



Somerset County Police Accountability Board
(End of Year Report, December, 2023)

Dear Somerset County Commissioners,

The Somerset County Police Accountability Board (SCPAB) continued to meet on a quarterly basis in 2023 as a result of the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021, and the Somerset County Resolution number 1,177 pertaining to the SCPAB. The SCPAB members selected by the Somerset County, Maryland Commissioners are Dr. Kirkland Hall Sr., Bruce Parkinson, Julie Thomas, Ivan Lankford, and Chairman Martin Koerner. The Somerset County Administrative Charging Committee (SCACC) members were selected as required and are Reverend Charles Bagley, Pastor James Riley, Pastor Steve Willing, and Chairman Martin Koerner. SCACC member Cynthia Powell resigned her position this year and it has been requested the Somerset County Commissioners fill this vacancy within the SCACC as soon as practical.

Over the past twelve (12) months, the SCPAB and SCACC have accomplished the following:

- The SCPAB has met on a quarterly basis with law enforcement heads, reviewed case results, and discussed relevant law enforcement issues pertaining to Somerset County.
- The SCPAB has responded to FOIA requests.
- The SCPAB has responded to media inquiries.
- As required, in 2023, the SCPAB has appointed a Civilian Trial Board member, Cathy Landon. Ms. Landon has completed the required two-day training and has participated in a two-day local trial board. Ms. Landon has proven to be an integral part of the SCPAB.

- The SCACC has reviewed all cases put before them in 2023 in an efficient and timely manner, and issued decisions on these cases.

The below chart summarizes the citizen complaints reported to the SCPAB made against law enforcement officers in Somerset County from January 1, 2023 through present date:

Agency	Number of Citizen Complaints	Allegation Type	Outcome
Sheriff's Office	1	Unprofessional Conduct	Under Investigation
Princess Anne P.D.	5/2	Inappropriate Conduct/Department Collisions	Closed
Crisfield P.D.	1	Inappropriate Conduct	Closed
Total	9		

In reviewing the chart, several items should be pointed out. First, the Maryland State Police and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore Police Department do not report citizen complaints to the SCPAB; they report investigative findings to the State of Maryland PAB. We are fortunate the Maryland State Police Princess Anne Barrack and University of Maryland Eastern Shore Police Department have attended SCPAB meetings. They have offered input relevant to citizen and policing concerns during the meetings in order to provide this information to the Somerset County Commissioners. The Somerset County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) case listed above was reported by the complainant using the Somerset County website via the SCPAB complaint form and was then forwarded by the SCPAB to the Sheriff's Office for investigation. This investigation is pending completion by the SCSO.

A question was put forth to the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) in regards to the SCACC making determinations on departmental collisions. It is the opinion of the MPTSC that all county and state ACC's will review the results of departmental collisions involving damage to citizen's property. The Princess Anne Police Department has forwarded the results of their departmental collisions to the SCACC for review and these cases were decided upon. It is the opinion of the SCPAB/SCACC board members this is not necessary and the review process should be allowed to remain with the Sheriff and Chief of Police.

In an effort to provide a comprehensive report to the Somerset County Commissioners for 2023, it can be stated it does not appear any of the allegations made against the law enforcement officers working in Somerset County are related, and they are not a potential police accountability trend.

During each SCPAB quarterly meeting, the following questions are asked of the law enforcement heads in attendance;

1. Are there any police accountability trends that you would like to bring to our attention?

2. Is there anything we can do as a Police Accountability Board in working with you all to improve matters of policing in Somerset County?
3. Are there any requests or information you would like us to bring to the attention of the Somerset County Commissioners to improve matters of policing in Somerset County?
4. Questions?

In this way, the SCPAB has attempted to solicit discussion and feedback for the Somerset County Commissioners to consider.

SCPAB Recommendations

During the course of the year 2023, several areas of interest were raised and discussed during the SCPAB meetings. States Attorney Wess Garner requested support and funding be provided to the Somerset County Sheriff's Office for Body-Worn Camera equipment. This request and information was provided to the Somerset County Commissioners. SCPAB member Kirkland Hall Sr. spoke of his concerns with juvenile violence and safety in Somerset County schools. Mr. Hall spoke of his concern for the students, teachers, and law enforcement in the schools and believes the laws regarding juveniles should be changed and/or improved upon. It appeared everyone in attendance during this SCPAB meeting was in agreement and this information was provided to the Somerset County Commissioners.

If in 2024, the State legislature meets, reviews, and makes changes to *House Bill 670 – Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021*; it is recommended local government entities and citizens have a voice in the process. States Attorneys, Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police should also be permitted to offer suggestions and content in order to improve the legislation.

In summary, the SCPAB will continue to work on improving the current processes, and continue to work with law enforcement agencies and the county government to improve matters of policing in Somerset County, Maryland.

Respectfully,

(SCPAB Members)

Dr. Kirkland Hall Sr.

Bruce Parkinson

Julie Thomas

Ivan Lankford

Martin Koerner

