



CITY OF ALBANY
COMMUNITY POLICE REVIEW BOARD
PUBLIC MONTHLY MEETING
MEETING MINUTES

December 8, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.
Albany Law School, Room 200

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL (N. Vives)

Chair Nairobi Vives called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Nairobi Vives, Dr. Veneilya Harden, Kevin Cannizzaro, John Levendosky, Victor Person, Rev. Victor Collier

OTHERS PRESENT: CPRB Program Manager Michele Andre, GLC Deputy Director Patrick Woods, Assistant Corporation Counsel Matt Toporowski, Office of Professional Standard (OPS) Commander Joshua Laiacona, Andrew Lah, CPRB Intern Danielle Piccone and Julie Schwartz, Michael Mansfield, Meryl Lutsky, and Martin Gleeson of T&M USA, LLC

II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (N. Vives)

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

One community member asked if the new Public Safety Commissioner will affect the CPRB and/or OPS review of complaints/cases. Chair Vives explained that the new Commissioner will not and will be responsible for adjudicating police disciplinary measures.

Ivy Morris, former Chair of the CPRB, commended the CPRB for considering diversity in hiring consultants, investigators, and members.

Shawn Young of All of Us asked about the frequency and future of community education engagement. Ms. Andre explained that community workshops with the CPRB will begin in February and there will be four workshops. Additionally, the CPRB is looking to

partner with the Center for Law and Justice to commemorate the history of the Board, which was established in 2000. The CPRB will also participate in the celebration of Kwanzaa at the New York State Museum on December 26th. Dr. Harden shared that community education will be ongoing and education must flow both ways between the Board and the community. Lastly, Chair Vives shared she hopes to receive public input on the disciplinary matrix to comply with Local Law J.

IV. REPORT FROM T&M USA, LLC & JAMES P. CONROY

Update on Request for Proposal for Investigative Services

Chair Vives reported that the Board hiring committee made the decision to hire T&M USA, LLC and James Conroy for investigative services to carry out independent investigations for the Board.

T&M USA, LLC attended virtually and in person and shared their extensive backgrounds and expertise in prosecutorial matters, investigations, police discipline, and police misconduct. T&M is an experienced investigation firm with a global team consisting of former prosecuting attorneys, defense attorneys, former members of federal, state and local law enforcement, and industry leaders in the private sector.

James P. Conroy has extensive experience in police oversight and investigations. He has conducted investigations for the NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board. He worked in law enforcement for over 20 years, including serving as a Senior Investigator with the NYS Office of the Inspector General. Mr. Conroy will participate virtually tomorrow and plan to attend in person on January 12, 2022, Public Monthly Meeting.

Several members of the Board formally welcomed and shared their excitement to work with T&M and James Conroy to independently investigate complaints.

V. REPORT FROM MOEEL LAH FAKHOURY LLP

(A. Lah)

Andrew Lah reported that one of the accomplishments this past month was contracting T&M USA, LLC and James Conroy to carry out investigative services. Additionally, the consultant team visited Albany this past weekend to conduct training with the Board on mediation, research, and case analysis. As well, the consultants discussed with the Board thinking of new policies and creating an agenda for subsequent training.

Matt Toporowski asked Mr. Lah if there should be ongoing training with the contracted investigators or if those trainings are unnecessary considering their experience and expertise. Lah responded that one of the benefits of contracting T&M and James Conroy for investigative services is their extensive experience in investigations and police misconduct, but we will meet with them to level set.

Member of the public asks Mr. Lah to expand on the experience of T & M USA, LLC and James Conroy, which he discussed.

Chair Vives gave thanks to Mr. Lah and his firm, Moeel Lah Fakhoury LLP for their work with the CPRB.

CASE REVIEW/UPDATE

No Report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

BY-LAWS AND RULES

(K. Cannizzaro)

Board member Kevin Cannizzaro shared the committee is continuing its efforts to update the by-laws to comply with Local Law J. He shared the committee hopes to complete the updates early next year to share and for votes of the full Board.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

(P. Collins-Hackett)

No report.

MEDIATION

(V. Collier)

Board member Dr. Veneilya Harden gives a report on behalf of Rev. Victor Collier, who appeared virtually on Zoom. There was a brief report during which Dr. Harden expressed the Board will hopefully utilize mediation more to connect with the community and there is ongoing research for best practices for mediation.

