



TALBOT
COUNTY

2025

Annual Report

Police Accountability Board



TALBOT COUNTY POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

MITCHELL S. ETTINGER, Chairman
WILLIAM BELDING, Member
JOHN GILBERT, Member
JO ANN MURRAY, Member
BRIAN NARANJO, Member
CHRIS RICE, Member
CONNIE A. WEBSTER, Member

11 N. Washington Street
Easton, Maryland 21601
Phone: 410-770-8092
Facsimile: 410-770-8007

December 15, 2025

The Honorable County Council of Talbot County
Talbot County Courthouse
11 North Washington Street
Easton, Maryland 21601

Re: Police Accountability Board Annual Report

Dear Council Members:

This December marks the conclusion of our third year as a fully constituted Police Accountability Board (“PAB”). I am pleased to submit the required annual report. As I explained during my April 8th presentation, the members of both the PAB and the Administrative Charging Committee (“ACC”) are highly motivated to serve the community and appreciate the role played by each entity in creating an atmosphere of trust between Talbot County's Law Enforcement Agencies (“LEAs”) and its residents. The PAB meetings with the LEAs continue to be productive with the exchange of standardized data and an open dialogue regarding issues of interest to the PAB and the LEAs. Although the subjects addressed at each meeting are fairly static, the LEAs have shown good flexibility when asked to address issues identified in the news, LEA press releases and policies that are the subject of ACC decisions. We are pleased with the cooperation provided by the LEAs, and we continue to work hard to foster mutual trust and respect.

The ACC issued 15 decisions this year, none of which proved controversial. Two cases resulted in administrative charges with the deputy/officer accepting the ACC's recommended disposition. In another case, the ACC disagreed with the LEA recommendation that the deputy be administratively charged. That case ended with no action being taken against the deputy. Accordingly, no trial board arising from an ACC decision was requested or convened this year.

Of course, please reach out if you have any question regarding the content of this report or desire additional information.

With warm regards for a happy and healthy holiday season,

Mitchell S. Ettinger
Chair, Talbot County Police Accountability Board

cc: Chief Allan Lowrey
Chief Jeffrey A. Oswald
Sheriff Joseph J. Gamble

Police Accountability Board

Board Makeup

Board Members

Membership on the Police Accountability Board (“PAB”) remained static this year except for the appointment of Brian Naranjo on September 15, 2025. Mr. Naranjo's government service, coupled with his connections to the local community, have enabled him to make immediate meaningful contributions to the PAB. The current PAB members' terms are listed below:

Mitchell S. Ettinger
Chair (2022-2027)

William Belding
Member (2025-2029)

John Gilbert*
Member (2022-2026)

Jo Ann Murray
Member (2024-2028)

Chris Rice
Member (2024-2028)

Connie Webster*
Member (2022-2026)

Brian Naranjo
Member (2025-2029)

Two members' terms of service, those of Ms. Webster and Mr. Gilbert, conclude on August 1, 2026, requiring County Council action either to reappoint or replace these members.

Administrative Staff

Patrick Thomas of MacLeod Law Group, LLC continues to serve as the legal advisor to the PAB and the Administrative Charging Committee (the “ACC”). Mr. Thomas attends ACC meetings and reviews each ACC decision before issuance. We greatly appreciate the support provided by Mr. Thomas.

Victoria Bradley, the County's Office of Law Manager, continues to serve as Secretary to the PAB and ACC. We rely on Ms. Bradley for all administrative tasks required to operate the PAB and ACC. She continues to serve as our liaison to the law enforcement agencies (“LEAs”) and is an integral member of our team.

Meetings with Law Enforcement Agencies

As required by the enacting legislation, the PAB met with the LEAs quarterly during 2025. Representatives from the Talbot County Sheriff's Office ("TCSO"), the Easton Police Department ("EPD"), the St. Michaels Police Department ("SMPD") and the Oxford Police Department ("OPD") participated in these meetings. The PAB published agendas in advance of each meeting, identifying the issues it wished to address, and the documents it requested to see in advance of the meeting. (**Exhibit A**). Senior leadership from each LEA continues to participates in the quarterly meetings. The minutes from each quarterly meeting are attached as **Exhibit B**.

The PAB continues to track use of force reports, which are required by each LEA whenever an officer is required to use physical techniques or tactics, chemical agents or weapons to effectuate a lawful police function. As noted below, all use of force incidents in 2025 involved an officer or deputy using their hands to obtain compliance from the individual being detained. In each instance, the use of force was appropriate and reasonably applied. Accordingly, the PAB has no current concern regarding the Use of Force Policies governing law enforcement officers' actions or their application.

One notable ongoing topic of discussion with the LEAs this year has been U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") activity in Talbot County. The LEAs described a guidance memorandum issued by the Maryland Attorney General that limits State LEAs' assistance with ICE to situations involving a validly issued arrest warrant. The LEAs noted, however, that they will hold an incarcerated individual if there is a federal detainer for the individual's arrest. Local citizens have raised concerns regarding ICE actions in Talbot County, expressing fright and seeking information regarding the role, if any, of local law enforcement in ICE actions and their legal rights if confronted by an ICE officer.

The LEAs noted a decline in turn-out from the Hispanic community at public events for fear of ICE enforcement actions. EPD has visited a number of Hispanic churches to inform the community of State laws and resources available. The principal purpose of these presentations is to emphasize that the role of the local law enforcement agencies is to ensure the safety of the citizens. In this regard, the LEAs do not inquire into customs status when responding to calls for assistance and, through such events as "Coffee with a Cop", are endeavoring to ensure the community understands this fact.

The Police Accountability Board



PAB Appearance Before the County Council

The PAB Chairman made a presentation to the County Council on April 8, 2025, and was supported by other PAB members at the presentation.

The purpose of the presentation was to: (i) inform the Council of PAB and ACC actions and (ii) obtain feedback from the Council regarding its expectations for both the PAB and ACC. During that presentation, Mr. Ettinger noted that other counties' police accountability boards have adopted an expansive interpretation of the legislative mandate, whereas, our PAB has stayed true to the limited mandate of reviewing disciplinary actions and identifying trends arising from such actions. In response to the Chairman's inquiry, the Council appears satisfied with the manner by which the PAB is operating and did not request an expansion of its oversight role.

