units
  - c. February – Recruitment/Hiring/Retention
  - d. March – Officer Safety and Wellness

# Chico Police Department | Police Community Advisory Board (PCAB)

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## BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chief Matt Madden, Giovanni Tricerri, Gloria Halley, Julia Yarbough, Kasey Reynolds, Michael Lo, Scott Kennelly, Tray Robinson, Tom van Overbeek

## ALSO PRESENT:

PIO Michelle Walker, Detective Jack Ditty, Admin Analyst Crystal Peppas

## OPENING COMMENTS

**Chief Madden** welcomed the board members. This meeting is being held in what was previously the Police Records Department. In September 2020, the Records Division moved to a remodeled, modular building on property acquired from the California Highway Patrol (CHP). The master plan was to remodel the CHP property for Chico PD Records and Evidence; however, Facilities has since learned that the main CHP building is not viable and may have to be torn down and completely rebuilt. As there is no timeline on the CHP property remodel, Chico PD is working on a plan to move the Records Division back into the main Chico PD building.

Adjacent to this meeting space is the Chico PD server room, which runs the 911 and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. City Council has approved the use of American Rescue Plan funding to update the current, end of life, CAD system to the RIMS system. Every other law enforcement agency in the county runs on RIMS. Chico PD will become what is called a RIMS superagency, which will create redundancy with Butte County Sheriff's Office system by backing up each agency's server at the other agency. This will create interoperability, efficiency, and information sharing between agencies throughout the county. **Kasey** asked the ETA on the RIMS project. **Chief Madden** stated that the contract is in the works and the goal is to have the system up and running by June, when the current CAD system's maintenance agreement is due for renewal.

**Jovanni** also welcomed the board members and thanked them for their time commitment to the board. He acknowledged that everyone in the room is busy and the feedback they provide to the department and Chief is invaluable. The last two meetings were focused on the topic of training. Gloria and Tray produced a Google Document to compile recommendations. That document will be cleaned up and ready for report review at the next meeting. Today's meeting will dive into the topic of Communication and Messaging, led by Julia and Tom.

## DISCUSSION

**Julia** said that she and Tom met to determine the type of information that would be important to gather to include in a report. They sent a questionnaire to PIO Walker regarding Chico PD's Social Media and Relations Team (SMART). The first question was about the team's structure and participants. Chico PD's SMART Team is led by PIO Walker with six additional members who are all Chico PD employees, with the SMART Team being an additional assignment to their regular duties. Together, the team manages the content for all social media platforms, event coordination, as well as media and community outreach. Members were identified for the SMART team to work in areas matching their skill set such as photography, videography, drone operations, and content creation.

**PIO Walker** stated that the short and long-term strategy of the team in relation to delivering social media content is to remain consistent, relevant, on trend and interesting, while also providing the necessary occasional public safety notifications and alerts. **Julia** stated that that the more the PD can narrow down the focus and be specific about goals, the more effective their messaging will be. Is the goal of a social media posts to educate, to raise awareness, or to raise emotion? With the goal in mind, it is important to engage the target audience and be consistent with messaging across

the various platforms. **Tom** stated that a comprehensive communications plan includes short-term, tactical plans to solve specific problems, as well as a long-term plan that delivers a unified message over time.

**Julia** delved into how to approach and deliver information, events, and story pitches to local media. Regional and local media is adapting to the real world, separate from social media, so it is important to know who is receiving the information. If needed, pick up the phone and tell the story person to person, or how to include it with another story that reaches a larger audience. For example, local media may not cover a story on grant money for the new CAD system but if it is pitched as a business or economic story that matches a national trend, then it may gain traction. A metric tracking system can be a valuable tool to see who is digesting information and linking to it. Chico PD does not have a metric for local and regional news coverage, but it does have a system for tracking social media outlets. Hootsuite allows for an aggregate system to see the metrics for social media posts, videos, hashtags all in one place.

**PIO Walker** said the SMART team receives monthly notifications from Hootsuite on how social media posts are trending. Posts with the most engagement include smiling officers being personable while out in the community and our K9 unit. There was a spike in social media engagement recently with Chico PDs participation in the Downtown Chico Business Association's Treat Street event. **Chief Madden** added that different communities respond to social media content in different ways. In Chico, community members love their dogs and families and so the K9 unit and officers at community events track well. In a commuter city, the public would be looking to their police department for traffic reports and accident information.

**Detective Ditty** stated that the Chico PD's Facebook page has the most followers at 22K. Twitter has 8K followers and Instagram has 7K. The YouTube channel has 23K subscribers. Chico PD hit big with one VLOG of a "day in the life" of one officer's shift. The video has over 1 million views and really humanizes the badge with the officer just being himself. YouTube is a huge platform that needs to be tapped into more. It takes a lot of time to film and edit, but the SMART team has acquired some equipment that should streamline that process. The popular VLOG allowed us to show the human aspect of a police officer. The idea is reminiscent of the show COPS, but with more control over the narrative. It's cool when recruits for an officer position come in for interviews and say that they have seen Chico PD on YouTube. **Julia** said that metrics on a national level show that YouTube is trending as a key player for media consumption once again. News agencies are circling back to YouTube to use for content. It's worth pulling quick soundbites and clips that did well in the past and push it back out to the media. Re-highlight yourself, give yourself a pat on the back, and show what you do all the time.

**Julia** stated this may a good time for the SMART team to do a SWOT Analysis to look at their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Look back and see what works, play into that, and push it out to the national media. Be sure that you have the budget and team members to make it all happen. Since Chico is in a somewhat rural area, include print media for those that are not as tech savvy or have online access. Make a specific concerted efforts to find a way to show that the community is changing in diversity. Image is perception, which becomes reality. Use any opportunity to include actionable items, feel good images, and links to programs that show how to become involved and how the community can connect.

