



POLICE REVIEW & ADVISORY BOARD

A Department of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Minutes from the meeting of September 30, 2015
(Draft subject to approval by the Board)

Board Members present: Mertin Betts (Chair), Ann Coyne, Lucy Murray-Brown, and Beverly Sealey.

Board Members absent: Laurance Kimbrough

City staff present: Executive Secretary Brian Corr, Administrative Coordinator Crystal Rosa, Deputy Superintendent Steve DeMarco, Deputy Superintendent Paul Ames, and Sergeant Casey McGrath.

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 PM.

Introductions

The Board and CPD officials introduced themselves to newly hired PRAB staff member, Crystal Rosa.

Review and Approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from the May 27, 2015 meeting and approved them unanimously on a motion from Board Member Murray-Brown, seconded by Board Member Coyne.

Executive Secretary's Report

- On June 3, Executive Secretary Corr met with Middlesex DA Marian Ryan, CPD, & Cambridge Black Pastors Alliance regarding unsolved murders in Cambridge.
- On June 8, Executive Secretary Corr attended a workshop at the Area IV Youth Center with Anthony Santiago and Devon Brooks. The workshop was geared for preteens on how to understand and respond to police stops, as well as general questions about policing.
- On June 24, Executive Secretary Corr participated in the Greater Boston Multi-Faith Crisis Management Workshop with Department of Homeland Security, regarding terrorism and sharing information through social media.
- On July 1, Executive Secretary Corr attended the City Council Public Safety Committee hearing chaired by Councilor Kelley to discuss policing, public safety, community policing and police training. Also in attendance were: City Manager Richard Rossi, Lisa Peterson, Commissioner Robert Haas, Greg Russ, Executive Director, Cambridge Housing Authority, Patrick Wardell, CEO, Cambridge Health Alliance, John DiFava, MIT Chief of Police, Francis Riley, Harvard University Chief of Police, and Robert Lenahan, MBTA Deputy Chief.
- On July 9-10, Executive Secretary Corr attended the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) "Executive Session on Strengthening Police and Community Relationships" with Commissioner Haas in Washington DC with 80 other pairs of chiefs and community people.

- On August 5, Executive Secretary Corr met with the City of Boston’s civilian oversight agency, the Community Ombudsman Oversight Panel (CO-OP): Professor Natasha Tidwell, Larry Mayes, and Judge Regina Quinlan, and Professor Tidwell; CO-OP has since joined the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE).
- On August 17, Executive Secretary Corr attended a community meeting to encourage community cooperation after murder of Rashaun Nichols in The Port (Area 4) on August 12. During the Commission meeting, Dep. Supt. DeMarco clarified that the case is still investigatory, witnesses are being subpoenaed, and the case will need to go to a grand jury.

Professional Standards Unit Report

Dep. Supt. Ames introduced Sergeant Casey McGrath to provide the Board an opportunity to ask the investigating Sergeant any questions, directly. Dep. Supt. Ames announced that CPD hired a new case worker, Catherine Dello Rosso.

Presentation on Cambridge Police Practices, Policies and Procedures as Compared to the Recommendations of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing

Dep. Supt. DeMarco presented a Power Point presentation regarding CPD’s instituted practices and newly developed applications in response to the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Six pillars were developed by the Task Force to redirect law enforcement in policing practices that can promote effective crime reduction, while building public trust.

- Building Trust and Legitimacy
- Policy and Oversight
- Technology & Social Media
- Community Policing & Crime Reduction
- Training and Education
- Officer Safety & Wellness

These are a few highlights captured, in substance:

Within each pillar there are numerous recommendations for implementation, according to Dep. Supt. DeMarco, 36 of the recommendations were applicable to CPD, and 6 were reserved for federal law enforcement.

Building Trust and Legitimacy

- “Embracing a Guardian Mindset” - CPD officers are encouraged to make positive connections with people while engaging in the community before they have to engage with individuals under contentious conditions. CPD has moved from having a “major crime unit” to victim assistance approach.
- CPD officers’ role are to reduce social harm, not only by being responsive. CPD officers are reminded in making a distinction between statutory authority and legitimate authority. CPD officers are trained in de-escalation techniques and practicing “mutual respect” procedures. In order to address Biased Based Policing, CPD checks for outliers in tactics and practices used by officers on a regular basis.
- CPD recognizes that transparency & accountability lead to trust & legitimacy
- CPD has added departmental policies online, however operational procedures are not provided due to officer safety.
- CPD has been working with other local police departments, such as MIT, Harvard, and MBTA. Officers of MIT and Harvard go through the CPD’s academy.

- CPD recruits new police officers through the Youth Academy, Military, and the city requires residency within the year of recruitment.
- In reference to immigration status, Cambridge has been a “Sanctuary City” since the early 1980s.

Policy and Oversight

- CPD is using alternative ways to resolve complaints by determining if an individual wants to complain or proceed with filing a complaint.
- CPD uses eye witness identification best practices.
- Use of Force cases are handled by the District Attorney’s Office.
- CPD conducts debriefs after every critical incident.
- CPD collaborated with Northeastern University for a traffic stop data study.
- CPD also collaborated with University of Massachusetts – Lowell for a sexual assault study.
- CPD officers are expected to enforce the law but not be driven by filling quotas.
- CPD has proposed having an Assessment Center as a way for the Commissioner to look at an officer’s job history and determine the officer’s fit in the department. This proposition must be approved by the Police Union first.
- CPD and PRAB have a collaborative relationship.

Technology and Social Media

- CPD is using social media to provide the public information and for media relations. CPD has investigated complaints made on twitter against officers.

Community Policing and Crime Reduction

- CPD has a few independent social worker who conduct outreach to encourage relationships with vulnerable populations.

Training and Education

Officer Wellness and Safety

- Dep. Supt. Ames has proposed using Mindfulness Initiatives in CPD training for officers to use strategies to stay calm during contentious confrontations.
- CPD has a no tolerance policy against officers not wearing their seat belts and bullet proof vests.

Implementation

- There are numerous of specialized units and community relations units that are dedicated to citizens of protected classes and other special interests. CPD officials participate in numerous boards and commissions around the city, and hold public meetings for community building.

New Business

Executive Secretary Corr mentioned to the Board that the Mayor will be hosting a Boards and Commissions Reception at the Royal Sonesta Hotel from 6-8 p.m. on Wednesday, October 28th. The Board unanimously decided to postpone their scheduled meeting to the following Wednesday, November 4, 2015.

Consideration of Complaints before the Board

Board Member Coyne 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 Murray-Brown, and approved by unanimous vote.

Adjournment

After reconvening in open session, Board Member Coyne moved that the Board adjourn. The motion was seconded by Board Member Murray-Brown and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 P.M.