City of Albany Citizens' Police Review Board

GWU the Center

274 Washington Avenue- Teen Center Conference Room June 12, 2012

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Present:

Marilyn Hammond, Maritza Martinez, Andrew Phelan Jr., Anthony Potenza,

Eugene Sarfoh, Reverend Edward Smart, and Akosua Yeboah.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Edward Smart called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was reviewed. Akosua Yeboah moved to approve the agenda. Anthony Potenza seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Approval of the February 12, 2012 Meeting Minutes

The February 21, 2012 meeting minutes were reviewed. Anthony Potenza moved to approve the February 21, 2012 meeting minutes. Akosua Yeboah seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Old Business

CPRB No. 22-12/OPS No. CC2012-044 (Presented by Chairman Edward Smart)

Chairman Edward Smart summarized the complaint. According to the complainant, she and her friend paid for 15 minutes on a parking meter, ran into the CVS to purchase a card, and received a false ticket from the meter maid officer. The complainant alleged that she had the time on the ticket and her CVS receipt.

Chairman Edward Smart noted that a letter has been sent to the complainant stating that the CPRB does not have the authority to look at allegations of misconduct by meter service officers. Chairman Smart stated that the CPRB only has the authority to review cases concerning badged officers of the Albany Police Department (APD). Chairman Edward Smart moved to close the complaint without review due to the Board not having jurisdiction. Marilyn Hammond seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CPRB No. 23-12/OPS No. CC2012-053 (Presented by Chairman Edward Smart)

Chairman Edward Smart stated that this complaint is against an animal control officer and that a letter has been sent to the complainant stating that the Board's authority does not extend to animal control. Chairman Smart further stated that the complainant has been referred to the APD. Chairman Edward Smart moved to close the complaint without review due to the Board not having jurisdiction. Marilyn Hammond seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CPRB No. 21-11/OPS No. CC2011-040 (Presented by Andrew Phelan, Jr.)

Andrew Phelan stated that he reviewed this complaint at the Albany Police Department's Office of Professional Standards (OPS) on June 5 and June 6, 2012. The complaint alleges two (2) counts of call handling and one (1) count of a violation of conduct standards. The alleged incident occurred on May 12, 2011. Mr. Phelan reported that this complaint was originally reviewed by the Board at its April meeting, however, it was sent back to have a monitor assigned to it. Mr. Phelan stated that the complainant alleged that the officers failed to make a report and acted racist towards her. The complainant further alleged that the officer was rude towards her. The complainant alleged that the officer did not do his job due to his failure to file a report and failure to arrest the other party involved in the initial incident.

Mr. Phelan summarized the OPS finding for the first call handling allegation that the officer failed to arrest the other person as *unfounded*. Based on the OPS investigation, no active warrants were found for the other party and no order of protection had been violated. The officers' decision was based upon the cooperation of the other party, the complainant's admission that he had been following the other party, and the other party's good reason for being in the area. Additionally, the incident took place in a public street and the other party had no knowledge of the complainant's presence. The complainant at the time made no effort to request the filing of a report. As the officers decided that there was no violation of any order, the officers deemed it unnecessary to file a report.

Mr. Phelan summarized the OPS finding for the second call handling allegation that the officer was racially biased because the other party was not arrested as *unfounded*. Based on the OPS investigation, the officers denied acting with any bias and did not make any comments towards the complainant that would suggest a bias existed. The other party stated that he is an African-American and that the officers did not act racially biased. Mr. Phelan reported that no evidence exists to suggest the existence of a racial bias. Mr. Phelan further reported that the officers fully explained their decision not to make an arrest to the complainant.

Mr. Phelan summarized the OPS finding for the conduct standards allegation that the officers acted unprofessionally as *not sustained*. Based on the OPS investigation, both officers denied acting unprofessionally. Both officers indicated that the complainant was

irrational and upset. The other party stated that both officers were professional throughout the incident. However, due to the fact that the other party was involved in the matter and there was no independent witness, there remains an inability to confirm or deny the allegation.