After the April 8th appearance before the County Council, the PAB attempted to contact other police accountability boards across the State to gain an understanding of how each county was implementing the legislative mandate. Those efforts fell principally on deaf ears as only three counties – Allegany, Garrett and Montgomery – responded to the PAB's inquiries. Allegany and Garrett County's PAB's have not expanded their roles beyond the strict legislative mandate.

Each coordinates regularly with the LEAs in its jurisdiction and reports no significant challenges in fulfilling its statutory role. The administrator of Montgomery County's program reported that its administrative charging committee meets twice monthly, handling between one and eight cases at each session. Given the volume of matters to be addressed, the Montgomery County ACC issues summary decisions typically one page in length. The PAB in Montgomery County does not veer from the statutory mandate, focusing on making recommendations to that County's LEAs arising from disciplinary actions. In sum, the Montgomery County PAB is operating essentially the same as our PAB. Montgomery County does invite local community leaders to its PAB meetings to address specific topics that impact law enforcement in that County. This concept was well received by our PAB, and we intend to pursue such speakers to make the quarterly meetings more constructive. For example, in Q1 2026, a guest speaker will address mental health challenges in Talbot County.

Mitchell S. Ettinger, Chair, presents to County Council on April 8, 2025





Trial Board Participation

During 2025, the PAB was asked to designate a civilian member to participate in two trial boards convened in other jurisdictions. Mr. Gilbert, who is one of two PAB members trained to serve as a trial board member, participated in both trial boards – one convened by Dorchester County and the other by the Maryland State Police. In each case, Mr. Gilbert served on a three-person board consisting of himself, a law enforcement officer and a retired judicial officer.

Administrative Charging Committee

As we notified the County Council earlier this year, Constance Hope passed away, leaving the ACC with four members. Ms. Hope was a wonderful colleague. We miss her substantive input and warm personality. We look forward to the Council's appointment of a member to serve the remainder of Ms. Hope's term. The terms of the current members are listed below:

Mitchell Ettinger
Chair (2022-2027)

Jennifer Williams
Co-Chair (2022-2027)

Wala-Neh Labala
Member (2022-2027)

Gregory Wilson
Member (2022-2026)

The ACC decided 15 cases this year, eight of which pertained to TCSO deputies and the remaining seven arose from complaints made against EPD officers. Ten of the 15 complaints resulted in the deputies/officers being exonerated. Three of the cases resulted in no action as the evidence was insufficient to sustain the misconduct allegations. Two cases resulted in administrative charges – one involving a Sheriff's deputy and one involving an EPD officer. The Sheriff's deputy failed to complete an adequate investigation, as required by TCSO Policy, before seeking criminal charges. The EPD officer lost his composure while conducting traffic control at an accident scene and verbally berated a motorist. Both cases fell within Category B of the Disciplinary Matrix and resulted in recommended dispositions of a loss of one or two days' pay or leave. Each officer accepted the ACC's recommended disposition. Accordingly, there were no requests for a Trial Board this year. A chart summarizing the complaints submitted to the ACC in 2025 and the corresponding dispositions is attached hereto as **Exhibit C**.

This report coincides with the conclusion of the ACC's third year in existence. We previously reported on the skepticism expressed by the LEAs regarding the need for and the ability of the ACC to evaluate fairly complaints regarding alleged police misconduct.

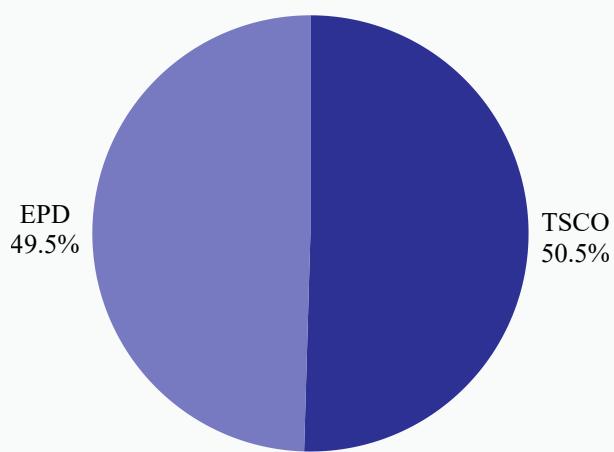
Although the LEAs certainly would prefer to resolve these matters without ACC involvement, we believe that they are becoming more comfortable with the legislative regimen as the ACC demonstrates its ability to analyze complex legal issues and apply the policies adopted by the LEAs in a fair and consistent manner.

Discernable Trends in Law Enforcement

Call Volume

The County's four LEAs provide coverage for 38,000 residents, and each track call volume utilizing different categorizations, which results in non-uniform data. Recent improvements have been incorporated to standardize the respective data, and overall, the information provides an excellent view of each LEA's volume of work. Many of the categories are common and include the following core police activities: responding to alarms, assisting other entities, managing emergency petitions, domestic calls, handling canine dispatches, and executing warrants. The LEAs also track neighborhood checks, conduct foot/bike patrols, make traffic stops, issue citations, manage the County's sex offender registry, file criminal complaints, provide Circuit Court security, and deploy School Resource Officers to nine area schools. Most activities are performed by the TCSO and the EPD. This year's combined call volume and activities of those two agencies alone was more than 70,000, which is an increase over last year's call volume.

● TSCO ● EPD

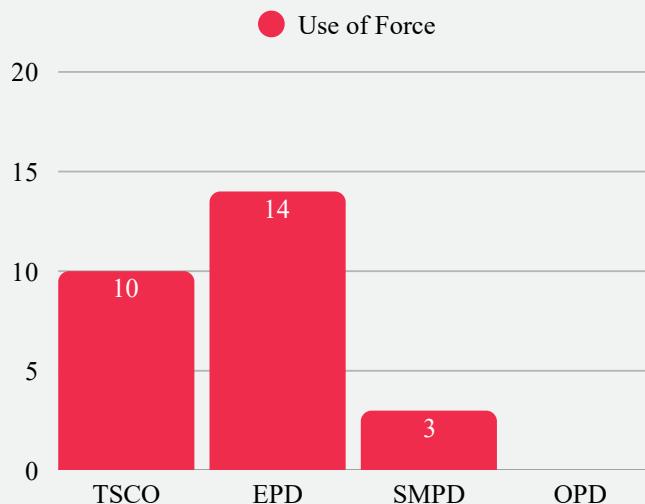


38,000

Talbot Co. Residents

Use of Force Reports

Use of force by law enforcement officers remains a PAB focus. Each LEA follows a comprehensive Use of Force Policy that guides personnel in their actions when dealing with the public. As seen last year, the number of use of force reports is relatively small given the number of interactions with the public and those involve minimal force. The PAB reviewed 27 Use of Force reports this year (TCSO - 10; EPD - 14; and SMPD - 3). Although the number of reports is slightly higher than last year (25), none involve the use of force greater than the minimal level of control and arrest techniques. No discernable trend was noted with respect to the use of force by any of the LEAs.



