



Board

Present Janet E. Jackson, Chair
Present Brooke Burns
Present Mark Fluharty
Present Dr. Chenelle Jones
Present Willard McIntosh, Jr.
Present Dr. DiMaris Medina-Cortes
Present Pastor Richard Nathan
Present Kyle Strickland
Present Rev. Charles Tatum
Present Aaron Thomas
Present Mary Younger

Guests

Present Lara Baker-Morrish
Present Richard Blunt
Present Colleen Dunne
Present Jeffrey Furbee
Present Kate Pishotti
Present George Speaks
Present Robert Tobias
Present Commander Mark Lang
Present Officer Rick Hannah
Present Lt. Justin Coleman
Present Sgt. Chris Cheatham

MEETING MINUTES

WELCOME

At 2:02 pm, Chair Janet Jackson welcomed the Columbus Civilian Police Review Board ("CPRB") to the meeting.

DR. MEDINA-CORTES INTRODUCTION

Dr. Medina-Cortes introduced herself and was welcomed to the Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Rev. Tatum motioned to approve the September meeting minutes, and Pastor Nathan seconded. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

REVIEW PROPOSED CPRB BYLAWS

Lara Baker-Moorish reviewed the amendments made to the draft bylaws since the September meeting.

Article I –

Section 3. A simple majority of a quorum will suffice for general votes, and amendment to the bylaws will be one instance which will require 2/3 majority vote.

Board members will have 7 days to review proposed amendments to the bylaws prior to voting.





Mr. Strickland asked if there exists a process for restricting revisions to the bylaws if a full Board was not seated at the time: No, not as it is currently written, the Board would have to make filling the Board first a priority themselves.

Article II –

Section 1. Specifies the required quorum shall be ‘of members present’ not ‘of members seated’ to vote. Removed the word “signed” in regard to resignation letters to allow for electronic communications.

Section 3. If a Board member misses two consecutive meetings, the board may choose to recommend removal, but it is not a requirement.

New Board members must complete initial training within 6 months of the time of appointment.

Article IV –

Section 1. Specifies virtual attendance option in the instance of pandemics or law changes which affect the Board’s ability to meet in person.

Article V –

Mr. Strickland asked about the 48 hour notices for upcoming meetings, is that standard? M. Baker-Moorish explained that 24 to 48 hours is standard.

Pastor Nathan asked if the Inspector General should attend all Board meetings. Ms. Baker-Morrish pointed out that sometimes the Inspector General might not be available, but the Board could invite the Inspector General at any time if his/her presence was deemed necessary.

Article VI –

A representative from the City Attorney’s Office will be at every hearing, and will attend all upcoming Board meetings as the Board is new and still working through formation.

Article VII -

Mr. Strickland asked about hearings occurring at regular meetings, which are open to the public. Ms. Baker-Moorish explained that for some boards or commissions, every meeting is or includes a hearing. This will largely depend on the volume of hearings this Board is doing. It might be necessary for the Board to meet separately for hearings, but as of now the Board has the option to do either.

Article VIII –

Ms. Baker-Morrish will update voting language to be consistent with bylaw amendment language.





Chair Jackson asked if it would be appropriate for the Board to vote to approve the draft bylaws at this time, given the minimal changes yet to be made. Ms. Baker-Morrish agreed it would be appropriate if the Board chooses to do so.

Rev. Tatum moved for a vote, Dr. Jones seconded. The bylaws were approved pending final revisions by a unanimous vote.

Rev. Tatum asked if the Board can view the final document prior to the next meeting. Chair Jackson promised to send the revised version as soon as possible. Ms. Baker-Morrish will make revisions and send to the Administrative Coordinator for preparation and dissemination.

REVIEW MEDIA/SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Ms. Burns reminded the Board that there was a previous court case which inspired the use of the word “impair”, and explained the history of the phrase being used. She would like to narrow the focus, as the entirety of the City is very broad.

Suggested language: “impair working relationships within the department of the Inspector General or among the Board”.

