

City of Syracuse
 Citizen Review Board
 Meeting Minutes
 Thursday, October 18, 2018
 5: 30 PM to 7:30 PM
 Common Council Chambers
 Public Comment – 20 minutes at 6:30 PM

| Name | P | A | Name | P | A | Name | P | A |
|----------------------|---|---|-------------------|---|---|------|---|---|
| Carter, Mae | X | | Natale, Dana | X | | | | |
| Comeau, Herve | | X | Nelson, Mary | X | | | | |
| Grinnals, R. Daniels | X | | Nilsson, Lori | | X | | | |
| Holmes, Hatisha | | X | Ryans, Clifford | X | | | | |
| Kutz, Ruth | | X | Releford, Ranette | X | | | | |
| McCarthy, Peter | X | | Pearson, Betty L. | | X | | | |

On Thursday, October 18, 2018, the City of Syracuse Citizen Review Board (CRB) held an open, stated meeting at 304 City Hall in the Common Council Chambers.

Peter McCarthy, Board Chair, called the meeting to order and announced that the meeting was being held pursuant to notice and that a quorum was present.

On motion duly made by Mr. Grinnals, seconded by Mr. Ryans and adopted, the Board approved the Minutes of the September 6, 2018 Board Meeting with no corrections.

On motion duly made by Mr. Ryans, seconded by Mary Nelson and adopted, the Board approved the Minutes of the September 20, 2018 Board Meeting with no corrections.

1. Chairman's Items

Community Outreach

- a) CRB participated in the Westcott Cultural Fair and the booth was manned all day.
- b) New events need to be either scheduled or other organizations' events will be attended.
- c) Mr. Ryans will follow up with some events.
- d) Ms. Nelson will email information about a community event happening on October 27, 2018.

Annual Evaluation of the Administrator is due. Ms. Natale, Mr. Grinnals and Mr. McCarthy will complete before December 1, 2018.

2. Administrator's Report

- a) The Administrator was at the Justice Center from 11AM to 4:45PM today where she took seven different complaints.
- b) In September Ms. Releford reported that 6 new complaints were received in September and 3 new complaints were received in October, bringing the 2018 total to 59 complaints. The Board will be reviewing 5 complaints during Executive Session.
- c) Resolution 2018-02 was presented to the Board for approval. Mr. Ryans moved that the Resolution be approved, Mary Nelson seconded. The Board approved the Resolution unanimously. The Resolution will be presented to the Common Council advising that the CRB will be pursuing the hiring of a Private Investigator as approved in the Budget.
- d) The Administrator has been attending the Grant Trial. She shared the testimony of the former Administrator and a Use of Force expert. At the trial, the City of Syracuse's Council expressed concerns about the CRB being secret, questioned the panel hearing process, the establishment of the By-Laws, wondered why the PBA President can't be at a hearing without the Officers involved, questioned the former Administrator's experience in developing a Use of Force Policy and argued whether the CRB Use of Force Policy, as recommended, would have benefitted Mr. Grant. Ms. Releford, the current Administrator, spoke to the fact that CRB meetings are not secret, explained the panel hearing process and the By-Laws and explained that the PBA President WAS present at the only hearing the current Board held where Officers attended. The Defense's Use of Force expert mentioned his experience related to Use of Force was through the Daigle Law Group and his employment in law enforcement. The current Administrator has attended the Daigle Law Groups trainings and plans to attend the upcoming Use of Force Summit in November. The expert gave testimony related to what he states was a "shoddy internal affairs investigations" in the Grant case by SPD.
- e) The Administrator attended the NACOLE Conference in September. She shared that Florida has policies that we should review, including a "Park, Walk & Talk" policy that requires Officers to get out of their cars, walk neighborhoods and interact with people. Mr. Grinnals shared that, when he was an SPD Officer, he used to walk the beat on Westcott Street and found it very fulfilling and effective. Next year's NACOLE conference is September 22-26, 2019 in Detroit and she suggests that Board Members attend.
- f) The Administrator is attending a Use of Force Summit in Connecticut in November. She saved \$100.00 by registering early and is driving a City vehicle to save money. Topics discussed include the Fourth Amendment, developing Use of Force policy, biological response to force, and officer involved shootings.