Arrests

Arrests in the County primarily involve first- and second-degree assault, theft, robbery, drug offenses, and warrants. The TCSO made 382 arrests, while the EPD reported 375, both slightly higher than last year. There has been an increase in telephone and internet fraud, particularly targeting elderly citizens, along with general gift card scams. Other arrests include commercial shoplifting and theft from unlocked vehicles. The EPD also noted an arrest related to a bank robbery and a rise in DUI arrests.

LEA Recruitment & Retention



Talbot County Sheriff's Office

The current staffing of the TCSO is 46 sworn deputies with authorization for 47. The Sheriff expects to bring on another deputy in January 2026, but also anticipates the departure of another deputy in that same time frame. The Maryland General Assembly has instituted new judicial security measures that requires each county to provide individual security for judicial officers during court sessions. TCSO estimates that additional deputies will be required to meet this legislative initiative by July 2026.

The TCSO reports that its salaries and benefits package is competitive with other jurisdiction and the quality of life offered on the Eastern Shore is a positive recruiting factor. Housing costs, however, remain an impediment to recruitment. In fact, 22 of the 46 current Sheriff deputies live outside the County.



Easton Police Department

The EPD is authorized to employ 48 sworn officers. It currently employs 42 sworn officers, with two candidates currently in the Maryland Police Academy. It is searching for four additional qualified officer candidates or transferees from other jurisdictions. The largest impediment to filling the vacancies has been the lack of qualified candidates. Chief Lowrey reports that EPD salaries are lagging behind other Maryland agencies, and he hopes to address that deficiency in the fiscal year. The EPD is offering a housing subsidy for those officers who reside in Easton.



St. Michaels Police Department

The SMPD is authorized to employ eight sworn officers. St. Michaels currently employs four full-time and two part-time sworn officers. Chief Oswald reports that the St. Michaels Town Commissioners improved its salary and benefits package in an effort to remain competitive when recruiting new officers and retaining its current officers. As with any small township, however, it is difficult for St. Michaels to remain competitive with neighboring law enforcement agencies as salaries are lower, and the lack of specialized units there is little opportunity for promotion.



Oxford Police Department

On November 18, 2025, the Commissioners of Oxford terminated the employment of Chief Chris Phillips. As a result of this action, the Oxford Police Department currently has one sworn officer. Oxford has authorized three sworn officers. On November 24, 2025, Oxford's Commissioners unanimously approved a request to Sheriff Gamble that TCSO provide oversight and assistance to the Oxford Police Department, including dedicated patrol coverage in Oxford. The Commissioners are evaluating long-term options for law enforcement services in Oxford, including whether to appoint a new Chief of Police or to pursue alternative models to meet the town's public safety needs.

LEA Community Relations Activities

All four LEAs have recurring monthly activities and special events to meet community needs and interests. Each participates in community events sponsored by a multitude of businesses, schools, places of worship, county agencies, charities and other community groups requesting their participation or assistance. These collective activities serve to promote community awareness to safety and well-being issues, and serve to foster goodwill between the LEAs and the communities they serve.

This year, besides the usual community and youth activities which have been reported in the last two PAB annual reports, there has been a focus on ICE activities, criminal conduct directed toward elderly citizens, and mental health awareness. For example, the EPD has met with community groups to ensure that they understand reporting suspected criminal conduct will not result in immigration action against either the victim or the person reporting the misconduct. The LEAs have made a concerted effort to raise community awareness regarding criminal scams directed toward the elderly. This constitutes only a sampling of the many efforts being made by the LEAs. A full accounting of community relations activities is accessible on the respective LEA websites and in their annual reports.

Recommendations to Improve Police Accountability in Talbot County

Pursuant to their legislative mandate, the PAB is charged with responsibility to identify discernable trends in police disciplinary processes and to make recommendations that serve to improve police accountability in the county. Given the relatively few complaints of alleged police misconduct over the past three years – and the fact that most were determined to be without merit – there is no discernable trend to report. The complaints submitted to the ACC generally involve one-off situations where the complainant feels that the deputy or officer acted unprofessionally. We note that no deputy or officer was administratively charged in 2025 for using excessive force when making an arrest or detaining an individual. We attribute the low volume of sustained complaints principally to the highly trained and experienced law enforcement officers that serve the County.

The PAB's mission is to foster transparency in matters involving the LEAs as they relate to the community, receive complaints of alleged misconduct and make policy recommendations designed to improve police accountability. In this regard, the PAB essentially functions as a liaison between the County Council, the LEAs, and the community. To best serve the County, its citizens need to know of its existence, purpose and role. The PAB requests that the Council assist us in raising community awareness of the PAB and ACC. Please consider referencing the work being done by the PAB and ACC at regular intervals during Council meetings, include references to the PAB and ACC on the Council's website, and extend an annual invitation to the PAB and ACC to present to the Council.