Ms. Baker-Morrish stated that the recommendation is because the office of Inspector General and the CPRB were designed by Charter to be more independent from the City. While the original language is defensible, the nature of the work of the Board and the Office of the Inspector General makes the narrower language appropriate.

Mr. Strickland suggested that removing #1 from the policy altogether, as the second point already covers the same issues. Chair Jackson disagreed, and does not see the two points as being the same.

Ms. Baker-Morrish explained that “impede” is a higher level of action – intent to hinder, obstruction. Impair might not have the intention, but the behavior could still have negative consequences.

Mr. Strickland brought up the divisive nature of the issues this Board will be discussing and was concerned that statements made during discussions could be seen as impairing relationships within the Board unknowingly. The language is subjective.

Ms. Burns explained that a fire department employee posting on social media was the original case. The fire department member used colorful language to refer to board members, and was terminated. He filed a wrongful termination suit due to vague language in the policy. There are not many cases to reference as social media is relatively new, but the case law explains the need for this language. The word impair is very specific about talking in a public capacity, not as a public citizen.

Chair Jackson asked Ms. Baker-Morrish if the Board needs to vote on this policy, Ms. Baker-Morrish was unsure. Chair Jackson requested Ms. Burns and Ms. Baker-Morrish continue to develop this document’s language, add a footnote from the case, and to determine whether a vote is needed.





Pastor Nathan requested a discussion of guardrails of behavior for the Board members in in their communication to the media. He received a media inquiry regarding the recently arrested police officers. What is the language which Board members feel comfortable using in responding to media or other inquiries?

Chair Jackson requested to set aside 30 minutes on the November agenda for a discussion of Pastor Nathan's suggestion. She commented that the media will probably continue to contact Board Members on a variety of subjects, and a response of "no comment" is perfectly appropriate.

Dr. Jones pointed out that she is often consulted by the media as an expert in the field of criminology and criminal justice, and she will continue to be a resource to them. There is nuance in who of the Board is able to respond to the media, but this does warrant a conversation, keeping Board Members' professional and personal roles in mind.

Rev. Tatum is being bombarded by his peers in addition to the media. He reminds them that the Board is still forming and that all meetings are open to the public, so anyone with questions could attend for more information.

Chair Jackson reminded the Board that their applications to join this Board were publicly available and thereby their contact information has been shared widely.

Mr. Strickland agreed that there should be a discussion on these issues as they impact public perception, and he requested recommended guardrails in the meantime.

Chair Jackson asked if Mr. Strickland, Pastor Nathan, and at least one additional Board Member will meet before the November meeting and prepare recommendations. Dr. Medina-Cortes and Dr. Jones volunteered.

Ms. Baker-Morrish reminded the Board that she and Robert Tobias will not be present at the November Board meeting, but Jeff Furbee will provide legal counsel.

DISCUSSION OF CHALLENGES FACING THE FUTURE INSPECTOR GENERAL

Chair Jackson asked the Board to share their ideas of what challenges the future Inspector General will face within the first year, at the request of Robert Berg.

Ms. Younger thought the first challenge will be educating the public on the role and responsibilities of the office and gaining their trust. At the same time, gaining the trust of the officers of the Columbus Police Department, so that when a grievance occurs, there is faith from both sides that the matter will be treated fairly. Hiring quality, dedicated investigators will be an additional challenge.

Mr. Thomas agreed with Ms. Younger, specifically in regards to the community awareness and need for 'advertising' the office. He foresaw a barrier in cooperation, from the police and citizen sides. Bureaucracy could create additional barriers.





Dr. Jones saw an additional challenge of building a team from scratch which is competent, transparent, and capable. Gaining the trust of the police and the public, and navigating the politics of the city. This will be a high profile position.

Dr. Medina-Cortes saw training as a key component for the Inspector General and his/her team. To be able to interpret laws and policies while investigating allegations. Weekly or monthly training for individuals in the office might be necessary to be sure they have full understanding of the relevant laws, rules, and procedures.

