



Office of the Town Council

**Trip Report**

**Purpose:** PERF Special Meeting  
**Date:** July 9 – 10, 2015  
**Location:** The Newseum/Knight Conference Center  
Washington D.C.  
**Attendee:** Vice Mayor Lou Waters

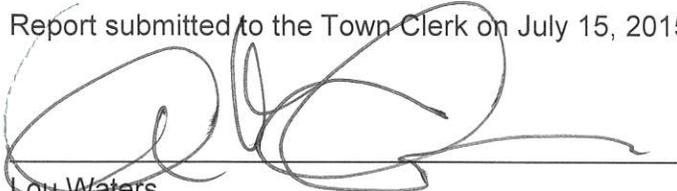
**Summary:**

The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) convened an executive session from July 9 - 10, 2015 in Washington, D.C. The theme of this special meeting was *Strengthening Police and Community Relationships*.

The meeting was attended by 60 police chiefs accompanied by community leaders from cities and towns across the nation.

The meeting invitation and additional notes are attached.

Report submitted to the Town Clerk on July 15, 2015.

  
Lou Waters  
Vice Mayor

*Oro Valley, it's in our nature.*

From: Chuck Wexler  
Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2015 1:20 PM  
To: Sharp, Daniel  
Subject: Invitation to participate in PERF conference on police-community relationships

Dear Chief Sharp,

August 9 will mark the anniversary of the incident in Ferguson, Missouri that made headlines around the world. As we reflect on that day and all of the other controversial incidents in policing over the last 10 months, we should recognize that policing has been thrust into the spotlight in a way that has caused a re-examination of nearly every aspect of how we police.

At the same time, we are beginning to see upticks in violent crime in many cities, following many years of historical lows in crime. So at the very moment when we must increase our focus on crime, public confidence in police tactics is being questioned, and police-community relationships in many cities are frayed.

The legitimacy of police comes from the communities we serve. So on Friday, July 10, PERF will convene a unique meeting. We are asking PERF chiefs to invite one member of their community to accompany them to Washington for a day-long discussion of strategies for building trust between the police and community members.

We would like this high-level meeting to be only chiefs and their selected community leaders. We ask you to select a well-respected community member – someone who is neither your biggest supporter nor your harshest detractor, but rather someone who can articulate the challenges of policing in all of your diverse communities. Generally speaking, we want to reach out to the brightest community leaders and seek their guidance as we try to walk ourselves back to a place where we have relationships built on trust and support, which in turn will support our efforts to make communities safe.

This meeting on Strengthening Police and Community Relationships will be written up in a “Critical Issues in Policing” report, so we can share the lessons we learn with others who are trying to restore and maintain positive police-community relationships.

Below are details regarding this event:

Critical Issues in Policing Series  
Executive Session on Strengthening Police and Community Relationships

Reception

Date: Thursday, July 9, 2015  
Time: 5:30 pm -7:30 pm  
Location: The Willard Hotel, The Nest (Mezzanine)  
1401 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Conference

Date: Friday, July 10, 2015  
Time: 8:30 am – 4:00 pm  
(Breakfast and lunch will be provided.)  
Location: The Newseum  
Knight Conference Center (7th Floor)  
555 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20001

With a sense of urgency, the nation's police chiefs, community leaders and clergy met July 10th, 2015 in Washington D.C. at the Freedom Center.

I accompany Oro Valley Chief of Police Daniel Sharp.

The Chiefs have been summoned by The Police Executive Research Forum, PERF, to drill down on the police shooting of an unarmed black man in Ferguson, Missouri that became a riot.

The prosecution of five white police officers in a car chase resulting in a 137 barrage of gunfire and the deaths of two African-Americans.

In North Charleston, a black man shot in the back by a white Police Officer after a traffic stop for a broken tail light.

In Cleveland the police shooting of a 12-year-old black boy playing with a toy pellet gun.

And in New York, two police officers ambushed and killed while sitting in their patrol car.

Most all of these high profile events were captured on video and magnified by the media, touching off sparks of community unrest and violence: "Black lives matter", they screamed.

Most recently, the tragedy in Charleston: The murder of 9 black people in a church by a mentally disturbed young white man with a gun.

The nation stopped to shudder.

Fast forward to the intense discussions in Washington this week. At issue: Strengthening Police-Community Relationships. This conference follows closely on the heels of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing in May and covered much of the same ground but in a more intense and personal way.

- Mental illness and all the associated problems for Police and community was discussed but lamentably short on solutions.

- Texas Chief stresses importance of after action reports, the same way doctors rely on them when a patient dies. "Own it", says the Chief.
- An Hispanic man rails at being marginalized by the concentration of effort on African - Americans. "We're being called drug pushers, criminals and rapists and it's got to stop."
- More than one Chief expressed frustration at being stone-walled by Police Unions preventing their attempts to rid their departments of "bad cops."
- "Adverse Childhood Experience": Police arrest a father or mother in front of the kids. The kids suffer. More and better training for officers was advocated by all in attendance.
- The internet, social media, movies and television generally was mentioned as a problem. 24-hour cable news was not mentioned.

I submitted the following comments to PERF board:

"Americans today are significantly less engaged with their communities than was true a generation ago", writes Harvard Professor Robert D. Putnam. Why? Television.

On average Americans spend 40 percent of free time watching television. And television usually paints a negative picture of American Society. Putnam uses the example of, "overestimating crime rates."

Introducing myself at the forum, I mentioned that I am a founding member of CNN's original news team, starting an electronic revolution with unintended consequences now being felt. Professor Putnam indicates technology may indeed be causing fractures in our communities.

In fact, the latest Gallup Poll suggests the American people's intense hatred of the media - all media - has intensified.

CNN's street corner reporting in Boston after the marathon bombing that a "brown skinned man" was suspected, was not only wrong but irresponsible.

Fox News has dwelled on reporting that later had to be apologized for. The internet and cable TV confuses Americans about what is real and what is not.

"Paranoid Conspiracy Thinking has become common currency", says journalist George Packer. And that's alarming.

My suggestion is this: nurture local journalists. Help them help you cut through "opinion journalism" - the result of cable news and the internet.

NPR recently took a local reporter through a "Hogan's Alley" and put her to the test of life and death police response times. She failed...badly. The reporter, duly educated, now is passing on reliable information.

And a reporter's job is to illuminate, educate or inspire. Otherwise television news is just lights and wires in a box. Media must be included in building community trust.

Lou Waters

Vice Mayor

Town of Oro Valley