



POLICE REVIEW & ADVISORY BOARD

A Department of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Minutes from the Meeting of October 28, 2020

Board Members present: Chair Ted Robitaille, Ann Coyne, Bet MacArthur, Lucy Murray-Brown, Beverly Sealey

City Staff present: Executive Director Brian Corr, Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa; CPD Director of Professional Standards and Training and Certification Unit James Mulcahy, and Lieutenant Phil McDavitt

Chair Robitaille called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Public Comment

There were no comments from members of the public.

Review and Approval of Minutes

The Board unanimously approved the minutes of the September 30, 2020 meeting on a motion from Board Member Coyne seconded by Board Member Murray-Brown.

Election of a Chair

Exec. Dir. provided an overview of the role of Chair position which is elected by the Board. There are no requirements to be a Chair. The Chair facilitates the monthly meeting, works on the agenda with the Exec. Dir. In addition, the Chair is the member who determines whether if executive session minutes are still covered by Section 21(a)(1) of the Mass. Open Meeting Law. Exec. Dir. Corr opened the floor for nominations. Board Member Coyne nominated Board Member Murray-Brown, who accepted the nomination. Board Member Murray-Brown nominated Board Member Robitaille, who accepted the nomination. As there were no further nominations, Board Members Robitaille and Murray-Brown each spoke to why they would be interested in being chair.

By roll call vote, Board Members MacArthur and Murray-Brown voted for Robitaille, Board Members Robitaille and Coyne voted for Murray-Brown, and with Board Member Sealey abstaining. Board Member Murray-Brown then withdrew her name for consideration, and in a second roll call vote, Board Member Robitaille was reelected as chair with Board Members Coyne, MacArthur, and Murray-Brown voting for Robitaille and with Robitaille and Sealey abstaining.

Executive Director's Report

- Exec. Dir. Corr reminded the Board that in December the meeting is rescheduled to the first Wednesday (Dec. 2nd) to combine the November and December meetings.
- Exec. Dir. Corr asked the Board Members for their availability to have a training on Vision Zero.
- Exec. Dir. Corr was a speaker at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government on the topic of civilian oversight of law enforcement for the third of seven sessions of "Reimagining Community Safety: A Program in Criminal Justice Speaker Series." The series is organized by Prof. Sandra Susan Smith and Prof. Chris Winship to better understand key topics about community safety from the perspective of practitioners, policymakers, community leaders and activists, and academics. Other speakers in the series include: Suffolk County DA Rachael Rollins; Ron Davis, Director of the U.S. Dept. of Justice COPS Office; Prof. Barry Friedman,

founder of the Policing Project and New York University School of Law; and Tracie Keese, co-founder of the Center for Policing Equity and former NYPD Deputy Commissioner for Training.

- Exec. Dir. Corr facilitated four 90-minute community focus groups in Cedar Rapids, Iowa as an effort to implement civilian oversight of their police department. The Cedar Rapids City Council has committed to partner with Cedar Rapids Alliance for Social Justice (the local Black Lives Matter group) and NACOLE to establish civilian oversight to ensure fair and professional law enforcement that is responsive to community needs, and that people of color and other underrepresented citizens are treated equitably.
- Exec. Dir. Corr met with and presented to the Westchester County, NY Police Reform and Reimagining Task Force, which has been established by the county government following the killing of George Floyd. The County Executive put together a working group charged with producing a report within 30 days that addresses various police reforms.
- Exec. Dir. Corr has been tapped by the City Manager's office to support the Cambridge Public Health Department with a call center project helping Cambridge residents and workers sign up for Cambridge flu shot clinics and COVID-19 testing, as well as future efforts for COVID-19 vaccine deployment.

Professional Standards Unit Report

Director Mulcahy shared updates from the Cambridge Police Department (CPD):

- Director Mulcahy reported that an important aspect of CPD's focus at the moment is ensuring enhanced security and a safe environment the days leading up to, on day of and during the days following Election Day. In addition to teaming up with local election and City officials, CPD has been working closely with agency partners and members of the business community.
- Director Mulcahy announced that CPD will be able to enroll and begin training the third class at the joint CPD/Northeastern University police academy in January 2021. Director Mulcahy described the student officers as diverse and qualified. There are several new trainings regarding implicit bias, domestic terrorism, and officer wellness.

Discussion on 2020 NACOLE Virtual Conference

Board Member MacArthur stated that she was impressed by the topics covered in the trainings. Particularly, Board Member MacArthur was left reflecting on veterans hired by police departments and wondering how they are screened for PTSD. Director Mulcahy clarified that applicants to be considered for police officers have to pass a medical and psychological evaluation before the physical abilities test and academy.

Board Member Murray-Brown explained that her interests aligned with the sessions on community outreach. Specifically, Board Member Murray-Brown is interested in figuring out ways to engage the community not only educate target groups. Board Members MacArthur, Robitaille, and Sealey expressed their interest in helping.

Based on what he learned at one of the conference sessions, Chair Robitaille suggested PRAB staff could start asking complainants, "What outcome do you expect? What can make this right for you?" Project Coordinator Rosa explained that when she engages with complainants, she will ask: "What is your ideal outcome?" These types of questions help determine the best course of action when someone considering filing a complaint.

Consideration of Complaints before the Board and Adjournment

Board Member MacArthur moved that the Board enter executive session pursuant to Section 21(a)(1) of the Mass. Open Meeting Law to discuss pending complaints PR-2020-003 and PR-2020-007. The motion was seconded by Board Member Murray-Brown and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board entered executive session at 7:12 p.m. and adjourned the meeting from executive session at 7:47 p.m.

Documents Used During the Meeting

- Police Review & Advisory Board Minutes of September 28, 2020