Exhibit A

**Agendas for the PAB
& LEA Meetings**



TALBOT COUNTY POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

MITCHELL S. ETTINGER, Chairman
WILLIAM BELDING, Commissioner
JOHN GILBERT, Commissioner
BRIAN NARANJO, Commissioner
JO ANN MURRAY, Commissioner
CHRIS RICE, Commissioner
CONNIE A. WEBSTER, Commissioner

11 N. Washington Street
Easton, Maryland 21601
Phone: 410-770-8092
Facsimile: 410-770-8007

Agenda

March 11, 2025
8:30 a.m. – Bradley Meeting Room
Courthouse, 11 North Washington St., Easton, Maryland

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes from the December 17, 2024 Meeting
- III. Old Business
- IV. Discussion with Law Enforcement Agencies
 - A. Introduction of newly appointed PAB member Brian Naranjo (August 1, 2025)
 - B. 2024 PAB Annual Report Feedback
 - C. Submission of Quarterly Use of Force Reports
 - D. Criminal Activity Trends or Upticks
 - E. Report on High-Speed Chase (TCSO)
 - F. ICE Actions in Talbot County
 - G. Community Relations Activities (Q1 and Q2 2025)
 - H. Complaint Mediation
 - I. Easton Police Department participation in Teen Court
 - J. Disclosure of Pending Investigations within ACC Purview

- K. Recommendations for PAB 2025 Focus
- L. PAB/ACC Attendance at Select LEA Training
- M. LEA Topics of Interest/Concern
- N. PAB Appearance Before the County Council (April 2025)

V. Announcement of next meeting – upon an Agenda

VI. Adjournment



TALBOT COUNTY POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

MITCHELL S. ETTINGER, Chairman
WILLIAM BELDING, Commissioner
JOHN GILBERT, Commissioner
BRIAN NARANJO, Commissioner
JO ANN MURRAY, Commissioner
CHRIS RICE, Commissioner
CONNIE A. WEBSTER, Commissioner

11 N. Washington Street
Easton, Maryland 21601
Phone: 410-770-8092
Facsimile: 410-770-8007

Agenda

May 13, 2025
8:30 a.m. – Bradley Meeting Room
Courthouse, 11 North Washington St., Easton, Maryland

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes from the March 11, 2025 Meeting
- III. Old Business
- IV. Discussion with Law Enforcement Agencies
 - A. Submission of Quarterly Use of Force Reports
 - B. Criminal Activity Trends or Upticks
 - C. Community Relations Activities (Q2 and Q3 2025)
 - D. Status of Pending Investigations within ACC Purview
 - E. Suggestions Regarding LEA Investigations of Alleged Police Misconduct
 - i. Form of Questions
 - ii. Timing of Witness Interviews
 - iii. Inclusion of Outside Legal Opinions
 - iv. Identification of Purported Discrepancies in Complainant's Statement
- F. LEA Topics of Interest/Concern
- G. Report on PAB Appearance Before the County Council and Possible Next Steps
- H. Report to PAB Regarding ACC Actions to Date
- I. Closed session to discuss (re)appointment of ACC Member

V. Announcement of next meeting – upon an Agenda

VI. Adjournment



TALBOT COUNTY POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

MITCHELL S. ETTINGER, Chairman
WILLIAM BELDING, Commissioner
JOHN GILBERT, Commissioner
BRIAN NARANJO, Commissioner
JO ANN MURRAY, Commissioner
CHRIS RICE, Commissioner
CONNIE A. WEBSTER, Commissioner

11 N. Washington Street
Easton, Maryland 21601
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Agenda

August 12, 2025
8:30 a.m. – Bradley Meeting Room
Courthouse, 11 North Washington St., Easton, Maryland

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes from the May 13, 2025 Meeting
- III. Old Business
- IV. Discussion with Law Enforcement Agencies
 - A. Submission of Quarterly Use of Force Reports
 - B. Criminal Activity Trends or Upticks
 - C. Community Relations Activities (Q3 and Q4 2025)
 - D. Status of Pending Investigations within ACC Purview
 - E. ICE Actions in Talbot County
 - F. LEA Topics of Interest/Concern
 - G. Report on PAB members' discussions with other PAB representatives
 - H. Report to PAB Regarding ACC Decisions
- V. Announcement of next meeting – upon an Agenda
- VI. Adjournment



TALBOT COUNTY POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

MITCHELL S. ETTINGER, Chairman
WILLIAM BELDING, Commissioner
JOHN GILBERT, Commissioner
BRIAN NARANJO, Commissioner
JO ANN MURRAY, Commissioner
CHRIS RICE, Commissioner
CONNIE A. WEBSTER, Commissioner

11 N. Washington Street
Easton, Maryland 21601
Phone: 410-770-8092
Facsimile: 410-770-8007

Agenda

November 4, 2025
8:30 a.m. – Bradley Meeting Room
Courthouse, 11 North Washington St., Easton, Maryland

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes from the August 12, 2025 Meeting
- III. Old Business
- IV. Discussion with Law Enforcement Agencies
 - A. Submission of Quarterly Use of Force Reports
 - B. Criminal Activity Trends or Upticks
 - C. Community Relations Activities (Q4 2025 & Q1 2026)
 - D. Status of Pending Investigations within ACC Purview
 - E. Recent Incidents:
 - i. Assault on TCSO Deputy Arrest (September 11, 2025)
 - ii. Cyclist Death
- F. PAB/LEA Topics of Interest/Concern
 - i. Migrant Community Response to ICE actions and effect on LEAs
 - ii. Take Aways from PAB Pre-Summit Meeting
 - iii. Revisit Mental Health Guest Speaker (Schedule for Q1 2026)
- V. Administrative Discussion
 - A. Assignments for Annual Report
 - B. Set Meeting to Revise Draft Annual Report

VI. Announcement of next meeting – upon an Agenda

VII. Adjournment

Exhibit B

Minutes from the
PAB & LEA Meetings

TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND
POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

Minutes of Public Meeting
March 11, 2025

The meeting of the Talbot County Police Accountability Board ("PAB") was called to order at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 11, 2025. Present were Chairman Mitchell Ettinger, Members William Belding, John Gilbert, Jo Ann Murray, Chris Rice, Connie Webster, and Board Secretary Victoria Bradley.

- I. Call to Order** – Chairman Ettinger called the meeting to order and made welcoming remarks.
- II. Minutes** – Upon motion made by Ms. Murray, seconded by Ms. Webster, the minutes of the Tuesday, December 17, 2024, PAB meeting were approved unanimously without modification.

