



MCPA CRITICAL ISSUES FORUM REPORT

**Shaping the Future of the Association and
the Policing Profession in Minnesota**

February 7, 2017



Overview

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On February 7, 2017, approximately two dozen Minnesota police chiefs from agencies of all sizes and geographic locations in our state came together at the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association's *Critical Issues Forum* to examine, address and discuss two of the timeliest topics impacting our members and the policing profession.

MCPA Executive Director Andy Skoogman facilitated the forum, which was held at the MCPA's Training Center in New Brighton, Minnesota.



Impetus and Objectives

In the fall of 2016, members of the MCPA's Executive Committee met and discussed new ways to get a better handle on the pulse of Association members, particularly on some of the more controversial local and national issues facing police officers, police chiefs and law enforcement agencies.

The Executive Committee, which is made up of the Officers from the MCPA's Board of Directors, proposed hosting two forums or listening sessions with one taking place in the Metro area and the other in Greater Minnesota (*The second forum will be on June 4, 2017 at Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge*).

To get a broad range of opinions and ideas and best represent all MCPA members, the Executive Committee decided to invite all the MCPA Region Representatives and asked each Region Rep to bring a guest police chief from their respective regions.



The *Critical Issues Forum* concept was approved by the MCPA Board of Directors in late 2016.

The forums' objectives are three-fold:

- Gather input, ideas and insight from MCPA members at agencies of all sizes and locations across the state on some of the most critical issues facing the profession
- Learn from a diverse group of MCPA members about what critical issues are TRULY impacting their jobs and their agencies
- Use the information gathered to help shape the direction of the MCPA for the next 3-5 years when the MCPA Board develops its new Strategic Plan in June 2017

Critical Issues

Although there are dozens of issues impacting MCPA members and the policing profession, the MCPA Board of Directors chose two topics to focus on during the 4-hour *Critical Issues Forum* held on February 7, 2017.

The first topic was mandated training. The police chiefs in attendance spent about two hours sharing their thoughts on mandated training in general and on a legislative proposal put forth by the Law Enforcement Coalition in partnership with the Police Officers Standards and Training Board (POST) in particular.





For reference, the Law Enforcement Coalition is comprised of the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association, the Minnesota Sheriff's Association and the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association.

The legislative proposal will more than triple the state's annual per officer reimbursement from about \$300 to a \$1,000 per officer. In exchange for the increase in funding, CLEOs will be required to provide their officers with 16 Continuing Education (CE) credits over the 3-year licensing cycle with at least one CE in each of these categories, which are taken directly from the POST Board's pre-service learning objectives:

- Crisis intervention and mental illness crises
- Conflict management and mediation
- Recognizing and valuing community diversity and cultural differences

POST Board Executive Director Nate Gove and former police officer Mary Vukelich from Century College were also in attendance to discuss the proposal, which the MCPA is calling the *21st Century Policing Platform*. In addition to the mandated training, the proposal also calls for state grants to help agencies hire and compensate second-career individuals while they are completing their licensure and education requirements to be a police officer.

Most police chiefs in attendance agreed that peace officers in agencies of all sizes in Minnesota would greatly benefit from the types of training being proposed. They shared their concerns about the challenges of meeting the mandates under the current training model and within their department budgets. After much discussion, most police chiefs in attendance came to the consensus that they are in favor of the mandated training being proposed by the Law Enforcement Coalition if there is a permanent funding mechanism in place from the state and the mandates could be met by online training, such as the League of Minnesota Cities' PATROL courses.



MCPA 3rd Vice President and Legislative Committee Chairman, police chief Jeff Potts from Bloomington, talked about how the MCPA has invested in audio and visual technology that will allow the association to also deliver some of the mandated trainings to members online. MCPA Professional Development Director Bob Jacobson is also in the process of reviewing the MCPA's curriculum at its Leadership and CLEO and Command Academies. The academy curriculum will likely change to help police chiefs and their officers meet some of the anticipated mandates.

The second topic or critical issue discussed was whether police officers should have the right to review body-worn camera footage before giving a formal statement following an incident involving the use of deadly force. The MCPA is dedicating a General Session at the 2017 ETI to this topic and bringing in two national experts who will discuss the pros and cons of viewing or not viewing.

BCA Superintendent Drew Evans spoke to the *Critical Issues Forum* attendees on this topic. At the time of the forum, the BCA had yet to publicly release its new policy which states that neither the officer nor the officer's attorney will be permitted to





view the video prior to giving a voluntary statement. The BCA policy does, however, say the peace officer may view the video following the voluntary interview if they request to do so to assist in clarifying any portion of their statement.

Superintendent Evans shared some of the science that drove the policy change, the Department of Justice's position on viewing of video in deadly force cases and the thinking of his peers around the country. Several police chiefs in attendance at the forum had a number of questions, including how the BCA will approach an incident if its new policy is in opposition to a local agency policy.

Superintendent Evans said he believes the BCA policy is the only one of its kind currently in the country as some other state investigative agencies have adopted policies forbidding officers to ever view the video at any time during the investigation. He noted that the current chair of the IACP Legal Officers Section, who represents peace officers in such cases and trains all over the country, instructs that officers should not watch video. But the Superintendent also says that he knows that there are other trainers and other schools of thought that peace officers should watch video prior to making a statement. This inconsistency is part of the reason he says the BCA has reached this position of what he's calling compromise. Superintendent Evans says he believes this approach is in the best interest of all involved to ensure integrity, trust, and accountability in the BCA's investigations of these incidents.

The BCA released its new policy on February 9, 2017.

Other Issues

In addition to the two main topics, the MCPA Board of Directors wanted to gather additional input on other issues members are facing. During the February 7 forum, Executive Director Skoogman went around the room and asked each attendee to share his or her biggest challenge. Many of the comments fell into these categories:

- Recruiting and retaining quality applicants
- Improving and maintaining officer wellness and morale
- Fixing an outdated and inefficient training model
- Countering the negative perceptions of policing
- Serving a more diverse citizenry
- Dealing with gangs and drugs
- Working in partnership with neighboring agencies and stakeholders

Strategic Direction of MCPA

The MCPA is committed to serving its members and providing resources to help address and overcome the evolving challenges that go along with being a police chief in the 21st century.

The MCPA's Board of Directors will use the information gathered at the February and June *Critical Issues Forums* to build its new Strategic Plan. That plan will likely include new programs and initiatives that will be developed and implemented over the next 3-5 years.

If you are interested in attending the June 4, 2017 Critical Issues Forum at Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge, please contact your Regional Representative. If you can't make it or don't want to attend, the MCPA still wants your input. We will be sending out an MCPA member survey in April. The MCPA Board of Directors strongly encourages you to take the time to fill out the survey.

Your input and ideas matter as the association and its members collectively shape the future direction of the MCPA and the policing profession in Minnesota.