

## POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE, INC. (PAL)

The Police Athletic League, INC. (PAL) Meeting was held on June 11, 2025 at 3:32 p.m. via Microsoft Teams with Chief Thomas A. Johnson, Jr. presiding. Members of the PAL Board in attendance were Dr. Chanda Jackson, and Kevin Baird, Esq. Dr. Wilma Mishoe was absent.

### **MIGRATING THE POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE TO A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

Chief Thomas A. Johnson, Jr. discussed letter dated June 6, 2025 to members of the Police Athletic League Board regarding the transitioning of PAL to a foundation (Attachment #1).

Responding to Chief Johnson regarding the movement of funds into the CenDel Foundation, Mr. Baird stated that the Tax Identification Number can remain the same as well as the bank account; however, moving forward there would need to be a meeting to discuss by-law changes, name changes, etc. Chief Johnson mentioned that he would like to add more board members to include someone with a financial background to help with tax statements as well as someone with a human resources perspective.

Dr Chanda Jackson stated that she spoke with Dr. Wilma Mishoe regarding the agenda for the meeting and there were questions regarding the urgency of the request to migrate to a community foundation and whether or not it could wait until August to give the Board more time to strategize what PAL might look like under the Dover Community Policing Foundation, what the vision is and strategic planning moving forward. She further mentioned, that although all four of the areas mentioned in the letter (PAL, Victim Services, Forensic Testing, & Officer Wellness), are important, she wanted to make sure that the funds are sustainable for PAL in the event that money gets tight.

Responding to the questions of Dr. Mishoe, presented by Dr. Jackson, Chief Johnson stated the different missions in the foundation, in the proposed form, would each have their own line item of committed dollars and PAL's assets would not be intermingled with the other missions. He further stated that the fundraising event has already been rescheduled twice and since it is being held at the personal residence of Mrs. Tonda Parks, he is respecting her personal schedule with regards to the proposed date in August. Chief Johnson stated that the conversion of PAL into the foundation could wait until the mission, vision, bylaws and organizational structure were revised and until then will remain the Police Athletic League in a relationship with the CenDel Foundation and in the interim, they will invest a portion of the current balance of PAL funds, which currently sits in a checking account, not earning any appreciation. Chief Johnson further mentioned that with a foundation, more people could get involved and strategic vision could be established with more energy, points of view and perspectives to bring good ideas. Chief Johnson stated that if the fund was set up initially, with an exit strategy, if we become dissatisfied, all funds can come back to PAL to be managed again, as a separate body.

Mr. Kevin Baird mentioned that he is a former board member of CenDel Foundation, and that it is a good organization with good people, he further mentioned that they manage financial assets prudently and appropriately. The funds are put in a huge pot so they have a lot of power and the ability to access things that PAL cannot as a small group. Mr. Baird stated that he sees very little to zero risk with establishing a relationship with moving a portion of the funds to CenDel that will primarily going to be used to fund PAL or whatever PAL ultimately becomes.

After a lengthy discussion it was determined that PAL would stay in their current structure with a portion of the approximately \$60,000.00 currently in PAL's Account to CenDel to open up a fund. The merging of PAL into the Dover Community Policing Foundation would be discussed at an upcoming PAL Meeting for further clarification. In the meantime, Chief Johnson will work on a proposal with his vision of the merge.

Dr. Jackson moved to execute documents with the CenDel Foundation for the limited purpose of creating the City of Dover Community Policing Fund and to transfer the minimum of \$10,000.00 required by CenDel to get the fund established, seconded by Mr. Baird and unanimously carried (Dr. Mishoe was absent).

Responding to Dr. Jackson, Chief Johnson stated that the \$10,000.00 start up money will be used only for PAL and the only way there would be money used for other areas in the Dover Community Policing Foundation would be if a donation came in for a specific area other than PAL at the kick off reception. Chief Johnson further mentioned that if a donation came in not earmarked, he would need to talk to the larger board to determine how the funds were going to be used. Mr. Baird mentioned that CenDel can only disperse checks to 501 C3 organizations and not direct to beneficiaries, CenDel is the money manager.

Meeting adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

Attachment #1 – Letter from Chief Johnson regarding the migration of the Police Athletic League into a foundation.

# CITY OF DOVER DEPARTMENT OF POLICE



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THOMAS A. JOHNSON, JR.  
Deputy Chief of Police  
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Police Captains  
RANDY R. ROBBINS  
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KEVIN A. STREADWICK

6 June 2025

To the members of the PAL Board of Directors

Re: Foundation Transition Process

Greetings;

Please consider this a briefing in advance of our scheduled meeting of 11 June 2025. Thank you all for coming together on relatively short notice. As I mentioned in a prior meeting in early 2024, I have been looking for a way to bring additional strength to the mission of PAL and other important underfunded areas of our agency mission. I've been spending the requisite time doing the necessary research, seeking advice, and obtaining the authority to establish a Foundation to support community policing in the City of Dover. Admittedly, momentum was lost on more than one occasion due to significant demands on my time related to agency operations or addressing organizational problems. In recent weeks, I have been able to resume the forward momentum and would like to report on our progress.