III. Discussion with Law Enforcement Agencies ("LEA")

- a. 2024 PAB Annual Report Feedback** – The Chairman noted that the correction requested by the Talbot County Sheriff's Office ("TCSO") to the summary of an Administrative Charging Committee ("ACC") action was made and that the corrected copy was distributed to the County Council.
- b. Submission of Quarterly Use of Force Reports** – The discussion centered on the apparent trend that use of force was becoming more commonly associated with persons who are intoxicated or suffering from a mental health disorder. It was noted that none of the incidents reported by the LEAs resulted in serious injury. Oxford Police Department ("OPD") stated that LEAs across the country are experiencing the same trend.
- c. Criminal Activity Trends or Upticks** – The TCSO reported no uptick or trend in criminal activity. Easton Police Department ("EPD") reported a continuing uptick in retail theft. St. Michaels Police Department ("SMPD") has seen an uptick in thefts from automobiles as owners are failing to lock their cars.
- d. Report on High-Speed Chase** – The TSCO reported on a high-speed chase that occurred last year and resulted in a fatality. The Attorney General recently cleared the deputy involved in the incident. The TSCO have adopted new policies surrounding high speed pursuits, especially in light of the fact that Maryland State

Police do not assist with such pursuits when they cross county lines. There was only one such fatality in the county last year.

- e. *ICE Actions in Talbot County* – The PAB asked the LEAs to explain how, if at all, they cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) agents. The LEAs described a memo from the Maryland State Attorney General’s Office (the “AG”) that requires ICE agents to have a warrant to obtain LEA assistance. The TSCO emphasized that the AG generally recommends adopting a hands-off approach, leaving the ICE agents to act on their own. The TSCO observed that there have been no material changes to their procedures since the new administration began more aggressive immigration enforcement. EPD noted that ICE does not report their actions after the fact, notwithstanding that that is the expected standard procedure. The LEAs will hold an individual who has been incarcerated if there is a federal detainer for his arrest.

The LEAs have engaged with the community regarding rumors circulating regarding ICE actions. EPD recently sponsored “coffee with a cop” event with the Hispanic community to dispel such rumors and inform the community that they are available to help. The LEAs share the view that ICE actions can chill victims from reporting crimes to local authorities for fear of being arrested. The LEAs do not inquire into customs status in response to such calls and are endeavoring to ensure that the community understands this fact.

- f. *Community Relations Activities (Q1 and Q2 2025)* – The Chairman praised the LEAs on their Q1 community relations events. With respect to Q2, the TSCO will sponsor a citizen’s police academy. The academy requires attendance one day per week for ten weeks.

EPD too is hosting a citizen’s police academy, which closely tracks the curriculum offered by the TSCO.

The OPD continues to host coffee with a cop and have enjoyed a good turnout. OPD also has started to host events on Facebook Live on a variety of topics. Oxford Day is in April this year and it provides yet another opportunity for the OPD to interact with the community in a positive manner.

- g. *Complaint Mediation* – The Chairman inquired whether the LEAs have attempted to pursue mediation as a means to resolve a citizen’s complaint, noting that a recent complaint submitted to the ACC was well suited for mediation. The TSCO explained that it has offered mediation to complainants but there has been little or

no interest by the complainant in agreeing to attend mediation. The TSCO also noted the challenges associated with contacting complainants and their general lack of responsiveness. The TSCO said a further impediment to mediation is the mediator's requirement that all "willingly" participate in the process and any reluctance expressed by the complainant results in termination of the mediation. Ms. Murray asked if the LEAs have tried talking with the mediation team regarding their process to help avoid that issue. The Chairman suggested that working with the mediation staff to rephrase their in-take questions could prove fruitful. For example, instead of asking "are you here voluntarily," they could ask "are you here in an effort to resolve your complaint against the police officer?" The LEAs agreed that re-phrasing of the in-take questions could overcome this hurdle.

- h. *Easton Police Department Participation in Teen Court* – EPD reported that it is working with the TCSO and utilizing Teen Court. The Chairman discussed the recent article in the Star Democrat about Teen Court, which presented the program in a very positive light.
- i. *Disclosure of Pending Investigations within ACC Purview* – The Chairman emphasized the need for the LEAs to report newly filed complaints to Secretary Bradley, noting that this was the agreed upon process to assist the PAB in tracking the number of complaints in the investigative pipeline.
- j. *Recommendations for PAB 2025 Focus* – No suggestions were offered.
- k. *PAB/ACC Attendance at Select LEA Training* – The Chairman inquired whether there was any training that the PAB/ACC members would be permitted to attend. EPD have reached out to the police academy and were told, due to class space, they would not be able to allow citizens to attend. The TSCO stated much of its training is not done in house, and what they in-house typically is not suited for PAB/ACC participation.

The Chairman stated the PAB/ACC would be interested in any training done in-house that focused on things such as traffic stops or mental health situations. Attending such training sessions would enable the members to better understand the police officers' perspectives.

- l. *LEA Topics of Interest/Concern* – The TSCO requested that when the ACC imposes administrative charges against a deputy that it delineate by charge the discipline, if any, imposed. The Chairman agreed to raise this request with the ACC at its next meeting.

m. PAB Appearance Before the County Council (April 2025) – The Chairman noted that he will make a brief presentation to the County Council on April 8th and requested that other members attend the session. The purpose of the presentation is to obtain feedback from the Council regarding its expectations of both the PAB and ACC. The Chairman committed to circulating any presentation materials he intends to use in advance of the meeting for PAB comment.

IV. Next PAB Meeting – The Board set a date for the next PAB meeting with the Local Law Enforcement Agencies for May 13, 2025, at 8:30 am.

V. Adjournment – There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Gilbert and seconded by Ms. Webster to adjourn the meeting. The motion was passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 9:31 am.

**TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND
POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD**

Minutes of Public Meeting
May 13, 2025

The meeting of the Talbot County Police Accountability Board ("PAB") was called to order at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 13, 2025. Present were Chairman Mitchell Ettinger, Members William Belding, John Gilbert, Brian Naranjo, Jo Ann Murray, Chris Rice, Connie Webster, and Board Secretary Victoria Bradley.

- I. Call to Order** – Chairman Ettinger called the meeting to order and made welcoming remarks. The Chairman also introduced the newest member to the PAB, Mr. Brian Naranjo, who will be representing St. Michaels.
- II. Minutes** – Upon motion made by Mr. Gilbert, seconded by Ms. Webster, the minutes of the Tuesday, March 11, 2025, PAB meeting were approved unanimously without modification.
- III. Old Business** – We revisited the issue raised by the Easton Police Department ("EPD") regarding the necessity of redactions of juvenile identities on body worn camera film and in investigative reports submitted to the Administrative Charging Committee ("ACC"). The Chairman explained that he had consulted legal counsel to the PAB who advised that the ACC is subject to statutory confidentiality and that, for cases involving a juvenile, the ACC could review the information/data on One Drive and subsequently delete it upon disposition of the matter. Ultimately, the decision of whether to submit unredacted material to the ACC must be made by the individual LEAs. The Chairman recommended that the LEAs seek a legal opinion from the Attorney General's Office.

