



POLICE REVIEW & ADVISORY BOARD

A department of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Minutes from the meeting of February 11, 2015

Board Members present: Mertin Betts, Ann Coyne, Laurance Kimbrough, Lucy Murray-Brown, Beverly Sealey.

City Staff Present: Executive Secretary Brian Corr, Deputy Superintendent Steve DeMarco

Meeting called to order at 6:07 PM.

Review and approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from the January 28, 2015 meeting and approved them unanimously on a motion from Board Member Kimbrough seconded by Board Member Murray-Brown.

Introduction of New Board Member

Board Member Sealey is excited about serving on the Board. She spoke of her long focus on positive police/community relations, her work as a probation officer in Boston and as a sociologist, as well as her work with youth and families in the community. She noted that she was involved in the founding of the Board in 1984 and 1985, and that her dissertation was on policing.

Executive Secretary's Report

The 2015 NACOLE Annual Conference will take place from October 4 through October 8 in Riverside, California. NACOLE has submitted extensive testimony to President Obama's "Task Force on 21st Century Policing" including NACOLE President Brian Buchner testifying to the task force in person in Cincinnati, Ohio. PRAB Staff is working to schedule additional outreach visits and will let Board Members know when those are so that they may participate.

Professional Standards Unit Report

The Cambridge Police Department is in the process of hiring 8 to 12 officers and the Professional Standards (PSU) Unit is conducting the background investigations. This round of hiring will consist only of Cambridge residents. The new recruits have to complete medical tests, physicals, psychological screening, and a physical agility test to enter the regional police academy in Lowell for the session that begins on June 1. The PSU has brought in new officers and a detective. The PSU's case manager just took a job in Boston at the Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC). The case manager is a civilian employee in the PSU who is primarily responsible for managing the cases and paperwork, meeting due dates and assignments and make sure that everything is moving forward.

Review of the Police Review & Advisory Board Complaint Process

Executive Secretary Corr reviewed the Police Review & Advisory Board complaint process. The process begins with a complaint being filed with the Police Review and Advisory Board. The Board employs its own staff, and works with the Professional Standards Unit of the Police Department to investigate all complaints. An investigation includes interviews with both the complainant and involved police officer(s), as well as any other relevant individuals, and reviewing police reports, witness statements, and other pertinent information. The staff submits its investigative report to the Board, which reviews the

investigative report from the staff, and may accept the report or order additional investigation into the complaint. After the investigation process is completed, the Board will deliberate and make a determination whether or not there was a violation of policy or procedures, or whether it is inconclusive.

Depending on the finding, any party to the complaint may request that the Board order a hearing, which is done at the discretion of the Board based on the evidence the Board has received. If a hearing is held, the Board will render a final decision. In addition, even if the Board finds that there was not a violation of policy or procedures, it may still make a recommendation to the City Manager and the Police Commissioner about changes which should be made.

Review of work of the Cambridge Police Department's Professional Standards Unit

The primary responsibility of the PSU is to receive and investigate complaints from the public and conduct investigations for the Police Review & Advisory Board. They take complaints in any form.

To file an official complaint, the complainant needs to fill out a form and/or write up an account that that can be shown to the officer (s) named in the complaint, because of their legal and employment rights. The PSU will look into all complaints – even if there isn't an official complaint -- but if there is not something in writing, it is hard to sustain anything if a problem or violation is found.

There are two categories of investigation: Line investigations and staff investigations. Staff investigations are conducted by PSU staff regarding serious issues such as use of force, and they endeavor to complete them within 60 days. Line investigations are usually about less serious issues, such as rude and discourteous behavior, and they are conducted by the officer's supervisor rather than by the PSU staff with a goal of completing them in 30 days. Line investigations are still conducted under the authority of the PSU and have to meet their standards and requirements.

Citizen complaints come in directly to the Police Department and can be conducted as either line or staff investigations. All complaints received by the Police Review & Advisory Board are always staff investigations and are conducted directly by the PSU.

The PSU also conducts other investigations, including internal audits. They also do background investigations for applicants to be police officers or fire fighters.

Discussion of Training for Board Members and Staff

Board Members discussed trainings including: walk alongs, ride alongs, and use of firearms through the FATS simulator. Board Members also discussed a retraining on the use of force and a training by the legal advisor on legal issues, including stops and other encounters by the police

Consideration of Complaints before the Board

Board Member Murray-Brown moved that the Board go into executive session to review complaints pursuant to M.G.L. chap. 21 (a) (1). The motion was seconded by Board Member Coyne and approved by unanimous vote.

Adjournment

Board Member Betts moved that the Board adjourn. The motion was seconded by Board Member Kimbrough and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM after reconvening in open session.