



# POLICE REVIEW & ADVISORY BOARD

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*A Department of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts*

## **Minutes from the Meeting of March 29, 2023**

**Board Members present:** Chair Alexandra Fallon, Maria Arlotto, Brendan Koscher, Gina LaRoche, Beverly Sealey; past member Lucy Murray-Brown

**City Staff present:** Executive Director Brian Corr; CPD Commissioner Christine Elow; CPD Director of Planning, Budget and Personnel Manisha Tibrewal; CPD Director of Professional Standards, Training and Certification James Mulcahy; CPD Lieutenant Thomas Glynn

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

### **Public Comment**

There were no comments from members of the public.

### **Thanking Outgoing and Welcoming New Members**

- Chair Fallon thanked outgoing board member Lucy Murray-Brown for her nearly eleven years of service on the Board, her contributions, and her wise counsel. Other Board members and City staff also thanked her, and she shared words of thanks and appreciation for the opportunity to serve, how meaningful it has been, and left the meeting.
- Newly appointed Board members Koscher and Arlotto introduced themselves and then the other meeting attendees briefly introduced themselves and described their connections to Cambridge, their lived experiences around issues of policing, and their roles with the City.

### **Review and Approval of Minutes**

The Board voted by roll call vote to approve the minutes of March 1, 2023, on a motion from Board Member LaRoche, seconded by Chair Fallon, with Board members LaRoche and Sealey and Chair Fallon voting in favor and Board members Arlotto and Koscher abstaining.

### **Executive Director's Report**

- Exec. Dir. Corr provided a brief overview of the work of the Board including:
  - Monthly meetings of the Board, including executive sessions as needed to consider complaints pending before the Board;
  - Community outreach as a way to connect with the community, let people know about the Board and its work, and hear concerns in the community about policing in Cambridge;
  - Training from various sources, including the executive director, the City of Cambridge Law Dept., CPD, and the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) through webinars and in-person conferences. He noted that training from CPD could include de-escalation training (ICAT), walk-alongs and ride-alongs with patrol officers, and visiting the CPD Training Academy.
- Exec. Dir. Corr noted that NACOLE's 2023 Annual Training Conference would take place from Nov. 12 to 16 in Chicago, and that Chair Fallon has indicated interest in attending. He noted that he could explore securing one-time extra funding for the new members to attend the conference if they are interested and able.
- Exec. Dir. Corr reported that Dir. Mulcahy provided four CPD draft policies for review by the

Board and that he anticipates that the new policy being developed for CPD use of body-worn cameras (BWCs) will be made available to the Board for its review in the near future.

- Ex. Dir. Corr stated that he will invite Christina Giacobbe, Director of Emergency Communications for the City, to present at an upcoming meeting about the work, role, and function of 911 system.
- He will resend the NACOLE Code of Ethics for the Board to consider at an upcoming meeting.

#### **CPD Professional Standards, Training and Certification Unit Report**

- Dir. Mulcahy stated that in the interest of time, he would forgo a report at this meeting as there were two other CPD-related items on the agenda.

#### **Discussion with CPD Commissioner Elow**

- Commissioner Elow provided background about the state of the CPD when she started as a patrol officer in 1995. She noted that at that time CPD was a traditional police department, focused on responding to calls and that their interactions were often based on whether an individual had broken the law and whether they could be arrested. She also noted that there was not an understanding of juveniles and vulnerable communities, nor a focus on supporting them. She explained that when Commissioner Haas joined in 2005, there was a new focus on collaboration, and CPD started to work with other providers and tried to identify young people who were struggling and work with the family and providing wrap around services.
- She described that now in 2023, they have the Clinical Services Unit (CSU) staffed by a licensed psychologist and three social workers, and they use a case management model. CPD also changed its approach to working with unhoused individuals, doing problem solving and connecting people to services. CPD now works with many vulnerable communities, in collaboration with other community partners. CPD is very focused on the intersection of substance use and mental health issues and how to help people who are struggling, with officers working in partnership with the CSU. CPD is working with the Middlesex County District Attorney's office to use the criminal justice system as a way to connect people to services and support instead of criminalizing or incarcerating them. Over the last decade CPD has become integrated into the community, rather than being an external force policing it, and they are resources for many of the most vulnerable members of the community.
- Discussing the fatal police shooting of Arif Sayed Faisal on January 4, 2023, Commissioner Elow reflected on the fact that she had not imagined that a tragedy like that would have happened in Cambridge with the training CPD has done with their officers on de-escalation and working with people who are in crisis. She explained some of the CPD initiatives that are underway in response:
  - The City has contracted the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) to do a review of CPD's implementation of the ICAT de-escalation training, which was developed by PERF and make recommendations on any changes needed;
  - CPD is moving rapidly to procure and deploy BWCs and is working on the policy for their use and for the video they capture. She noted that BWCs will be an important tool for transparency and accountability, and can help to build trust, and that she will be looking to the Board for guidance on at the BWC policy, as well as helping CPD think about how to introduce BWCs to the community in a way that promotes community trust.
  - CPD is working on its procedural justice dashboard with the Center for Policing Equity, a research and policy center based at Yale University, that combines academics and law enforcement reformers. They will be helping CPD develop it and help with interpreting data on stops and disparities.
- Commissioner Elow stated that she would welcome having the Board examine the PERF review and ideally there will be an opportunity for PERF to appear before the Board to report and answer questions. She also noted that there will be a community-facing portion of PERF's reporting back to Cambridge and that the Board could be involved in that as well.
- In response to questions about BWCs, Commissioner Elow noted that it will be approximately

18 months before a full rollout of BWCs after policy development, procurement, a pilot, and training. She also noted that in 2020 the City was moving toward getting BWCs after discussions, but that there was never a clear decision to do so.