IV. Discussion with Law Enforcement Agencies ("LEA")

- a. Submission of Quarterly Use of Force Reports** – The Chairman thanked the LEA's for their submissions of the Use of Force Reports and noted that the incidents in the reports all seemed straight forward.
- b. Criminal Activity Trends or Upticks** – EPD reported a recent issue with election signs and street signs being defaced. The Talbot County Sheriff's Office ("TCSO") stated their call volume was up, but that is normal for this time of year. St. Michaels Police Department ("SMPD") and Oxford Police Department ("OPD") stated they have not seen any upticks or trends in their jurisdiction.

- c. Community Relations Activities (Q2 and Q3 2025) –TSCO stated they have finished their Citizen’s Junior Police Academy and are midway through the corresponding adult academy. The TSCO is planning another Citizen’s Junior Police Academy early next year.

The current EPD’s Citizen’s Police Academy class is graduating as well. The Chairman asked if the LEA’s feel the police academy is helping with recruitment. EPD stated they hired someone last year who attended the Academy. TSCO stated two attendees have indicated an interest in applying for deputy positions.

OPD stated they recently participated in the Oxford Day celebrations that had about 1,500 to 2,000 people in attendance. The feedback from the public was positive and overall it was a good community event. OPD further stated most of the LEA’s will be assisting with local 4th of July celebrations.

The Chairman noted the Rotary Club in St. Michaels wants to donate day passes for the community pool for use by those who cannot afford a membership. The SMPD said it is interested in being a distribution point for pool passes as it would be a good addition to their community outreach efforts.

- d. Status of Pending Investigations within ACC Purview – The Chairman asked the LEAs to send any pending investigation information to Secretary Bradley so that the ACC can be aware of what is coming to them. EPD stated they have two that are currently in the investigation process. SMPD stated they have one they will be submitting soon. TSCO stated they have one for the ACC June meeting and two that are currently in the investigation process.
- e. Suggestions Regarding LEA Investigations of Alleged Police Misconduct – The Chairman had a few observations from the ACC regarding the form of investigations and reports being submitted. The purpose of providing these observations is to provide constructive feedback.
 - i. Form of Questions – In a recent case submitted to the ACC, the officer subject to the complaint was interviewed principally through leading questions. The ACC would prefer that the officer be permitted to describe his or her version of events through direct questions, resulting in a narrative. Leading questions, used sparingly, are appropriate. When used as the principle form of inquiry, leading questions tend to undermine the credibility of the investigation.

- ii. *Timing of Witness Interviews* – The ACC noted that often interviews of the officer subject to the complaint are conducted months after the incident. It was suggested that the interview be conducted as close in time to the submission of the complaint as possible when the incident is likely to be top of mind to the officer.
- iii. *Inclusion of Outside Legal Opinions* – The ACC welcomes the citation of case law with the investigative file. However, the ACC does not need (or want) outside legal opinions to accompany the investigative file. The ACC has counsel to assist it with legal questions and opinions. The Chairman made clear that the ACC would not consider outside legal opinions regarding the appropriateness of the officer’s actions when making its decision.
- iv. *Identification of Purported Discrepancies in Complainant’s Statement* – The ACC noted that in a recent investigative file, the report identified “discrepancies” in the complainant’s narrative. The noted “discrepancies” were not internal inconsistencies but rather mere differences in perspective. Differences in perspective are properly noted, but are not best characterized as discrepancies in the complainant’s version of events.

f. *LEA Topics of Interest/Concern* – Mr. Naranjo asked if the LEA’s are concerned about losing or not obtaining federal grants under the current administration’s directives. The TSCO stated that it is a concern, but it has only one direct federal grant, which funds its policing of Trappe.

The TSCO submitted its budget request to the County Council and is awaiting its action. The largest equipment expenditure pertains to front-mounted vehicle cameras that would simultaneously activate when the emergency lights are or body worn cameras are engaged.

The TSCO advised that Deputy Bob Musterman recently passed away. He had a distinguished career in law enforcement. His absence has resulted in a staffing shortfall at the Circuit Courthouse.

SMPD stated it terminated the employment of an officer recently, resulting in only five officers on staff. The town has authorized the employment of eight officers.

g. Report on PAB Appearance Before the County Council and Possible Next Steps – The Chairman described the recent County Council meeting where the PAB was invited to present on the status of the PAB and ACC. During the presentation, the Chairman praised the cooperation received from the LEAs. The LEAs thanked the PAB and ACC members for their service and agree that they enjoy a good working relationship with each committee.

As a result of the interaction between the Chairman and the County Council, Mr. Naranjo suggested PAB members reach out to other PABs to learn about their successes and challenges. This suggestion was adopted and each member agreed to contact two PAB chairs and report back during the August meeting.

h. Report to PAB Regarding ACC Actions to Date – The Chairman discussed recent ACC decisions. In 2025, the ACC has decided eight (8) cases. Seven (7) of those matters arose from complaints filed in 2024.

V. Summary of Closed Session Held on May 13, 2025

A motion was made by Ms. Murray and seconded by Mr. Gilbert for the Board to move into closed session to discuss the possible reappointment of an Administrative Charging Committee member.

1. Statement of the time, place, and purpose of the closed session:

Time of closed Session: 9:46 a.m. to 9:51 a.m.

Place of closed session: Bradley Meeting Room

Purpose of the closed session: To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matters that affects one or more specific individuals.

2. Record of the vote of each member as to closing the session: Unanimous Aye
3. Statutory authority to close and listing of each topic actually discussed, persons present, and each action taken in the session:

Topic Description	Statutory Authority	Reason for Closed Session Discussion	Persons Present	Action Taken
To discuss possible reappointment of ACC member	GP § 3-305(b)(1)(i)	Public discussion would discourage individuals from volunteering to serve	Mitchell Ettinger, William Belding, John Gilbert, Brian Naranjo, Jo Ann Murray, Chris Rice, Connie Webster, Victoria Bradley	No action

A motion was made by Ms. Webster and seconded by Ms. Murray to reconvene in open session at 9:51 a.m.

