

City Of Syracuse Citizens Review Board

Meeting Minutes 01/06/2012

Those Present:

Facilitator: Lance Denno, *Common
Council Public Safety Chair*

CRB Members:

Jarrold Bentley (absent)
D'Vonne Bowman
Crystal Collette
Demetria Gammage

Carole Horan
Louis Levine
Sarah McIlvain
Donna Oppedisano

Invited Guest:

Frank Fowler, *Chief of Police*

With a quorum present, the first meeting of the Citizens Review Board, held in the SYRASTAT Room at City Hall, was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

Opening Business:

- Councilor Denno welcomed the new board, invited guests and attending citizens
- The new CRB legislation and the New York State Open Meetings Law were passed out to members. Councilor Denno highlighted the following about those pieces of legislation:
 - We await the mayor's signature on the new law and look forward to her appointments to the board
 - Sarah McIlvain has been appointed by Councilor Barrett to fill out the final 3-months of term
 - D'Vonne Bowman has served the full length of two 3-yr. terms and was thanked for her service. Newly elected councilor Khallid Bey will appoint a new member to the board
 - According to the NYS Open Meetings Law public notice of upcoming meetings must occur at least 72 hours before convening
- Donna nominated Crystal Collette to chair the board, noting that Crystal's education and experience in community organizing/relations make her a strong candidate to chair. Crystal accepted the nomination and it was seconded. **MOTION:APPROVED**
- Councilor Denno suggested a board secretary position. The secretary would take minutes for the board and potentially serve as chair in the chair's absences. Donna will accept the responsibility of secretary for a limited time. It was suggested that one of the new appointees or a current board member not serving on a committee could fulfill that role in the future.

Committee Reports/Responsibilities:

Search Committee:

- A national search will be conducted for a new CRB administrator. Crystal will call a meeting with the council administrator to review the old job description and next will call together the search committee (Lou, Donna, Crystal, Sarah). The following suggestions for the committee were made:
 - Create a timeline for the process
 - Establish goals of the committee
 - Create a new job description that incorporates the additional responsibilities per the new legislation, an understanding of the new culture surrounding the CRB and the Syracuse Police Department
- It was suggested that if a timeline is established that makes the process longer, there may be a need for an interim administrator to be hired.
- Crystal made it clear that in order to get this new board up and running it would be best if we met more often for the first few months. It was decided that we would meet the first and the third Thursdays of each month at 6:00 p.m.

Training Committee:

- It was decided that the training committee (Donna, Carole, Lou) should meet soon to:
 - Establish goals
 - Discuss ideas for training
- The committee decided that one of the first training sessions needed was one on the current legislation with some of the citizens that helped to draft the leg; maybe to include lessons learned.
- No date was set for this meeting to occur

Community and Youth Engagement Committee:

- It was decided that the Community and Youth Engagement committee (Crystal and Jarrod) would be responsible for the website. It was suggested that caution be used in putting info on the site. We should begin soon to get basic info onto the site such as:
 - Board membership and terms of service
 - Meeting dates
 - A digital copy of the Legislation
- Other responsibilities will be forthcoming

New Business:

- A question was raised as to the board's independence from the Mayor's Office, Common Council and the SPD. Councilor Denno made the point that the decisions are the board's to make but that in the hiring of the administrator there is a Civil Service component to the hiring process.
- A question was raised about meeting in each district as per the legislation. It was decided that those meetings will be delayed until after an administrator has been chosen so that s/he may be introduced to the community

- Councilor Denno suggested that the board attend a Public Safety Committee to pose questions and to be introduced to the committee.
- Chief of Police Frank Fowler was then introduced and took questions from the board
 - What are the other entities (i.e. FBI, State Police, ATF, etc.) and the members of those personnel serving in our community? Chief Fowler said he cannot compromise security in giving specifics but said that before there is any co-operation, a memo of agreement between the agencies and there is a protocol for interaction between the agencies

Public Comment Period:

- Some discussion about how often and for how long the public comment period will be scheduled. The board needs to be cognizant of this in creating its schedule
- Barrie Gewanter (member of the draft legislation committee) requested that the board take up a revision of the complaint form, paying attention to demographics and special circumstances of the complainant in order to better understand the situation
 - This form will be e-mailed to members prior to the next meeting
- Citizens Questions:
 - How the board may be able to help them police their own communities?
 - this is something for the community engagement committee to look into
 - What is the time-line for citizen complaints?
 - There is no time limit
 - How can the board facilitate better accommodation and advocacy for people with disabilities?
 - Chief Fowler pointed out that communication is the key and that his department wants to do a better job and is open to training in some of these areas
 - Crystal issued a public thank you to Chief Fowler for the pro-active approach he has taken
 - There are also community organizations that can assist people with the process (i.e. United as One Coalition has a pamphlet)
 - The board will consider including on the website some resources for citizens
 - How will citizens know about meeting dates and times? Can there be a variety of means (i.e. posters in community centers and/or libraries, Announcements in the paper, announcements on the web, social media?)
 - The board will look into the best ways to keep citizens informed
 - Can the board deal with complaints that were filed under the jurisdiction of the past board that were have not been addressed?
 - The board will look into this

- Until the board is up and running, what should people with do if they have complaints?
 - Chief Fowler answered that Shirley Rowser at City Hall is currently taking complaints and that people may contact the Office of Professional Standards at (315) 442-5250

Meeting Adjourned: 7:25

Minutes Respectfully Submitted

Donna M. Oppedisano

1/12/2012