Several key individuals have helped me get to this point. The Mayor has been fully briefed and has authorized the creation of a Community Policing-based Foundation in support of the Police Athletic League, to expand the capacity of our Victim Services Unit, to address funding for critical Forensic Testing needs, to support Officer Wellness programs, and to engage any other critical need as identified by the civilian Board of Directors. Dr. Dina Vendetti of the Chamber of Commerce has joined Mrs. Kim Willson of Ruggerio, Willson and Watson and Mrs. Tonda Parks of the Daily State News to facilitate a special reception with the sole purpose of getting our message out and getting us started. While not set in stone, the tentative date of the reception is the 16<sup>th</sup> of July at Mrs. Parks' residence.

For a brief time, there was consideration to stopping short of establishing our own Foundation and instead focus on a Community Policing Fund under the umbrella of the CenDel Foundation. Once that idea was fully vetted, there were certain barriers discovered that made it impossible to do one without doing the other. So after all things have been considered, and in the interest of advancing the mission of PAL to another level, I would request the Board consider the following action.

1. Begin the process of converting the City of Dover Police Athletic League, INC into the Dover Community Policing Foundation in whatever way is deemed legal, as well as most practical, and authorize the Chief of Police to advance the process as soon as practical.
2. Authorize the release of \$10,000 in PAL funds to be the beginning balance of the Dover Community Policing Fund managed by the CenDel Foundation. This will allow donations to be accepted at the reception and allow the PAL fund balance to grow through investment.

As noted in the PAL By-Laws, the Chief of Police can execute the action of the Board. This request is made with the follow thoughts in mind.

1. PAL has struggled to find a way to fundraise due to the obvious limitations of the current team of Officers and Board Members. That is nobody's fault. There are huge limitations on all our discretionary time and an innovative solution is needed.
2. Corporal Smith is an exceptional PAL Director but his time and talents will someday be pulled in a different direction. PAL must be ready for that with funding sources that are not directly tied to Anthony's unique ability to solicit donations for programs and obtain special courtesy from other organizations.
3. If we can eliminate sustainability concerns from the Director's duties, the position can focus on the delivery of programs and make a bigger difference in the lives of more of our young people.
4. The CenDel Foundation has the ability to invest the current assets of PAL and make each donation grow while we prepare for operations each year. That is why I am requesting the minimum amount required by CenDel to establish a fund within their Foundation. If things go as planned, and initial estimates are realized, then the PAL Board can consider investing a larger portion of their current assets to further grow the cash reserve.
5. When the entire process is complete, the Dover Community Policing Fund will release dollars to the Dover Community Policing Foundation at the direction of the authorized official. To be clear, the authorized official will not be me or any other Police Officer. The whole premise of a Police Foundation requires the governance of community members.
6. Eventually, the Dover Community Policing Foundation will be born from the framework of the current Police Athletic League. As stated earlier, the four pillars of the Foundation will be made up of PAL, Victim Services, Forensic Testing, and Officer Wellness.
  - a. The mission and vision of PAL is already known to us.
  - b. The Dover PD Victim Services Unit just added a second staff member and is always short on resources for victims of crime and tragic events, as well as the survivors.
  - c. In pursuit of justice, the Police Department and the Attorney General's Office will often encounter large unanticipated costs in the area of Forensic Testing. To ensure that the best evidence is available in major criminal cases, the goal is to have the Foundation available to cover the cost of expensive tests that are crucial to a conviction but might not be ordered due to budget constraints.

- d. There have been startling discoveries over the last 5 years on just how poorly our municipal and policing administrations have been at recognizing and responding to the trauma and cumulative career stress suffered by our first responders. To quickly make the case, the suicide rate of police officers is now 2.5 times the rate of line of duty death each statistical year. And that is just the number of officers still employed as there is no available reporting mechanism for the suicides of retired officers. We must respond to this problem so our team members can sustain themselves throughout their careers.

It is my intention to have all existing members of the PAL Board, should they desire, continue on as the Charter Members of the Foundation's Board. It is my intention to financially account for each pillar of the Foundation as a separate mission. Therefore; should something lead to the premature demise of the Community Policing Foundation, the PAL can continue as before and have its resources returned to a reconstituted PAL entity. In the interim, any unspecified donation to the Foundation can support any of the pillars and will be divided equally across the four areas of focus should the Foundation dissolve.

Bottom line- in the summer of 2025, we need to establish the CenDel account, before the date of the reception, so we have the capacity to receive donations for the planned Foundation. Mrs. Parks has considerable experience in this area and has advised that we should plan for certain motivated donors to offer checks to us at the initial reception. I'm not counting on that happening, but I would also like to be prepared should the best case scenario come to pass. We will have plenty of time in the months to come to figure out the best way to create the Police Foundation. While we do that, the PAL can keep functioning as currently constituted and there is no gap in service.

Clearly there is much to discuss and I look forward to answering any questions at the meeting on Wednesday. There is so much more background that I could not possibly have covered in this letter but nothing is a secret so have your questions ready.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas A. Johnson, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Thomas A. Johnson, Jr.  
Chief of Police