



City of Boston, Massachusetts
Office of Police Accountability and Transparency

Civilian Review Board (CRB) Public Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday, September 12, 2023 | Scheduled for 1:00 p.m.

In-Person Meeting | 2201 Washington St, Suite 102, Roxbury, MA 02119

Call to order at 1:04 p.m.

Civilian Review Board (CRB) Members Present: Chair E. Peter Alvarez; Natalie Carithers Utley; Rev. Wayne S. Daley; Joshua Dankoff; Tara Register; B. Chris Sumner.

Civilian Review Board (CRB) Members Absent: Anne Hernandez; Carrie Mays; Amy McNamee.

Introduction

Chair E. Peter Alvarez opened the meeting by welcoming members of the public and the CRB members present. The chair established that a quorum was not present and that the board would begin its meeting by reviewing all agenda items that did not require a quorum to vote. Chair Alvarez reminded the public that public comment would not be heard during this meeting and that any comments could be sent to opatboards@boston.gov.

OPAT Executive Director's Report

Chair Alvarez introduced OPAT Deputy Director, John Steies, to provide the Director's Report.

Deputy Director Steies reported that OPAT's previous Executive Director, Stephanie Everett, has left the department following an appointment by Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey to the position of Suffolk County Register of Probate & Family Court. Deputy Director Steies will occupy the position in an interim capacity until Mayor Michelle Wu appoints a new Executive Director.

Deputy Director Steies reported that the FY24 City budget was passed by the City Council and approved by Mayor Wu at the end of June. OPAT received a budget of \$1,452,986, a slight decrease from its FY23 budget explained by the reduction in board member salaries,



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informed by the actual salaries paid to board members in FY23. OPAT's FY24 budget also included a key investment: an additional \$10,000 to continue the efforts in increasing the Boston Police Department's (BPD) hiring, retention, and promotion of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) employees.

OPAT hired consultants Conan Harris & Associates and Strategy Matters to review and provide recommendations for the hiring, retention, and promotion of BIPOC employees. These recommendations have been published and are available on the OPAT website.

Deputy Director Steies introduced three (3) new OPAT staff members: Tyesha Marius, Intake Specialist; Joseph Scott, Community Mediator; Cheyenne Isaac-Dorsainvil, Youth Coordinator.

Deputy Director Steies reported that OPAT hosted two (2) youth - Crystal and Seniyah - through the 2023 Summer SuccessLink Program run by the Office of Youth Employment and Opportunities (OYEO).

Deputy Director Steies reported that the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) met in August and approved its internal structure. YAC will have its own elected officials and is holding a nomination period that will be open until elections at the next meeting. Applications for YAC itself are also open and can be found at boston.gov/opat-yac.

Board Member Joshua Dankoff asked about the timeline for the appointment of the new OPAT Executive Director. Deputy Director Steies responded that the Mayor's Office was leading the appointment search and expected the position to be filled by late October.

Board Member Dankoff asked if the hiring, retention, and promotion recommendations produced by the consultants had been sent to BPD Commissioner Michael Cox. Deputy Director Steies answered that the recommendations had been sent to Commissioner Cox. The \$10,000 investment received in the FY24 budget is intended to continue the implementation of these recommendations.



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Board Member Dankoff asked where responsibility landed for implementing the consultant's recommendations. Deputy Director Steies responded that BPD holds the responsibility to implement the recommendations.

Other Business

Chair Alvarez reported that Board Member Amy McNamee would resign from the CRB, effective at the end of September 2023, and noted the importance of obtaining quorum and attendance in light of this resignation.

Chair Alvarez and the CRB members present reviewed the date and time of the next CRB meeting and determined that all could attend on Tuesday, December 12th, 2023 at 11:00 a.m.

Board Member B. Chris Sumner arrived at 1:16 p.m. Chair Alvarez established that a quorum was present.

Review & Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The November 15, 2022 minutes and the June 13, 2023 minutes were approved as presented by a unanimous vote of the CRB. No corrections were made.

Complaint Summary & Disposition

After a review and investigation and in accordance with 12-16.7 (b) of the Ordinance, Deputy Director Steies reported the dismissal of the following cases: Case #10, Case #65, Case #178, Case #183, Case #198, Case #199, Case #203, and Case #224.