Mr. Phelan stated that monitor Richard Lenihan was assigned to this case and was present. Mr. Phelan commented that the monitor's report was very thorough and asked Mr. Lenihan if he wished to add anything. Mr. Lenihan stated that the incident was not racially motivated and that both of the individuals involved were black. Mr. Lenihan further stated that the evidence suggested that the officers acted professionally and that the complainant violated his own order of protection by following the other party. No outstanding arrest warrant existed and the responding officer was familiar with the situation.

Andrew Phelan moved to concur with the OPS finding of *unfounded* for the first call handling allegation, where the review shows that the act or acts complained of did not occur or were misconstrued. Chairman Edward Smart seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Andrew Phelan moved to concur with the OPS finding of *unfounded* for the second call handling allegation. Chairman Edward Smart seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Andrew Phelan moved to concur with the OPS finding of *not sustained* for the conduct standards allegation, where the review failed to disclose sufficient facts to prove or disprove the allegations made in the complaint. Chairman Edward Smart seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CPRB No. 22-11/OPS No. CC2011-055 (Presented by Anthony Potenza)

Anthony Potenza stated that this case was heard and acted upon by the Board at the last meeting but there was a question of whether the complainant's mother had standing to file a complaint. He further stated that the Board was unsure of whether or not the complainant's son was a minor. Since then, the OPS confirmed that the complainant's son was not a minor and was free to file a complaint on his own behalf. Mr. Potenza stated that in light of the OPS investigation, the complainant did not have standing to file the complaint. Anthony Potenza moved that the case be closed without prejudice. Chairman Edward Smart seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CPRB No. 37-11/OPS No. CC2011-120 (Presented by Anthony Potenza)

Anthony Potenza stated that this case had also previously been heard by the Board but the complainant came forward with more information. Mr. Potenza stated that this complaint

stemmed from a situation where an individual called the police for assistance with removing property from the residence of his estranged wife. The documents that were initially presented by the OPS in their investigation were previously used by the Board in voting on this complaint. The complainant filed additional information with the OPS and the Government Law Center (GLC) regarding the incident. Mr. Potenza further stated that the complainant alleges that she was not considered in the investigation. Mr. Potenza stated that he believed the complainant had ample time to bring the additional information forward before the matter was brought before the Board. The complainant was sufficiently informed of the process and therefore should have brought the information forward previously. Anthony Potenza moved for the Board to uphold their previous ruling regarding this complaint. Andrew Phelan Jr. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. New Business

A. New Complaints

1. New Complaints Received since the May 17, 2012 Meeting.

Chairman Edward Smart reported that the Board received four (4) new complaints since its May 17, 2012 meeting. Board Secretary Andrew Phelan, Jr. read the new complaints.

CPRB No. 22-12/OPS No. CC2012-044

According to the complainant, she and her friend were improperly ticketed by a meter officer while they were inside of a CVS store. The complainant alleges that she has the time on the ticket and the time on her CVS receipt.

A monitor was not assigned to investigate this complaint.

Andrew Phelan noted that this complaint is against a meter officer and the Board lacks jurisdiction in this matter. This case was closed without review by the Board earlier in this meeting.

CPRB No. 23-12/OPS No. CC2012-053

According to the complainant, an animal control officer violated her rights at a local veterinarian's office, when the officer insisted that the cat did not belong to the complainant and refused to let the complainant take the cat home. The officer also allegedly insisted that the complainant pay a bill at the veterinary office.

A monitor was not assigned to investigate this complaint.

Andrew Phelan noted that this complaint is against an animal control officer and the Board lacks jurisdiction in this matter. This case was closed without review by the Board earlier in this meeting.

CPRB No. 24-12/OPS No. CC2012-054

According to the complainant, an APD detective wrongfully searched the complainant's vehicle and wrongfully had it towed. Additionally, the complainant's vehicle has allegedly not been released from the APD yet, despite the fact that the detective assured the complainant that the vehicle would be released. The complainant further alleges that the warrant used to search the vehicle was not issued until after the car had been searched.

A monitor was not assigned to investigate this complaint.

