



POLICE REVIEW & ADVISORY BOARD

A Department of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Minutes from the meeting of December 7, 2016

Board Members present: Ann Coyne (chair), Laurance Kimbrough, Beverly Sealey, Ted Robitaille, and Lucy Murray-Brown.

City staff present: Executive Secretary Brian Corr, Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa, Deputy Superintendent Paul Ames and Commissioner Christopher Burke.

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m.

Review and Approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes of the October 26, 2016 regular meeting and approved them unanimously on a motion from Board Member Murray-Brown, seconded by Board Member Robitaille.

Executive Secretary's Report

- Since the last meeting, the Cambridge City Council selected Louis DePasquale as the new City Manager, and he officially started on Monday, November 7, 2016.
- The members of the Board were provided with State Ethics Summaries and Receipt of Acknowledgements. The deadline for their submission is December 30, 2016.
- Executive Secretary Corr stated that NACOLE is currently receiving new proposals for next year's conference scheduled at Spokane, WA during September 14-18. He worked with Dep. Supt. Ames and the City's Domestic and Gender Violence Prevention Coordinator Liz Speakman and proposed a workshop on Trauma Informed Policing, to discuss how trauma affects victims of crime and law enforcement officers, and to discuss the evolution of the training as a case study for others agencies.
- Board Member Kimbrough summarized his outreach experience at Kathleen Fitzgerald's Civics class at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. Board Member Kimbrough presented information about PRAB and answered questions regarding an incident at the mall. Board Member Kimbrough stated that he had the students create mock complaints from the perspective of a complainant and an officer.
- Board Member Sealey also summarized her participation in an informal discussion called Community Conversation with Deputy Superintendent Elow and Vice Mayor Marc McGovern regarding community police relations.
- Project Coordinator Rosa provided a brief explanation of liaison work that the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) conducted in response to a language access issue regarding a Spanish-speaking couple who arrived at PRAB with a complaint against multiple police agencies alleging a lack of service. The couple had limited English ability and was unable to adequately describe an incident to the Medford police department. Project Coordinator Rosa spoke with the couple in Spanish and was able to obtain information regarding their incident. It was determined that the couple did not have a complaint against CPD or any Cambridge officer. With the help of PSU, Project Coordinator Rosa was able to provide the couple's account to detectives in Medford, who then made multiple attempts to contact the complainants regarding their allegations and request for a report.

Professional Standards Unit Report

- In response to the CPD liaison work as described by Project Coordinator Rosa, Commissioner Burke stated that 44 CPD officers speak multiple languages, which include Creole, Spanish, Chinese, Cantonese, and Mandarin.
- Commissioner Burke also provided an extensive history of his 32 year career at CPD, which includes work in Internal Affairs (now referred as PSU), Command Staff, and as Superintendent.
- Dep. Supt. Ames reported on the incident that occurred in Porter Square regarding CPD Sgt. Thomas Ahern and Mr. Cleon Hodge, a young man of color, as well as two women who involved themselves in the situation. Commissioner Burke provided the facts of the incident along with documents describing the elements of a crime. In the incident, Mr. Hodge, demanded an apology from Sgt. Ahern (who was in plain clothes) for bumping into him when they were walking past each other. A disagreement ensued when Sgt. Ahern expressed that he was a police officer and he was the one who was struck by Mr. Hodge. Dep. Supt. Ames played four videos of the incident, which were used by the *Boston Globe* to create a shorter compilation video of the incident. Commissioner Burke stated that he personally reviewed the videos and reports filed by Sgt. Ahern and a responding officer. Based on the available evidence, Commissioner Burke concluded that the Sgt. Ahern's actions were consistent with his duty obligations, meaning that Sgt. Ahern conducted an investigative stop only after Mr. Hodge's actions raised the sergeant's suspicion. Commissioner Burke explained that he had numerous conversations with elected officials about their concerns regarding the *Globe* article and the video. Commissioner Burke noted that many in the community have expressed strong opinions regarding interaction between the two women in the video, Mr. Hodge, and Sgt. Ahern. According to Commissioner Burke, CPD is in discussion with the defendants with the goal of reaching a mutually agreeable resolution. Members of the Board then asked Commissioner Burke and Dep. Supt. Ames questions about the incident. Both stated that this incident was a learning opportunity and an opportunity for additional training. Dep. Supt. Ames also mentioned his planning for a training on implicit bias. Additionally, Mayor Simmons has asked the City to organize a community conversation on Race, Class, and Gender, which is being planned.

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. Ch. 30A, §21(a)(1). The motion was seconded by Board Member Kimbrough, and approved by unanimous vote. The Board entered executive session at 7:55 p.m.

Reconvened in Regular Session

The Board reconvened in regular session at 9:20 p.m.

New Business

- CPD-related incident at the Galleria Mall in November will be discussed at the next meeting

Adjournment

Board Member Robitaille moved that the Board adjourn. The motion was seconded by Board Member Kimbrough and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.