



**CITY OF ALBANY
COMMUNITY POLICE REVIEW BOARD**

*June 25, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.
Via Zoom*

MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order & Roll Call (W. Hamilton)

Board Members Present: Larry Becker, Rev. Collier, Zach Garafalo, Warren Hamilton, Veneilya Harden (starting at 6:30pm), Matt Ingram, Nairobi Vives

Also Present: Ava Ayers, Commander Anthony Batuello, Robert Magee, Lisa Rivage, and members of the public

Warren Hamilton, chairing the meeting in Ivy Morris's absence, called the meeting to order.

II. Discussion of Reforms (W. Hamilton)

The Board discussed potential recommendations for reforms, and invited public comment on them.

Melanie Trimble of the New York Civil Liberties Union offered several recommendations: the Board should have its own counsel; the Board should have subpoena power; its members should be either independently elected or paid. The Board currently has the power to seek a subpoena from the Common Council, but she urged the Board to seek an independent subpoena power to keep those investigations out of the political realm.

Mark Mishler also offered recommendations. He had submitted a letter to the Board (which is attached to these minutes). His recommendations included:

- The Board should conduct investigations, rather than relying on investigations conducted by the Office of Professional Standards.
- The Board should be able to recommend or impose discipline.
- The Board's members should be elected.
- The Board should have the power to adopt rules for the governance of police.

Rob Magee (of Corporation Counsel for the City of Albany) agreed that independent counsel for the Board was a good idea.

Asked about the repeal of Civil Rights Law 50-A and how it would affect the Board's access to information about officers, Commander Batuello said it would be preferable to discuss this in a non-public forum, but the Department would comply with the law.

The Board also discussed how to make people feel safe reporting concerns. Members discussed their experience with people who said they were afraid to come forward. One idea was to allow anonymous complaints. Ava Ayers said that her understanding was that complainants need not identify themselves. Commander Batuello confirmed that the Department treats anonymous complaints like any other, and investigates them. Also, it doesn't take a complaint to start an investigation; the Department sometimes conducts "administrative investigations" which it initiates itself.

The Board also discussed the possibility of initiating complaints itself. Its procedures don't make clear whether this is allowed. Board members expressed interest in clarifying that power. Allowing the Board to initiate complaints itself would avoid the need for complainants to interact with the police, which is for some a deterrent.

Members of the public raised, and the Board discussed, other issues including litigation against the Rochester review board, responses to police sexual violence, and defunding the police department.

III. **Scheduling Next Meeting and Adjournment**

(W. Hamilton)

In conclusion, Nairobi Vives agreed to draft a proposal with additional policy recommendations. Other members agreed to send her ideas they had collected.

Veneilya Harden moved to adjourn the meeting, and Rev. Collier seconded the motion. When the Reverend remarked that he did not typically offer prayers at meetings, Warren Hamilton invited him to offer one, which he did. Ava Ayers read a comment from a member of the public pointing out that prayers are inappropriate in public bodies, and Warren apologized for inviting the prayer.

With this, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.