

POLICE CITIZEN REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

September 9, 2020

Meeting Held Remotely Via Zoom

Members present: Emily West, Chair; Maria Testa; Luke Beland; Kaylin Kerina; Reggie Parson; Rev. Lewis

Staff present: Major Frank Gorham; Lt. Cliff Strout; Sgt. Chris Dyer; Anne Torregrossa

6:03 Call to order via Zoom.

Motion to accept minutes of August 12, 2020. Seconded. Roll call approval 6-0.

Ms. Testa discussed the PCRS first annual report issued in 2003, which states that PCRS was created to address the issue of public confidence following a highly publicized incident. PCRS scope was crafted after MLRB decision. In Ms. Testa's research, she has not found any board that has similar scope. Ms. Testa reviewed some historical information from the PCRS, including recommendations.

Ms. Testa shared a written summary of her research into other review boards in New England. Ms. Testa presented a summary of the PERA board from Providence, RI. Ms. Testa answered questions by the PCRS about the Providence board. Ms. Testa next presented a summary of the review board in Cambridge and responded to questions from the PCRS.

The PCRS discussed next steps with respect to further discussions about alternative ideas. Ms. Testa will come up with a handful of points to discuss further. Ms. Testa stated that she does think it is critical to engage the public in this process.

The PCRS next discussed the City Manager's responses to the PCRS memo of recommendations. The PCRS is pleased with the collaborations with universities but wants to ensure that the projects follow a definite timeline and would appreciate updates on the project. Rev. Lewis also expressed concerns about the loss of data in converting to a new CAD/RMS system, and Major Gorham and Ms. Torregrossa both stated that this is something the City is sensitive to as well.

With respect to the complaint form, the PCRS commented that it is more readable and accessible. Ms. Kerina suggested that they explore suggestions for additional places to put paper forms to make them more readily available.

As for the business card policy, the PCRS got clarification from staff about the information that would be on the card, when cards would be distributed, and whether a member of the public could ask an officer to provide their supervisor's information.

The PCRS discussed the City Manager's response to the recommendation that citizens be appointed to the Police Department's internal use of force committee, and is generally disappointed in the response. Ms. Torregrossa clarified that both the City Manager and Chief Clark saw value in the suggestion and were interested in exploring the idea further. Rev. Lewis reiterated his position that it is important to have an outside voice on the committee to bring perspective and public confidence in the process. He also stated that he would appreciate a more definitive process for moving forward with the suggestion.

The PCRS also expressed disappointment at the City Manager's response to their suggestion that the PCRS review internal complaints as well as external. Rev. Lewis stated that there is a benefit and that the City shouldn't shy away from change. Ms. West and Ms. Kerina expressed confusion at the statement that a citizen presence might stifle reporting, as they believe that a citizen shouldn't be a threatening presence. Rev. Lewis stated that he felt this was important in being proactive and contributing to transparency. Ms. Testa stated that other places have citizen review over all complaints and that it could assist with identifying trends, such as for early intervention for problem officers. Major Gorham informed the PCRS that the Police Department did have internal procedures for identifying potentially problem officers. Ms. West stated that being able to review all complaints was important to allow the PCRS to fulfill its function in identifying recommendations for policy changes.

The next step for the PCRS is to try to put together a framework for recommendations for changing the role of the PCRS. The Subcommittee discussed extensively the need to gain public input on any changes, the public's perception of the police, and other issues. With that in mind, the PCRS finalized the workplan for October.

8:42

Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Roll call approval 6-0.