CPRB No. 25-12/OPS No. CC2012-054

According to the complainant, his nephew was approached by an officer while the nephew was inside his uncle's garage and asked if he knew a specific family. Allegedly the nephew responded that he did not, but that his aunt, who was inside, knew the family. The complainant's nephew stated that he would bring his aunt outside to speak with the officer, but instead the officer allegedly walked into the house with the nephew without being invited. After the wife responded that she knew the family, the officer responded that there had been some thefts in the neighborhood involving bicycles. The officer allegedly stated that after seeing a bicycle at the house he decided to investigate. The officer allegedly asked the complainant's wife for identification. Following this, another officer arrived and the first officer left.

A monitor was not assigned to investigate this complaint.

Chairman Edward Smart stated that he did know what the OPS would investigate since he did not see a complaint. OPS Detective Andrew Montalvo agreed with Chairman Smart but further elaborated that the complainant felt that the officer acted inappropriately in speaking to the complainant's daughter after entering the house without an invitation. Chairman Smart stated that he does not see a complaint and asked that a letter be sent to the complainant asking for the complainant to explain the situation. Chairman Edward Smart made a motion to send a letter to the complainant. Andrew Phelan Jr. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Complaint(s) for Board Review

CPRB No. 34-11/ OPS No. CC2011-112 (Presented by Maritza Martinez)

Maritza Martinez summarized the complaint. Ms. Martinez stated that this incident occurred on September 24, 2011, on Partridge Street in Albany. The complainant alleges that improper force was used against her brother while her brother was operating her vehicle. The officer allegedly pointed his weapon at the complainant's brother while the complainant's child was in the vehicle.

Ms. Martinez reported that she reviewed the following documents: OPS Confidential Report; two (2) Inter-Departmental Reports; Officer Notes; Citizens Complaint Form; two (2) Call Details; and Detective Notes. Ms. Martinez further reported that a monitor was assigned to this case.

Ms. Martinez summarized the OPS finding for the allegation of use of force as exonerated, where the acts which provide the basis for the complaint occurred, but where the review showed that such acts were proper. The complainant alleged that improper use of force was used in the presence of her son, but the complainant was not present at the time of the stop. Based on the OPS investigation, the complainant's brother, who was driving the vehicle, was pulled over by an APD officer due to the fact that three (3) children in the car were not sitting in proper safety seats. The officer who pulled over the vehicle was in the area assisting EMS vehicles and fire trucks. An unidentified woman in the car stated that it was not a big deal and she would take the kids and go. Following this statement, she exited the vehicle and began to walk with two of the children. The officer asked the complainant's brother for his license, registration and proof of insurance and walked back to his police car which was out of view behind a fire truck. The officer told the complainant's brother not to move while the officer checked the information. While checking the information, the officer heard squealing tires which the officer interpreted to mean that the complainant's brother was attempting to leave the scene. The officer rushed to the vehicle with his weapon drawn and ordered the complainant's brother to put the car in park. The officer holstered the weapon shortly after having it pointed at the driver's side of the vehicle. After the driver cooperated by taking the keys out of the ignition and placing them on the dashboard, he exited the vehicle where he was placed into handcuffs and brought to the officer's patrol car. The complainant's brother stated he did not mean to squeal the tires, and that the act was due to a transmission issue. The officer stated that his actions were due to the fact that he did not know if there was a warrant or not for the individual and it was possible the complainant's brother was trying to flee the scene. Additionally, the officer stated that he feared that if the complainant's brother did flee the scene, it could create a dangerous situation in an already congested area. The officer also stated that he was concerned for the safety of the child who was still in the vehicle. A second patrol car arrived shortly after the scene with the complainant. The second patrol officer stated that he did not see the original officer with his weapon out.

Chairman Edward Smart asked if the complainant was present. It was noted that the complainant was not present. Chairman Smart acknowledged that monitor George Kleinmeier was assigned to this case and was present. Mr. Kleinmeier stated that he did not wish to add anything.

Maritza Martinez moved to concur with the OPS finding regarding the use of force allegation as *exonerated*. Chairman Edward Smart seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Martinez reported that the OPS found that the officer violated the APD Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which mandates that any use of force be reported to the respective supervisor. The officer in question failed to provide a report for the incident in question.

