

City of Syracuse
Citizen Review Board
Board Meeting Minutes
Meeting Date: October 4, 2012

On October 4, 2012, the City of Syracuse Citizen Review Board (CRB) held an open, stated meeting at City Hall in the Common Council Chambers.

Chairperson Crystal Collette called the meeting to order and announced that the meeting was being held pursuant to notice and that a quorum was present, with the following persons in attendance:

Board Members

Crystal Collette, Chairperson
Timothy Jennings-Bey
Demetria Gammage
Carole J. Horan
Raheem Mack
Joseph Masella
Sarah Stuart McIlvain
Virginia Diane Turner

Others

Joseph L. Lipari, Administrator CRB

The following members were not present, and the Board excused their absence: Donna Oppedisano, Tafara Blake Timmons and Louis Levine.

The Chairperson asked Mr. Masella to take the minutes of the meeting.

The Chairperson then introduced Mr. Mack, who had recently become a member of the Board, and welcomed him to the Board. Mr. Mack then provided the board with a brief outline of his background and said that he was looking forward to making a contribution to the CRB.

On motion duly made, seconded and adopted, with Mr. Mack abstaining, the Board approved the Minutes of the September 6, 2012 Board meeting, with the following correction: Mr. Jennings-Bey would be shown as absent from the meeting but excused.

Mr. Lipari then reported on his progress in hiring an assistant and stated that he expected the position to be filled by the end of November.

The Chairperson then introduced the topic of Mr. Lipari's attendance at the NACOLE Conference in San Diego in October. Mr. Lipari reported that the cost of attending the conference would be approximately \$1,800. In response to a question from Mr. Mack, Mr. Lipari stated that the CRB's budget would have funds available for additional training after the expenditures for his attendance at the NACOLE Conference. On motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted, the Board approved Mr. Lipari's attendance at the NACOLE Conference.

The Chairperson then introduced the topic of the various committees of the Board. The Chairperson announced that the Committee on Community Outreach & Public Education would hold its next meeting at 6:00 PM on October 10. Mr. Mack then asked if there would be training for members of the Committee, and the Chairperson responded that some training had already taken place.

The Board then discussed the question of allowing non-Board members to be members of Board committees.

Ms. Horan then explained the purpose of the Committee on Board Development & Training. In response to a question from the Chairperson, Ms. McIlvain explained the purpose of the Committee on Government Relations and noted that she and the Chairperson are members of the committee.

The Board then discussed the purpose of the Committee on Police Relations. Ms. McIlvain discussed the need for the CRB to develop relationships with those police agencies, which are numerous, that have a presence in the City of Syracuse. The Board then agreed to reconsider at a later meeting the question of the composition of the Committee on Police Relations.

The Board then discussed the Committee on Operations and agreed that the committee would be deemed an *ad hoc* committee and staffed as needed.

Mr. Lipari then reported on his attendance at the Syracuse & Central New York Police Retirees Association dinner forum. Mr. Lipari stated that he had given a presentation on the CRB at the dinner. He said that he was asked a number of questions following his presentation and felt that the exchange between him and the dinner attendees was beneficial. Mr. Lipari also stated that for future events of this type, he would likely invite Board members to attend with him.

Mr. Lipari then reported on his discussions with the Chairperson about forming an advisory council of the CRB. Ms. McIlvain then related her experience with advisory councils at other organizations and emphasized that in her view such councils require specific direction to be effective. The Chairperson noted that an advisory council should be staffed with community leaders. Mr. Lipari then reported that he had been invited by the Mayor to attend meetings she holds with local ministers. The Board agreed that it would continue to discuss the idea of forming an advisory council.

Ms. Turner left the meeting.

Mr. Lipari then raised the topic of training to be offered by the Syracuse Police Department. He stated that the Department had asked the CRB to suggest specific areas of training that would be of interest to its members. The Chairperson stated that the use of TASERS might be a useful training topic, as well as search and seizure. In response to a question from Mr. Masella, Mr. Lipari said he would research whether use-of-force training might be available from other than a police agency. The Chairperson then suggested that another possible training focus could be the use of deadly force.

The Board then agreed to defer a discussion of ride-alongs.

Mr. Lipari then distributed to the Board members a statistical summary in tabular form of cases handled by the CRB. Mr. Lipari noted that the "sustain rate" of CRB cases was approximately 15%, which Mr. Lipari described as high compared to national standards. He also stated that the number of complaints received by the CRB recently had declined, likely due to the change in weather and the fact that school is back in session. Mr. Lipari also reported that the CRB's average time for closing a case is approximately three months. The Board then discussed the reasonableness of the CRB ordinance's 60-day time frame for concluding action on each case.

Mr. Lipari then began a discussion of the CRB's draft quarterly report, which he stated had been previously distributed to the Board members. The Board then discussed the draft,

focusing in particular on language regarding the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association's stance regarding the CRB. Mr. Lipari also agreed to revise the section of the report dealing with the categorization of case dispositions by adding a new category relating to policy recommendations. Mr. Lipari also reported that he is still waiting for Chief of Police Fowler to inform the CRB of the disciplinary action the Department has taken against officers recommended for discipline by a CRB panel.

On motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted, the Board then recessed to allow members of the public in attendance at the meeting to make comments.

The Board then resumed its meeting in Executive Session.

The Board discussed the public-comment period and in particular the question of whether the public should be afforded more time to speak. The Board also discussed whether the public-comment period should precede, instead of follow, the public session of the Board's meetings.

In response to a question from Mr. Masella, Mr. Lipari stated that he would consult further with the Corporation Counsel about the permissibility of panel members quoting from the Administrator's investigative report during panel hearings.

Mr. Lipari then presented to the Board the results of his investigations of complaints filed with the CRB to allow the Board to vote individually on whether to refer each complaint to a panel for a hearing.

On motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted, the Board approved the issuance of two subpoenas in connection with Mr. Lipari's investigation of complaints filed with the CRB.

On motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted, the Board adjourned its meeting.

Respectfully submitted by

Joseph Masella, Acting Secretary