**Chief Madden** said that is what is good about a team. Each team member comes to the table with a different perspective. Open communication and a variety of viewpoints helps in the short-term with acute political emergencies (APEs) as well as in the long-term. There are times when the PD may be working quietly on a case and not able to talk about the active investigation. However, the team can re-direct by navigating it into a discussion about violent crime.

The Command Staff recently read a book about "finite" and "infinite games". Historically, police chiefs have been playing 4<sup>th</sup> quarter football, but the game never truly ends. The police department as an organization is not going away. The goal is to set the department up for a win in the long term, not just to win the day. Tactical communication is how we achieve success.

**Tom** said there is an art in timing and knowing when and what to respond to. If you don't proactively communicate your message, then others will drive public perception of the department. A strategic and comprehensive communication

plan will deliver desired messages to target audiences to manage those perceptions and change attitudes and behavior towards the Chico Police Department. Good communications plans are important to foster public and political support, involve the public in crime prevention, and create a sense of esprit de corps and morale among staff.

Chico PD should do a situation analysis and audit of current communications. Conduct interviews, surveys and focus groups – both internal and external. A July 2021 Gallop poll shows that police are one of the most trusted institutes in America, at a 51% approval rating. Former Police Chief Mike O'Brien once said, "There is a group of people who love us; there is another group that hates us. We need to communicate with the majority in the middle." So, how does the police department reach the majority in the middle to build relationships and move people into action? Target audiences need to be defined such as: elected officials, community/opinion leaders, public interest groups, faith communities, the community at large as well as the department's own employees. Then a comprehensive message and overall theme must be crafted that is real, simple, and delivered to the people where they are. This cohesive, targeted message will be what drives all PD media, events, and communication. Also, it's important to measure progress and make any mid-course corrections that need to take place.

**Chief Madden** said the new mindset of "infinite game" concept will set the department up for success. All information coming back to the department from PCAB has been great. It's important to lead from the front and now is the time to be visible in our community. Community policing has been a buzzword for quite a while and Chico PD has really embraced this philosophy in the last few years. Building relationships and partnerships takes time, the intent must be genuine and grow organically and cannot be forced, but in the long run, it is worth the effort.

News media has changed, and we have seen huge turnover in reporters for the local news outlets, as well as the print media. The department plans to bring the media producers and leaders together to have a conversation. How can we assist in coordinating on camera interviews, stage locations for the media during breaking stories to get the stories and shots they need? Overall, the department would like to develop a better line of communication and partner with the media.

**Julia** said that the landscape in media is shifting. Chico is a small market and will not have seasoned reporters. Reporters not coming to the PD for an on camera is not their fault; they are being taught to reach out to real people, and not the "talking heads". These reporters are still learning how to find and tell stories, so you may need to spoon feed the information from the department to them, give them actionable items, be constant, and build that trust.

**Jovanni** pointed out that many people are consuming news on social media and not watching local, live broadcasts. That is the reality for many families in town and Chico State students. **Chief Madden** agreed and stated that it will be interesting to see how things will change in the next year. Broadcasts of police radio traffic will soon be encrypted, and the public will not be able to listen to police scanners at home to post online. Perhaps this will shift the focus for information back to the source. **Jovanni** questioned if the radio encryption makes information scarcer, creating even more inaccuracies and rumors on social media. Either way, there will be a change in how information is gathered and distributed, and adjustments will need to be made.

**Tray** asked if all this information could be put into a Google document. PCAB members could add questions and comments for the Chief and SMART Team to consider. **Jovanni** stated he could help create the document.

**Chief Madden** said he's looking forward to the report from PCAB to receive perspective from the citizen group to give back to the boots on the ground. The SMART team was initially put together based on skill set of current employees. We would like to develop a policy, outlining the mission of the team and a directive for a recruiting and application procedure to join the team.

**Detective Ditty** said there has been great support for the SMART team from the Chief on down the line. It's important to build that kind of culture, so officers are willing to put themselves out there on social media. Officers make up the bulk of the department and many of prefer to live a private life, rather than be on camera. But the internal culture has transitioned to where it is more common than it used to be.

**Chief Madden** agreed to this statement. There is a strong desire to protect family in this line of work. Some officers may not take even direct route home from the police station, as a precaution. However, there has been a paradigm shift in the last couple of years as far as being seen on social media. Opportunities to connect to the community, online or in person, is important to me, as a chief. What is important to the Chief is important to the department. Now that staffing has been built back up, I'd like to see officers get out of their vehicles, be approachable and spend time in the community out of their regular uniforms and in their training uniforms.

**Tom** suggested Chico PD attend events like Cars & Coffee at Starbucks on the first Saturday of the month. **Michael** said it may be good attend cultural events and reach out to communities that may not reach out to the PD on their own. **Kasey** stated that it's nice have events back in the community like car shows. The younger officers seem comfortable on social media and YouTube and it's great to see them be so approachable and relevant. Kasey asked if officers were allowed to wear beards or facial hair and Chief Madden let her know that a memo recently went out about this topic. Officers are allowed to wear beards this fall, adhering grooming standards outlined in an interim directive, through March 31, 2022. It's another way to allow officers to be seen as a regular person, and not just a badge.

## CLOSING COMMENTS

**Gloria** stated that the presentations were insightful and relevant. She will reflect and give feedback with intentionality. **Jovanni** said he would put the information into a Google Document and send it out to the group for their comments, to be reviewed at the next meeting.