POLICE DEPARTMENT LIASON

(Dr. Harden)

Board member Dr. Veneilya Harden reported to the OPS regarding remote electronic access for case review. Dr. Harden shared she looks forward to carrying out the online access to review complaints and get through backlogged cases.

Dr. Harden also reported shared that several members of the Board met the incoming police recruit class on November 21 and presented police oversight and CPRB training to the new APD recruits. She also shared that Board member Matt Ingram will be responsible for creating a curriculum for the Board to present to recruits in the future. This is an extension of an ongoing effort to bridge gaps within the community and the Albany Police Department.

MONITOR TASK FORCE

(Dr. Harden, N. Vives)

Board member Dr. Veneilya Harden had nothing to report to the Monitor Task Force.

REPORT FROM PUBLIC LIAISON

(N. Vives)

Chair Nairobi Vives and consultants met several times with Mayor Sheehan to discuss CPRB budget request, training and operation. There will be regular meetings of Public Liaison with Mayor Sheehan and Chief Eric Hawkins to ensure the continuation of communication going forward.

REPORT FROM GOVERNMENT LAW CENTER

(M. Andre, P. Woods)

Ms. Andre reported that the Board met on Saturday, December 3, 2022, at Albany Law School for an all-day retreat. The retreat focused on case review training, review of the case management platform, facilitating goals/strategy setting, and discussing community engagement efforts, which were completed by CPRB consultants. Ms. Andre reported that she provided a demonstration of the new case management system, HighQ. There will need to be another training virtually to wrap up policy and investigation training. Ms. Andre also reported that she scheduled by-laws and mediation committee meetings are scheduled for next year.

Mr. Woods expressed support and admiration to the Board and program manager Michele Andre on behalf of the GLC.

Chair Nairobi Vives shared gratitude for the work of the GLC, more specifically, Ms. Andre, Judge Leslie Stein, and Patrick Woods.

REPORT FROM OPS

(J. Laiacona)

Commander Laiacona reported that he met with the consultants during their visit to Albany and he is started meeting with the Board on the disciplinary matrix to comply with Local Law J.

Commander Laiacona reported there was positive feedback from both the police recruits and instructors on the presentation by the Board. Additionally, he shared the prospect of a Board presentation as a permanent component of the police academy curriculum.

Board member Kevin Cannizzaro clarified if there was confusion about the terms of the confidentiality agreement on the part of Commander Laiacona. Commander Laiacona shared there are no issues with the agreement going forward, and he needs to clarify how the requests need to come to OPS to forward requested information to the Board and qualified persons.

Additionally, Mr. Cannizzaro inquired about the cases pending review that pre-date the enactment of Local Law J and the steps being taken by OPS to expedite the review of those backlogged cases. He expressed concern about the interplay of collective bargaining agreements and the 1-year time frame of disciplinary proceedings. Commander Laiacona responded that OPS is working under the constraints of limited resources and individuals to review cases. Additionally, he shared cases are being assessed based on severity and

whether they could result in discipline. Cases deemed severe, and that will likely result in discipline are being prioritized.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

(N. Vives)

Chair Vives shared it was a busy year for the Board. She shared several of the accomplishments of the Board which include hiring investigators to complete independent investigations, training Board members, and the Board securing funding above 1% mandated by local law J. Additionally, she encouraged members of the public to join Common Council meetings to help elect the vacant Board member position.

REPORT FROM CORPORATION COUNSEL

(M. Toporowski)

No Report.

NEW BUSINESS

(N. Vives)

November 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Board Members unanimously approved the November 10, 2022 meeting minutes.

Nominations for Election of Offices

Board member Dr. Harden nominate, Board member Cannizzaro seconded Chair Nairobi Vives for re-election as Chair.

Chair Vives nominates, Board member Cannizzaro seconded Vice Chair Dr. Veneilya Harden for re-election as Vice Chair

Chair Vives nominates, Vice Chair Dr. Harden seconded Secretary Paul Collins-Hackett for re-election as Secretary

Board Member Levendosky and Board member Cannizzaro supports the continuing leadership of the current Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michele Andre
Program Manager