After a review and investigation and in accordance with 12-16.7 (b) of the Ordinance, Deputy Director Steies referred the following cases to the Civilian Review Board for review and recommendation of disposition: Case #67, Case #100, Case #142, Case #175, Case #176, Case #190, Case #205, and Case #216.

Chair Alvarez stated that the CRB would enter an executive session, pursuant to Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c.30A, § 21(a)(1) and § 21(a)(7), combined with M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(f) and (g), to hear the remaining cases in order to discuss the complaints brought against a Boston Police Department public officer, employee, staff member, or individual. Chair Alvarez



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stated that the CRB would reconvene in a public session to hold a roll call vote on the disposition of the cases remaining on the docket.

Board Member Natalie Carithers motioned to enter into Executive Session and received a second from Board Member Dankoff. The motion was unanimously agreed upon by the Board.

The CRB's executive session was called to order at 1:23 p.m. and adjourned at 4:39 p.m.

Complaint Summary & Disposition – Public Session

Chair Alvarez reconvened the CRB meeting in its public session at 4:43 p.m.

Chair Alvarez held roll call votes on each of the cases presented to the CRB during its executive session.

In the matter of **Case #67**, the CRB voted unanimously to adopt the disposition of **Insufficient Evidence to Make a Finding**. The CRB included the following note:

While this case was found to be Insufficient Evidence by the Board, the CRB noted that the body-worn camera referenced in the police report as being activated by one of the officers on scene was not available when requested during the OPAT investigation. This is concerning to the CRB, but was not a factor in this particular disposition.

In the matter of **Case #100**, the CRB voted unanimously to adopt OPAT Staff's recommended disposition of **Exonerated**.

In the matter of **Case #142**, the CRB voted unanimously to adopt the disposition of **Not Sustained**. The CRB included the following note:

While this case was found to be Not Sustained by the Board, the CRB strongly recommends that the officer named in the complaint review the body-worn camera footage from the interaction and reflect on the following CRB concerns:



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1. The lack of checking in on the passenger at the scene;
2. The insistence that this was not a major accident and thus no police report was needed given the surrounding circumstances and substantial damage observed by the CRB to at least one of the vehicles;
3. The circumstances that eventually led the officer to write a police report for this matter;
4. The curt demeanor in which the officer addressed the complainant who, throughout the interaction, was respectful. This includes actions by the officer of not providing his full name and being sarcastic with the complainant when they were trying to get the situation resolved;
5. Providing the observed race of the complainant on the police report the officer ultimately did draft, but not providing the race of the other driver even though the observed race of the other driver was white/Caucasian and the complainant's observed race would have been Black, non-Hispanic.

In the matter of **Case #175**, the CRB voted unanimously to adopt OPAT Staff's recommended disposition of **Sustained**. Per the BPD Draft Discipline Matrix, the mitigating penalty for a violation of BPD Rule 113 Canon 8 and Rule 102 §3 is: oral reprimand to 1 day. Accompanying recommended discipline from the Board is an **Oral Reprimand**.

In the matter of **Case #176**, the CRB voted unanimously to adopt OPAT Staff's recommended disposition of **Not Sustained**. The CRB included the following note:

We highly recommend considering a policy on limiting displays of the Thin Blue Line flag due to its implications and connotations within the communities that the BPD serves. The unique relationship between the public and the police should be considered, especially since the flag is being publicly displayed in the halls of the BPD district. The CRB also notes that other police departments across the country have limited displays of the Thin Blue Line flag.



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In the matter of **Case #190**, the CRB voted unanimously to adopt OPAT Staff's recommended disposition of **Sustained**. Per the BPD Draft Discipline Matrix, the mitigating penalty for a violation of Rule 102 §9 is: oral reprimand to 5 days with training. Accompanying recommended discipline from the board is an **Oral Reprimand**.

In the matter of **Case #205**, the CRB voted unanimously to adopt OPAT Staff's recommended disposition of **Not Sustained**.

In the matter of **Case #216**, the CRB voted unanimously to adopt OPAT Staff's recommended disposition of **Unfounded**.

Chair Alvarez called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board Member Sumner motioned and received a second from Board Member Carithers. All six (6) CRB members present voted to adjourn until the next scheduled meeting at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 12th.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:54 p.m.