3. **Committee Reports**

- a) Community Outreach and Public Education – Mr. Ryans suggests going into High Schools as the return of Officers in schools has recently been approved. All Board Members and the public are encouraged to suggest events for the CRB to attend.
- b) Board Development and Training - Ms. Releford will find out the dates of the next Civilian Police Academy and encourages Board Members to let her know if they want to do ride alongs.
- c) Government Relations – Ms. Releford and Mr. Ryans have been invited to take part in Friday meetings with the Deputy Mayor and other community members. These meetings are focused on community violence. In discussions about re-establishing the youth component of the Board and How the CRB can be more beneficial to the communities' youth, etc.
- d) Police Relations – the Police Liaison Committee will reach out to the SPD and have a meeting during the fourth quarter

4. **CRB Study**

- a) Ms. Theresa Rocha Beardall, J.D., and a PhD candidate at Cornell University gave a progress report on her study to the Board. She has catalogued 712 newspaper articles from the office and has about 60 left to go through. She now has 26 years' worth of articles in an Excel sheet that can be sorted by date, topic and/or participants.
- b) Ms. Beardall reported that, in the past five years, over \$5 million has been paid out by the City of Syracuse to settle lawsuits. About \$5 million (85% of the total) have been payouts for the SPD.
- c) Ms. Beardall posits that if there is a good Use of Force Policy that is followed, there will be no incidents and therefore no judgments.
- d) Ms. Beardall advises that the numerical statistics the CRB keeps are very important to sustaining reform. Supervisors and Chiefs are very important to the CRB's success and it is also very important to address and involve youth.

5. **New Business** – no new business was discussed

6. Public Comments

- a) Mustafa shared how he looked up to the Beat Cops in his neighborhood when he was a child. The Police had a Police Athletic League (PAL) that was made up of Police volunteers and involved the children in different areas in boxing and other athletic events and taught kids to bring conflict “to the ring”. This was beneficial to him as a child.
- b) Mr. Grinnals shared that, when he was a Beat Cop on Westcott Street, under Chief Sardino, a study was done that found that having officers walk the beat in all neighborhood of the City would necessitate a 25% increase in the police force.
- c) Ms. Beardall pointed out that more money to the police does not decrease crime, fixing poverty does. As the SPD structure stands now, more police walking the beat would cost more but we can re-imagine what the police do and reorganize the current structure. We also need to do more than tell our children how to behave for the police because that implies that they are subordinate to them. We need to teach our children that the community is the police department’s employer in order to empower them. Mustafa expressed support for getting a medical examiner as well as an investigator.
- d) Ms. Releford commented that an investigator is the CRB’s priority now because there is not office space for a medical examiner.
- e) Ms. Beardall wondered whether an investigator could be a full time City employee in order to attract a bigger candidate pool.
- f) Ms. Releford advised that type of long term commitment can be addressed in the 2019-20 budget.
- g) Ms. Beardall wondered if the New York State Troopers are here at the request of the City of Syracuse Mayor do complaints about them fall under the CRB’s jurisdiction. She suggested that the CRB should make a statement to the Mayor to the effect that we will treat them as though they do.
- h) Mr. McCarthy advised that our By-Laws specifically address only the “Syracuse Police Department”.
- i) Mr. Anderson is hopeful that there is progress on the new CRB member.
- j) Ms. Releford advised that the 2nd District appointment was chosen by the CRB and will be at the next meeting. The CRB will only wait 60 days before filling the next vacancy.
- k) Mr. Anderson asks about the Body Worn Camera Policy draft and is advised that it is on the SPD website.

Mr. Ryans moves to adjourn to Executive Session, Mr. Grinnals seconds. Board moves to Executive Session.

During the Executive Session, the Board voted on the following cases to determine whether to forward the case to a CRB hearing:

- 14-082 No Hearing
- 17-062 Tabled for medical records
- 18-003 No Hearing
- 18-042 No Hearing
- 18-057 No Hearing

On motion duly made by Ms. Carter and seconded by Ms. Natale and unanimously adopted, the Board adjourned its meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Natale
1st District Appointee to the Citizen Review Board