VI. Next PAB Meeting – The Board set a date for the next PAB meeting with the Local Law Enforcement Agencies for August 12, 2025, at 8:30 am.

VII. Adjournment – There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Murray and seconded by Mr. Gilbert to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 9:52 am.

TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND
POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

Minutes of Public Meeting
August 12, 2025

The meeting of the Talbot County Police Accountability Board ("PAB") was called to order at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 12, 2025. Present were Chairman Mitchell Ettinger as well as Members Brian Naranjo, Jo Ann Murray, Chris Rice, Connie Webster, and Board Secretary Victoria Bradley.

- I. Call to Order** – Chairman Ettinger called the meeting to order and made welcoming remarks.
- II. Minutes** – Upon motion made by Ms. Webster, seconded by Mr. Rice, the minutes of the Tuesday, May 13, 2025, PAB meeting were approved unanimously with one spelling correction.

III. Old Business – There was no old business to discuss.

IV. Discussion with Law Enforcement Agencies ("LEA")

- a. Submission of Quarterly Use of Force Reports** – Chairman Ettinger thanked the LEA's for their submissions of the Use of Force Report summaries, noting that there were no major incidents. The Chairman requested that the LEAs submit the actual use of force reports in lieu of summaries.
- b. Criminal Activity Trends or Upticks** – The Talbot County Sheriff's Office ("TCSO") stated they were seeing an uptick in mental health related calls and cases across the County. TCSO provided information and background regarding the Mobile Crises Program in Talbot County and described recent challenges it had faced. TCSO stated that more resources were needed in the County to address mental health related issues.

Easton Police Department ("EPD") discussed a recent bank robbery and the detective work that led to the arrest of those involved.

The LEAs noted that they were still seeing too many Internet scams aimed primarily at senior citizens.

- c. Community Relations Activities (Q3 and Q4 2025) – TCSO stated there was a good turnout at the National Night out event. TCSO stated they were preparing for Talbot Go Purple's event on September 5th.

The LEAs noted the decline in turn out from the Hispanic/Latino community at public events for fear of ICE enforcement actions. EPD visited a number of Hispanic churches to inform the community of state laws and resources available. The principal purpose of these presentations was to emphasize the role of the local police department – to ensure the safety of the residents and that they should not hesitate to reach out for fear of deportation.

- d. Status of Pending Investigations within ACC Purview – EPD has two (possibly three) complaints under investigation. TCSO currently has three complaints under investigation and anticipates submitting one or two to the ACC next month.
- e. ICE Actions in Talbot County – Ms. Bradley reported on phone call conversations she had with concerned members of the community regarding recent ICE activity in the County. Ms. Bradley stated both members of the community expressed fright over ICE actions and were seeking information regarding their legal and civil rights, and the role of the local police in such enforcement actions.

EPD stated they referred people to Lt. Orionta within its department, who a native Spanish speaker who could assist members of the community. EPD also stated they provided contact information for the Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center (“ChesMRC”) located on Dover Road in Easton, a center that provides legal service referrals, immigration services, and family and employment support.

EPD further stated if a member of the community was uncertain whether someone appearing at their home was an ICE or other federal official, the EPD would dispatch an officer to confirm the identity of the purported federal officer.

TCSO stated the Sheriff's Association met with the Maryland ICE Director, who reported that she was not seeing due process issues with the manner by which ICE operated. TSCO noted that ChesMRC worked to bond out detained individuals and set a bond hearing in Baltimore. Most, if not all such detainees, received a bond hearing within 30 days. TCSO further stated its belief that ICE agents were targeting specific individuals and not arresting random individuals.

The LEAs had received phone calls from concerned citizens about the recent ICE activity were doing their best to educate and assist the community. All the LEAs stated they were not receiving any communications from ICE directly. The LEAs

had requested more direct communications from ICE, noting the lack of communication created additional challenges. LEAs had seen more missing persons reports as a result of families unable to locate family members who had been detained by ICE.

- f. LEA Topics of Interest/Concern* – None at this time.
- g. Report on PAB members' discussions with other PAB representatives* – The PAB members discussed their feedback and experiences when reaching out to other PABs to learn about their successes and challenges. Unfortunately, most members' outreach was not returned, neither with return calls nor email responses. Chairman Ettinger reported on his conversation with the administrator for the Montgomery County PAB and ACC. Their ACC met twice monthly, handling anywhere from 1-8 cases at each session. Because of the volume of matters, the Montgomery County ACC issued summary decisions typically one page in length. Montgomery County had a good working relationship with their LEAs. The PAB did not veer from the statutory mandate, focusing on recommendations arising from disciplinary actions. Its current focus regarded LEA policies that use the term “may” and determining whether it would be beneficial or more appropriate to make such discretionary actions mandatory (“shall”). In sum, the Montgomery County PAB operated essentially the same as our PAB.

Montgomery County's PAB invited local community leaders to its PAB meetings to talk with the LEAs and PAB about specific topics. This concept was well received by the Talbot County LEAs and the other members of our PAB. Ms. Webster suggested the first invitation could be extended to county officials working to quell the mental health crisis.

- h. Report to PAB Regarding ACC Decisions* – Chairman Ettinger discussed the most recent ACC decision.

V. Next PAB Meeting – The Board set a tentative date for the next PAB meeting with the Local Law Enforcement Agencies for November 4, 2025, at 8:30 am.

VI. Adjournment – There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Webster and seconded by Mr. Rice to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 9:38 am.

TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND
POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

Minutes of Public Meeting
November 4, 2025

The meeting of the Talbot County Police Accountability Board ("PAB") was called to order at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, November 4, 2025. Present were Chairman Mitchell Ettinger as well as Members William Belding, John Gilbert, Brian Naranjo, Jo Ann Murray, Chris Rice, Connie Webster, and Board Secretary Victoria Bradley.

- I. **Call to Order** – Chairman Ettinger called the meeting to order and made welcoming remarks.
- II. **Minutes** – Upon motion made by Mr. Naranjo, seconded by Mr. Belding, the minutes of the Tuesday, August 12, 2025, PAB meeting were approved unanimously.