CPRB No. 5-12/OPS No. CC2012-020 (Presented by Akosua Yeboah)

Akosua Yeboah summarized the complaint. Ms. Yeboah stated that this complaint involved an allegation of conduct standards due to an officer allegedly harassing the complainant due to a personal dislike. The harassing behavior allegedly occurred when the officer was on patrol and involves undue attention.

Ms. Yeboah reported that she reviewed the following documents: OPS Complaint Forms; CPRB Complaint Form; and Prior Arrest Report.

Ms. Yeboah stated that the witnesses and the complainant were interviewed and, based on the OPS investigation, nothing was said of any sort of physical interaction. Ms. Yeboah further stated that this unwarranted attention was causing the complainant and his loved ones hardship.

Ms. Yeboah summarized the OPS finding for the conduct standards allegation as *unfounded*, which is appropriate where the review shows that the act or acts complained of did not occur or were misconstrued. Ms. Yeboah further stated that she disagrees with the OPS finding and believes that *not sustained* is the more appropriate and impartial finding.

Akosua Yeboah moved for the Board to agree to a *not sustained* finding for the conduct standards allegation, which is appropriate where the review failed to disclose sufficient facts to prove or disprove the allegation. OPS Detective Andrew Montalvo stated that he did not believe there will be an issue changing the OPS finding from *unfounded* to *not sustained*. Chairman Edward Smart seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CPRB No. 9-12/OPS No. CC2012-016 (Presented by Chairman Edward Smart)

Chairman Edward Smart summarized the complaint. Chairman Smart stated that the complainant alleged that he was profiled by the APD and an officer who stopped him had no legal right to do so.

Chairman Smart reported that he review the following documents: Citizen's Complaint Form; Bulletin Posting Number 12051; Call Stop Detail; Complainant's Date of Birth; Field Investigation Report; Notes; Confidential Report; and No Copy of the UTT.

Chairman Smart summarized the OPS finding for the call handling allegation as *unfounded* which is appropriate where the review shows that the act or acts complained of did not occur or were misconstrued. The complainant alleged that he was profiled by an officer, who had no legal right to stop the complainant. Based on the OPS investigation, the officer stated that prior to seeing the complainant drive by in a dark colored Honda Pilot, he became aware of a vehicle fitting the same description being involved in a larceny. This bulletin was confirmed with the Information Coordination Unit. The officer observed the complainant's failure to use his signal prior to the traffic stop. The complainant's failure to use his signal gave the officer sufficient reason to conduct the traffic stop. Chairman Smart further stated that there is no evidence to suggest that the officer engaged in profiling.

Chairman Smart noted that a monitor was not assigned to this case. Chairman Smart asked if the complainant was present. It was noted that the complainant was present. Chairman Smart expressed his appreciation for the complainant's presence and invited him to speak to the Board. The complainant stated that he was going up Central Avenue and made eye contact with a police officer who got into his police vehicle and turned on his lights. The complainant stated that there was no way that the officer could have seen whether or not the complainant used his signal. The complainant stated that he was angry at this point. The complainant further stated that he asked the officer why he was pulled over and allegedly was told by the officer that he was pulled over due to a failure to use his signal. The complainant also stated that he did not understand why the Board was agreeing with the APD. He wanted to know why the officer did not tell him that the police were looking for a dark colored Honda Pilot at the time of the stop. The complainant stated that the officer is lying about the complainant's failure to signal. The complainant asked to see the bulletin. APD Deputy Chief Stephen Reilly stated that the bulletins cannot be released, but that he would make arrangements so the complainant could see the bulletin. Chairman Smart stated that the Board exists to hear from complainants. The complainant stated that the Board has already made a decision. Chairman Smart explained that the complainant only heard what the OPS decided. Chairman Smart further explained that the officer in question was responding to a bulletin regarding a burglary that involved a vehicle description that matched the

complainant's vehicle and that is why the complainant was pursued. Chairman Smart further stated that it was only at this point when the officer observed the complainant's failure to use his signal that the officer pulled over the complainant. The complainant disagreed with Chairman Smart. The complainant stated that he was not interested in seeing the bulletin. The Board already has made its decision and he wasted his time in attending the meeting. Chairman Smart thanked the complainant for attending the meeting. Chairman Smart then reiterated the series of events.