Ms. Burns suggested finding the right people, people who know what they're doing, will be a challenge. Developing processes with fidelity and integrity will be as well. Remaining neutral in a highly polarized city and time will be incredibly difficult. This person cannot seem to be on any one side, or they will not be effective or genuine.

Mr. Strickland spoke to a need for independence and courage, and someone with a demonstrated track record of changing practices and policies. This person will have to take innovative approaches and employ a holistic definition of community safety.

Chair Jackson thanked the Board for their thoughts and will provide Robert Burg with the responses as he is moving forward with his search.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Chair Jackson worried that the Board misunderstood her intention for additional Board training, thinking that would require members to be present outside of Board meetings. She intends to have these trainings completed during regularly scheduled Board Meetings with the exception of the CPD Academy situational training and ride along. She would like to have training completed by March of 2022. There may be additional training opportunities, which a committee can determine. Required minimum training includes: de-escalation, DEI [Diversity Equity and Inclusion], cultural competency, and implicit bias. If any Board member feels strongly about an additional training topic, convey that to the Chair.

FORMATION OF BOARD COMMITTEES

Chair Jackson listed her planned committees as:

1. Training and Education
2. Rules and Regulations
3. Nominating Committee
4. Standards of Professionalism

Each committee could be 3-5 members, preferably three. Each Board member can serve on at least one, and should share their preferences with Chair Jackson. These committees' memberships will be announced at the November meeting. Board members should contact the Chair via phone, text, email, etc. within 10 days of the October meeting.





Mr. Thomas asked about a committee to publicize the role of the Inspector General, or if that will be the responsibility of the Inspector General Office once formed. Chair Jackson didn't see a need for such a plan to be in place until an Inspector General is named.

Mr. Strickland suggested a community engagement plan or committee to ensure the Board is always aware of the topic, whether or not it is its own committee. Chair Jackson created a 5th committee called Community Engagement.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Chair Jackson requested the Board accept her recommendation that the Vice Chair be Brooke Burns. She chaired an important committee on the Safety Advisory Commission. Chair Jackson called for objections, none were heard.

Ms. Younger moved, and Mr. Thomas seconded that Brooke Burns will serve as Vice Chair until the end of the term in 2022. Ms. Burns abstained, all other members voted yes.

BREAK

Chair Jackson called for a break at 3:15pm, to reconvene at 3:30pm.

THE ABC'S OF POLICING

Commander Mark Lang introduced himself and described the training that CPD Officers undergo. Officers undergo 7 months of training, and the ABC's presentation is just a bit of that. He introduced Lt. Justin Coleman, Officer Rick Hannah and Sgt. Chris Cheatham who conducted the training.

Mr. Thomas asked about the statement that the officer's uniform is a form of de-escalation: the visibility of police officers at the scene often creates compliance at the scene. A uniformed officer is viewed differently than a store security guard or other authority figure, and can immediately de-escalate a situation.

Mr. Strickland asked about how officers balance prioritizing multiple locations needing officers with a large number of officers on a single scene being beneficial: from a management perspective, you get a situation under control first, then redirect all but the minimum number needed to complete the necessary follow-up. Runs are prioritized in a way which dictates the minimum number of officers required to respond.

Rev. Tatum returned to the subject of the police uniform as a form of de-escalation, and asked if there were instances where the uniform served to escalate a situation: Yes, it depends on the individuals and the specific situation in question.

Mr. Strickland asked how alternative response options are utilized by officers: The Right Response Unit does still include a uniformed officer, but also includes clinicians who can often handle situations once





situations are safe. Utilizing telephone reporting in lieu of officer response for non-injury accidents and other non-emergencies helps to prioritize officer responses.

Mr. Thomas asked to clarify the scenario he participated in, given the information that most police shootings happen within 6 feet. He was concerned that the “officer” in the scenario would be expected to immediately start shooting. Commander Lang explained that this is not how officers are trained to respond. This scenario is just an example of a time where an officer might find himself close to a dangerous person, and that that person can move faster than the officer can react. This was just to demonstrate the repercussions of the third-of-a-second response time.