III. **Old Business** – There was no old business to discuss.

IV. **Discussion with Law Enforcement Agencies ("LEA")**

- a. **Submission of Quarterly Use of Force Reports** – Chairman Ettinger thanked the LEAs for their submissions of Use of Force Report summaries. The Chairman noted that the PAB wants to review the actual use of force reports, not summaries, and requested that they comply with this request going forward.
- b. **Criminal Activity Trends or Upticks** – Easton Police Department ("EPD") referenced an uptick in gift card scams that are targeting the elderly population. Oxford Police Department ("OPD") noted the increasing use of AI in fraudulent schemes (e.g., voice replication).

Lt. Orellana (EPD) reported on the difficulty of detecting the source of these fraudulent schemes and the need to educate the public as the best defense to preventing people from being deceived. In this regard, the Talbot County Sheriff's Office ("TCSO") representatives visited local senior centers and residences to alert the public to the perceived threats.

Chairman Ettinger inquired whether the government shut-down had resulted in an increase in theft related crimes. Although that is not a noted trend, the LEAs anticipate an uptick in shoplifting and related offenses as the holidays approach.

EPD stated they have seen an uptick in auto theft and/or things stolen from unlocked vehicles. In response to Mr. Gilbert's question, EPD noted that the thefts are taking place in residential areas. St. Michaels Police Department ("SMPD") reported a recent vehicle theft that was recovered by the EPD. TCSO observed that teenagers are committing a majority of these crimes.

Mr. Naranjo asked the LEAs to address any perceived trends in drug overdoses in Talbot County. The LEAs responded that the number of reported overdoses is on the decline. TCSO suggested that this may be due to the fact that Talbot County has a large contingent of trained individuals in the use of Narcan, which certainly has reduced the number of fatalities.

- c. Community Relations Activities (Q4 2025 and Q1 2026) – Chairman Ettinger asked if there were any upcoming community relation events and whether there was a need or potential for PAB assistance.

The LEAs noted that they received significant local support (e.g., Rotary Clubs and churches) and other donors who make the holiday programming possible. Planned events include Shop with a Cop, coat drives and Nicole's Promise. Nicole's Promise is a program that directly supports children who have lost a parent to, struggling with or in recovery from addiction.

Mr. Belding thanked the TCSO for its assistance with Oxford's Constitution Day event. More than 150 people participated, and TCSO provided added security on short notice.

- d. Status of Pending Investigations within ACC Purview – TCSO currently has two complaints under investigation, while EPD currently has three complaints under investigation.

- e. Recent Incidents:

- i. Assault on TCSO Deputy Arrest (September 1, 2025) – TCSO stated that a Deputy responded to a late-night call, and the person at the scene became disorderly. The incident was described as relatively minor, but required officers to use force to gain compliance of the assailant.
 - ii. Recent Cyclist Death – EPD stated the incident is still under investigation and was not able to give many details at this time. EPD noted that the scene

of the accident is poorly lit and the road is heavily traveled. They will consider ways to make the area safer for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

- iii. St. Michaels Middle High School* – TCSO reported that a former teacher from St. Michaels Middle High School was apparently experiencing mental health issues, resulting in heightened security at the school. No actual safety issues arose from this incident.

f. LEA Topics of Interest/Concern:

- i. Migrant Community Response to ICE actions and effect on LEAs* – In response to Mr. Naranjo's inquiry, EPD's Lt. Orellana notable considerable community outreach to assure the citizens that they should not be wary of seeking help from the police for fear of being deported. For example, EPD was working with the Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center (ChesMRC) and connecting with the youth to foster improved communications and trust. For example, the EPD participated in a ChesMRC-organized hybrid meeting; though few attended in-person, over 500 people participated via teleconference platform. No other LEA commented on this matter.
 - ii. Take Aways from PAB Pre-Summit Meeting* – Ms. Webster noted that a few counties proactively publicize the existence and purpose of the PAB; for example, by attending public events and providing handouts. Commissioner Gilbert looked forward to interacting with the other PAB members and exchanging ideas and experiences.
 - iii. Revisit Mental Health Guest Speaker (Schedule for Q1 2026)* – Chairman Ettinger asked whether LEAs had a possible speaker for the next PAB meeting to address the mental health challenges in Talbot County. TCSO suggested a speaker from For All Seasons. Ms. Murray offered to reach out to that organization to see if somebody would be interested in addressing the next PAB meeting.

V. Old Business and Administrative Discussion – The Board discussed the assignments for the Annual Report and set a tentative date for the next meeting to discuss and finalize the Draft Annual Report.

VI. Next PAB Meeting – The Board set a tentative date for the next PAB meeting for December 15, 2025, at 9:00 am.

VII. Adjournment – There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Murray and seconded by Ms. Webster to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 9:35 am.

Exhibit C

ACC Disposition
Chart

PAB-ACC Reference #	Allegations	Investigation Agency	ACC Disposition
25-001	False traffic violation	Easton PD	Not Sustained
25-002	Failing to issue a report, Investigation, Enforcement Action, Notification of body cam	Easton PD	Category B
25-003	Rude, Discourteous, unprofessional conduct	Sheriff	Exonerated
25-004	False Report, misconduct	Sheriff	discourteous - Unfounded/ false report - Exonerated / [TSCO Policies §§423.6(a) and 600.3.1(b)(4)]
25-005	Rude & Discourteous/Operating agency vehicle beyond jurisdiction	Easton PD	Unfounded
25-006	Improper reporting/misconduct	Easton PD	Exonerated
25-007	Unlawful Detention	Sheriff	Unfounded & Exonerated
25-008	Unsafe Vehicle Use	Easton PD	Unfounded
25-009	Improper Reporting & investigating	Sheriff	Unfounded & Exonerated
25-010	Excessive Force on Minor	Easton PD	Exonerated
25-011	Discourteous & Discrimination/Oppression	Sheriff	Exonerated
25-012	Unprofessional	Sheriff	Unfounded & Exonerated
25-013	Unlawful search & Discourteous	Sheriff	Unfounded & Exonerated
25-014	Negligent & Derelict when conducting welfare check	Easton PD	Unfounded & Exonerated
25-015	Rude & Discourteous	Easton PD	Sustained - EPD Policy 1100.6.1 & 422.9

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