- In response to questions about non-police responses such as sending social workers to handle people in crisis and handling traffic stops, Commissioner Elow noted the complicated landscape, and that while there are no communities that would send a social worker into a situation with an individual in crisis with a large knife, this is an area that the City is actively working to address. She noted that Cambridge's new Community Safety Dept. will probably start its work with activities such as conducting welfare checks and similar things instead of the police, and that there are many other areas where a police response isn't needed. They are going to be working with the Emergency Communications Dept. which is adopting new protocols so that certain calls can be sent to Community Safety. She also noted that Massachusetts state law requires police officer to make traffic stops, but there are conversations at the City Council about submitting a home rule petition to the state legislature about that possibility.
- In response to a Board member expressing a concern about what are people's views in Cambridge about CPD and the Board, while noting that there are not many complaints received, Commissioner Elow stated that her experience Cambridge is a very vocal community, yet there are also people that say they have horrible experiences but don't want to talk to CPD, the Board, or to the City in general. She noted that the City always encourages people to come forward if they have bad experiences.
- A general discussion followed about people in the community feeling heard, increasing legitimacy of the Board and CPD, and increasing awareness of the Board and its work and role.
  - Commissioner Elow noted that most of the complaints that both the Board and PSU received are for behavior seen as rude or discourteous, and a discussion followed about situations where there is no violation of policy, but the outcome is not what anyone would like to see, as well as the need to help officers understand how to balance safety in uncertain situations with procedural justice and treating all with respect and dignity and communicating in a way that makes that clear.
  - Chair Fallon noted that it resonated that there are cases where there is no violation of policy, but there could have been a better outcome, and invited Commissioner Elow and the Board members to consider what the Board can do to share its ideas and understandings with CPD and what would a clear process be for CPD to receive and incorporate that feedback.
  - PSU staff shared how CPD training addresses those issues, including through scenario-based training, and that officers do experience significant amounts of violence and that training and CPD efforts like its Peer Stress Team work to mitigate the impact of that on officers and their behavior.

#### **Review of Fiscal Year 2024 CPD Budget under Chapter 2.74.040 B. of the Cambridge Code of Ordinances**

- Exec. Dir. Corr introduced this item by explaining that during the special City Council meeting held on January 25, 2023 regarding the fatal police shooting of Sayed Faisal on January 4, the "Duties" section of the ordinance establishing the Police Review & Advisory Board was raised. That section states "The Board and the City Council shall review the Department budget before it is submitted to the City Manager."
- CPD Commissioner Christine Elow introduced Manisha Tibrewal, CPD's Director of Planning, Budget and Personnel to share a presentation on the budget that had been prepared for the Finance Committee of the City Council
- Director Tibrewal guided the Board through the presentation, taking questions as they arose.
  - In response to a question about patrol functions comprising approximately half of the budget, Director Tibrewal noted that was typical.
  - In response to a question about the composition of the Family and Social Justice Unit,

Commissioner Elow stated that it comprises nine youth resource officers, six adult outreach officers, two victim advocates, two Domestic Violence detectives, as well as the Focused Deterrence Unit on emerging adults ages 18 to 25 where people are involved in violent or criminal behavior but not connected to services; and the CSU including a psychologist as director of the unit, two social workers, a case manager, two lieutenants and two sergeants.

- In response to a question about whether there are any cities that are good to compare to Cambridge, Director Tibrewal explained that questions had come from the City Council about why the Somerville Police Dept. (SPD) budget seems significantly smaller than CPD, but comparing the expenditures that make up the CPD budget to the same expenditures in Somerville (which are not shown as part of the SPD budget) and adjusting for Cambridge's larger population, the budgets are proportionally fairly similar.
- In response to a comment that there was not as much detail in the presentation as a business would produce with profit and loss statements and detailed line-item budgets, Ex. Dir. Corr noted that the full City budget contains much more detail as that this first review is the beginning of trying to meet both the letter of the ordinance and the spirit of it, and that the Board's feedback will inform how this is done in subsequent years.
- In response to a question about whether establishing the new Community Safety Dept. (CSD) means that CPD staff like social workers would move to that new department, Commissioner Elow noted that the need is for having them inside CPD will remain as they play an important role for the CPD does its work. Ex. Dir. Corr noted that the intent of CSD is to start with 6-8 responders and that it won't be 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and focus on the most vulnerable, many of whom won't work with the police or don't need police involvement.
- In response to a question for Commissioner Elow about how she sees the Board helping CPD in the creation and implementation of the budget, she stated that she did not have a specific idea at this point, and that she very much appreciates the thoughtfulness of the questions, and that CPD and the Board can look at what we need to do. She also noted that she appreciates the ideas about recommendations, especially when there are complaints of rude and discourteous behavior, as there are individuals who are harmed if they don't understand what happened or feel it was properly addressed.
- In response to a Board member asking about stipends, Ex. Dir. Corr explained that the ordinance establishing the Planning Board had recently been amended to allow for its members to receive stipends because they spend between 10 and 40 hour per month on the work of that board, but that members of other boards and commissions are not receiving stipends.

### **Adjournment**

The Board voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 p.m., on a motion from Board Member LaRoche, seconded by Board Member Sealey.

### **Documents Used During the Meeting**

- Police Review & Advisory Board Meeting Minutes of March 1, 2023
- CPD Presentation on the FY 2024 CPD Budget