Ms. Younger asked to clarify the scenario where the perpetrator did not turn around, and the officer shot him in the back. The purpose was to demonstrate that the suspect is a threat whether or not they are facing the officer.

Mr. McIntosh added that by not shooting, an officer is giving the suspect the option to shoot or not shoot the officer. While they might not shoot, that’s a big risk for an officer to take.

Dr. Medina-Cortes asked if the training officers do these scenarios in the community for citizens to see these situations and clarify misconceptions about the police. Yes.

Chair Jackson cautioned that the situational training the Board members will be undergoing will be more stressful than this.

Mr. Strickland pointed out that community mistrust stems from a lack of understanding and from high profile instances of officers not following training or being faced with unusual circumstances.

Dr. Jones asked if officer training conditions them to shoot and react as in this scenario, despite the small number of officers who will face these circumstances in the line of duty. Sgt. Cheatham explained that the training varies to include all sorts of scenarios which require a variety of responses.

Pastor Nathan suggested that in the future, officers could suggest improvements to the CPRB as well as vice versa. There could be a further conversation about what officers are seeing and the Board could hear their opinions. Commander Lang explained new officers are required by the state to undergo about 700 hours of training, and Columbus requires additional 500-600 hours. When the need for new trainings arise, they can be more easily incorporated into the Columbus training hours.

Chair Jackson mentioned that the Safety Advisory Commission made dozens of recommendations regarding officer training, and that the Chief has an Advisory Council. This Board could ask to get a report back on what has been implemented based on those recommendations.

Ms. Younger asked if there has ever been a situation where a recruit reacts badly during training and is not allowed to become an officer: Yes. She then asked if there are scenarios where the suspects are of various races to determine whether officers react differently to different races: City Council just





approved a new purchase of training software which will allow exactly that – run the same scenarios with people of different colors. At the very least this should allow management to look at the issue statistically. Ms. Younger suggested this may allow officers to identify their own prejudices.

Mr. Thomas asked if the officers are satisfied with the current cadet training, given the community concerns about the training. Commander Lang assured him there is always room for improvement and that the team works hard to constantly improve. There is balance between needing officers on the streets and wanting to spend more time training them. Columbus currently doesn't have the luxury of spending years training new officers.

Chair Jackson brought up the probationary time period being extended to 1 year in the new FOP contract, and Commander Lang said that allowed the department to add 2 additional weeks of training for new officers, which are spent almost entirely on scenario training.

Mr. Strickland pointed out that police officers can't solve every problem and highlighted the need to think about safety holistically.

Dr. Medina-Cortes asked about the time spent on cultural competency, given the diversity of Columbus. Commander Lang explained the state requirement 84 hours of "human relations" and that Columbus adds 87 additional hours. These hours include community panels, which can include new Americans and LGBTQ groups among others, to interact with the officers and talk about stereotypes and build those relationships.

Mr. Thomas asked if officers are being taught the history of various community groups and the police, particularly negative histories, and how that impacts current relationships with the police. Dr. Jones shared that since April 2021, one of the first things taught to new officers is race and the history of policing, training which she has helped to develop. Additionally, recruits and Field Training Officers are taught about redlining and other such things through Community Immersion. Recruits are quizzed and surveyed to ensure learning and retention.

Ms. Burns reminded the group that the training mentioned by Dr. Jones was one of the recommendations of the Safety Advisory Commission.

Mr. Thomas asked if Dr. Jones's training was a result of the Safety Commission: they were developed simultaneously, and it was a collaborative effort.

Chair Jackson suggested that the committee on training and education might consider spending time in a future board meeting on Community Immersion.

Chair Jackson asked that the officers return for the November meeting to complete the ABC's of Policing training.





Chair Jackson reminded the Board that the November meeting has been moved to Monday, November 8th, and will be in the conference room in the parking garage at 141 N Front Street.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jackson asked for a motion to adjourn at 4:53pm. Rev. Tatum moved, Pastor Nathan seconded. Unanimous vote to adjourn.