OPS Detective Kathy Hendrick stated that a ticket was not issued and a Field Interview Card was filled out instead. Chairman Smart stated that he believed the officer showed great judgment in not issuing a ticket and not allowing the incident to go any further.

Chairman Smart moved to concur with the OPS finding of *unfounded* for the call handling allegation. Anthony Potenza seconded the motion. Akosua Yeboah abstained from the vote. She explained that she did not feel comfortable without the assessment of an independent monitor. The motion carried with a vote of 6-0 with one (1) abstention.

Chairman Smart stated that in the initial complaint there was no mention of profiling. Chairman Smart stated that if the complainant had mentioned profiling or discrimination, a monitor would have been assigned. Mr. Sarfoh stated that the complainant does not mention profiling in his complaint. Deputy Chief Stephen Reilly offered to meet with the complainant to speak about the incident and the APD's policies in general. Deputy Chief Reilly also stated that although he believes the officer did not do anything wrong, he wished that the officer communicated more effectively with the complainant. The complainant agreed to meet with Deputy Chief Reilly.

Eugene Sarfoh asked the complainant why he believed he was pulled over. The complainant replied that he was pulled over because he was Black. Mr. Sarfoh asked the complainant why he believed he was not given a ticket. The complainant stated that he was not given a ticket because the officer must have thought he was a drug dealer or something and there was nothing wrong with the vehicle. The complainant also stated that he knows when he is being followed. Mr. Sarfoh stated that the officer is not denying that he followed the complainant's vehicle. The officer's actions were due to the bulletin. Mr. Sarfoh and the complainant disagreed as to why the complainant was pulled over by the officer. The complainant described how he was treated when driving from Syracuse on the New York State Thruway when a New York State Trooper stopped the complainant and communicated effectively to him. The complainant stated that he wished the officer in this complaint could have communicated as effectively. The complainant asked if there was another place he could bring his complaint. Chairman Smart stated that the Board's role is also to make sure that everyone has a fair opportunity to speak. Chairman Smart further stated that the OPS has looked at the case and the Board has looked at the case. Chairman Smart again reiterated that the Board

has not made any decisions yet and the Board is fair and understanding. Chairman Smart stated that the Board does not rubberstamp cases and that in this particular case, evidence has been provided that the officer showed good judgment. Chairman Smart further stated that no evidence has been provided that the officer profiled the complainant. The complainant stated that he and the officer looked each other in the eye. Chairman Smart also stated that there is a great deal of experience on the Board and the Board takes its work very seriously. Maritza Martinez stated that she believed that it was beneficial for the complainant to have the opportunity to communicate with the Board.

CPRB No. 17-12/OPS No. CC2012-037 (Presented by Marilyn Hammond)

Marilyn Hammond stated that this complaint involves the Coeyman's Police Department and therefore, after consulting with the OPS, there is nothing to be reviewed. The Board did not have jurisdiction to review this complaint. Marilyn Hammond moved to agree with the OPS finding of *no finding* for the call handling allegation. Chairman Edward Smart seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Appointment of New Members to the Committee on Complaint Review for September 2012

The following Board members were appointed to the Committee on Complaint Review for September, 2012: Marilyn Hammond, Maritza Martinez, Andrew Phelan, Jr., Anthony Potenza, Eugene Sarfoh, Chairman Edward Smart, and Akosua Yeboah.

C. Committee Task Force Reports

By-Laws and Rules

Committee Chairman Edward Smart stated that he had nothing new to report.

Community Outreach

Committee Chair Akosua Yeboah reported that a Spanish version of a brochure for the CPRB has been approved and is ready for publication. Additionally, a different brochure is currently being translated. Committee Chair Yeboah further reported that the committee met last month and discussed other ways to interact with the community, including creating a Facebook page for the CPRB to communicate with the public. Committee Chair Yeboah stated that the Albany Latin Fest and American Family Day are also opportunities to educate the public about the CPRB.

