

City Of Syracuse Citizens Review Board

Meeting Minutes 01/19/2012

Those Present:

CRB Members:

Jarrood Bentley (absent)
Tafara Blake
Crystal Collette, *Chair*
Demetria Gammage (absent)
Carole Horan

Louis Levine
Sarah McIlvain
Donna Oppedisano
Quorum Present

The second meeting of the Citizens Review Board, held in the Common Council Chambers at City Hall, was called to order: 6:00 p.m.

Minutes:

Corrections:

- Sarah McIlvain's appointment by Councillor Rayo had been held, This was not a new 3-month appointment as reported in the minutes from Jan. 5 meeting.
- The date of the Jan. meeting was Jan. 5 rather than Jan. 6 as reported in the Jan. minutes

Motion to APPROVE Minutes as amended Passed with one abstention

New Business:

- Newest Board member, Tafara Blake, was introduced and welcomed. Tafara was appointed by legislator Khalid Bey and was sworn in Jan. 9, 2011
- Sarah McIlvain has been appointed to a full 3-year term, by newly-elected councilor, Jared Bartlett and was sworn in Jan. 9, 2011
- Crystal provided the board with a copy of the letter she sent to the Mayor requesting that she make the three appointments as directed by the law.
 - It is not clear whether Mayor Miner has signed the legislation

Meeting Structure Discussion:

- The following were agreed to by consensus:
 - Meetings will start and stop on the assigned schedule. The point was made that this is a volunteer board and that in addition to the General meetings there are committee meetings as well.
 - The facilitator has agreed to hold us to a limited agenda and start/stop times. Meetings will run for 1 hour and will be held twice per month.

- After some discussion about what rules would be followed during meetings, a **MOTION was made to adopt Robert's Rules of Order. Motion approved with one NO vote**
- Discussion ensued about whether or not the public comment period should be part of the official meeting. The point was made that according to the law, public meetings would be conducted five times over the year. **MOTION TO adopt the policy that the public comment period would not be included in the official meeting was made by Sarah and seconded by Lou was APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**
- Crystal has called Joel (last name?) to discuss the website. With the impending state of the City report, he was pretty busy and will work on this after that report has been delivered
 - The Community and Youth Engagement Committee will be responsible for the website. Some suggestions for the new site:
 - Website should be accessible and user-friendly and easy to find (linked off of the city's website)
- Shirley Rowser has been collecting and opening the CRB mail in the absence of an administrator.
 - There have been a number of complaints in the past few months. These have been logged and have been sent on to the Office of Professional Standards. Crystal will be meeting with that office. **ALL MEMERS ARE WELCOMED TO ATTEND.** Crystal will let the board know when that meeting will happen.
- What is the status of our budget? Sarah will call Mary Bosler to ask her to come to our next meeting to address the budget
- Crystal will discuss the following with Bill Ryan:
 - Getting an office
 - What data/information is available and what has been released from the investigation

Committee Reports:

Search Committee:

- The Committee met and discussed the following:
 - According to Bob Staime (sp) the position of administrator is an "exempt civil service" position – there is no test requirement
 - Sue Greenstien in the Personnel and Labor Relations office is updating the job description for our review. Crystal will e-mail it to members before the Feb. 2 meeting
 - The committee is working on interview standards and protocol
- There is no city civil service requirement as to where the job must be published
- Councillor Denno told the board that it will be publicly noticed through the County's Civil Service website

- Lance also suggested that we publish it with the National Association of Cities which will do so for free
- The salary for the position “given the salary schedule of the city for this level of position” (Denno) is \$47,000 - \$64, 707
 - The question was raised as to whether or not the money would be available for salary this year
 - Crystal brought forward the question of whether it was acceptable that the \$\$ budgeted for salary is being used on the lawsuit. This question will require more discussion
 - Crystal: \$20,000 has been spent to date on the lawsuit. We need more clarity on the funds available and the budget for this fiscal year
- The idea was raised that if the money was not sufficient to hire someone this year, we may may be able to hire someone on a per diem basis
 - Donna raised the notion that Sec 6 (3)(a) of the law requires that “the board shall appoint an administrator...shall provide for the compensation and benefits for the person appointed” and further that (d) “the CRB administrator shall be responsible, on a full-time basis”. Both of these would seem to make a per diem appointment against the law

Training Committee:

- Tafara will join the Training Committee
- It is the consensus of the committee that it would make sense to hold off on further training until the full board is in place
- Some embers of the community have reached out to members to offer their support/expertise in training. All offers will be considered
- Carole will reach out to members of the draft committee for training on the legislation
- Some areas of training were discussed in response to the concerns of citizens as raised in the last meeting (mental health, etc.). Sarah suggested that before we can train in these areas we need to know what the current policies are regarding people who identify as such

Community and Youth Engagement Committee:

- Suggestions were made as to website inclusion:
 - Member bios, photos and terms
 - Current procedures/complaint filing
 - Links to the police department
 - “United As One” coalition explanation (this was passed out to members)
 - Members should bring ideas to subsequent meetings

Other Business:

CRB Complaint Form

- The CRB complaint form was passed out to board members
- It was suggested that we develop a working group that would include board and community members and to review the form
- Board members will review the form and make a first round of suggestions. Crystal will e-mail it to the members who will comment
 - It was suggested that it might be useful to view the form through the lens of some of the previous complaints lodged
 - Crystal will check to see whether or not we have access to those previous complaints
 - Perhaps the *United as One Coalition* that worked with the past administration on some of the previous complaints
 - Sarah will compile the suggestions and send them out prior to the next meeting
- Any form must be approved by this board
- The Community Engagement Committee would work to make sure that citizen concerns are reflected in the revised forms

Crystal motioned to approve a revised complaint form within 14 days (next meeting). This was seconded by Carole and unanimously approved

Tafara motioned to adjourn and Sarah seconded. Approved

Public Comment Period:

- The question was raised about whether this board would be a pro-active or a re-active board. The Board made it clear that it has been very pro-active so far (committees established, ideas generated, reaching out to community groups, etc) and that it plans to continue to be so
- One citizen suggested that the social networks of the community are paying careful attention to the board
- In response to a citizen comment, discussion ensued about Board members' ability to be neutral when investigating complaints. The Board made the point that, according to the law, there will be a 3-member panel when reviewing. Therefore, members can recuse themselves from a specific complaint if a conflict of interest develops
- Citizens request that the board make sure that the complaint form is accessible to Spanish-speaking people, blind people, etc. The board will work with local agencies to make sure that this happens

Next Meeting: **Feb. 2**

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted;
Donna M. Oppedisano
1/30/2012**