Mediation

Committee Chairman Edward Smart stated that great progress is being made with the mediation process by the APD administration, the police union, and the CPRB. Committee Chairman Smart further stated that the Board is encouraging its counsel

Patrick Jordan to review the written protocol. Committee Chairman Smart further reported that a meeting is scheduled for July 10, 2012, and at that meeting it is hoped the document will be completed.

Police Department Liaison-Policy Review/ Recommendations

Committee Chairman Andrew Phelan stated that he had nothing new to report.

Public Official Liaison

Committee Chairman Edward Smart stated that the next public safety meeting was on June 19, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. Additionally, a meeting with the City of Albany Deputy Mayor is scheduled for June 18, 2012 at 2:30 p.m. at City Hall.

Task Force on Monitors

Task Force Chair Akosua Yeboah stated that the task force had a meeting previously, where policy and protocol were discussed. Chairperson Yeboah stated that a report from the meeting would be completed. Chairperson Yeboah stated that at that meeting, how monitors are assigned to cases was discussed in order to help the monitors effectively do their jobs. Board Chairman Smart noted that if the terms 'profiling' or 'racism' are mentioned in a complaint, a monitor will be assigned.

D. Report from the Government Law Center

Government Law Center (GLC) Coordinator of the Board Sharmaine Moseley gave the report.

Complaint Inventory as of Date of Meeting

It was reported that included in tonight's packets is the complaint database scorecard. As of today, there are currently twenty-four (24) active complaints before the Board for review. Of those twenty-four (24) active complaints, five (5) were reviewed and closed, two (2) were closed by the Board with no review, and one (1) was closed without prejudice at tonight's meeting. This leaves the Board with sixteen (16) active complaints. Currently, there are no complaints ready to be reviewed at the next meeting.

It was reported that five hundred and seventeen (517) complaints have been closed. The total number of complaints that remain suspended from review is sixteen (16). The total number of complaints filed to date is five hundred forty-nine (549).

It was further reported that since the Board's last meeting, the GLC received six (6) grievance forms, bringing the total number of forms received to three hundred and twenty-seven (327). In response to the GLC's outreach to all individuals, the GLC has received ninety-two (92) Citizens' Police Review Board (CPRB) complaint forms.

Board Member Resignation

It was reported that the Board recently received correspondence from Board member Patrick Toye, informing the Board of his resignation effective on July 1, 2012. He will no longer be a resident of Albany which is a requirement to be on the Board. Mr. Toye was appointed by the Common Counsel.

NACOLE Conference

Coordinator of the Board Sharmaine Moseley asked those Board members who are attending the NACOLE Conference to please let her know with as much notice as possible if they experience any changes to their travel plans. Anthony Potenza stated that he is interested in attending the conference. It was further reported that the APD will be sending a representative to the conference.

APD Ride-Along

It was noted as a reminder that Board members should participate in at least one ridealong per year. Board members should let GLC staff know if assistance is required in arranging a ride-along.

Upcoming Meetings

It was reported that the next Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 13, at 6 p.m.

E. Report from the Office of Professional Standards

APD Deputy Chief Stephen Reilly reported that with the early warning system, the Board would be alerted when an officer is flagged in the system. Following the alert, action would be taken by the APD. Deputy Chief Reilly further reported that the implementation of the early warning system is on track. He further reported that the APD reached out to the Deputy Mayor regarding video and audio and the APD's ability to release that material. The APD is concerned with possibly violating individual rights by releasing recordings. The Deputy Mayor would report back to the APD regarding what could be released. Deputy Chief Reilly stated that this is an important subject and the APD recognizes that. Chairman Edward Smart stated that the Board's function is to bridge the gap between the community and the APD. Chairman Smart stated that he believes the Board stands to help make officers better and to help educate citizens as to how the APD functions. Chairman Smart further stated that the video and audio recording equipment exists to protect the officers. Chairman Smart thanked the Board and the APD for their work.

F. Report from the Chair

Chairman Edward Smart reported that the Board has been contacted by the City of Syracuse to model their Board after Albany.

VI. Public Comment

Chairman Edward Smart opened the floor for public comment. It was noted that there were no public comments.

VII. Adjournment

Chairman Edward Smart moved to adjourn the meeting. Marilyn Hammond seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Phelan, Jr.

Secretary