



FINAL  
6/23/20

## INDEPENDENT CITIZEN POLICE REVIEW BOARD

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### Minutes of the Regular CPRB Meeting Held on May 26, 2020 (Mtg. No. 223)

Online Zoom Webinar # 916 7093 0738

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Neighborhood: Citywide

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Video of the meeting <https://cprbpg.org/2661>

Members Present:  Mr. Thomas C. Waters Vice Chair Mr. Sheldon Williams Mr. Elwin Green Sr. Patrice Hughes  Solicitor: Atty. William F. Ward  Staff Present: Ms. Elizabeth C. Pittinger, Exec. Director Ms. Stephanie Dorman, Asst. Exec. Director Ms. Michelle Gamble, Lead Investigator Ms. Sherri Bridgett, Investigator Mr. David Ellwood, Investigator	Excused: Dr. Emma Lucas-Darby Ms. Karen McLellan  Absent: None  Vacancy: None  Excused staff: None
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Mr. Waters, Vice Chair, called the online Zoom meeting to order at approximately 6:04 p.m.

Mr. Waters recognized the members present and the excused members, Dr. Darby and Karen McLellan.

Mr. Waters called for a motion to approve the minutes of the regular Board meeting conducted on May 26, 2020. A motion to approve the 05/26/20 meeting minutes was offered by, Mr. Williams seconded by Dr. Guercio and approved unanimously.

The entire meeting may be viewed here: [Independent CPRB Meeting 05/26/2020](#)

#### **Opening remarks by Vice Chair:**

Mr. Waters reserved his remarks for the end of the meeting

#### **Executive Director's Report:**

Intake for this year is 106 complaints. Lead Investigator, Ms Gamble, has been handling intake and taking complainant phone calls on a call forward basis from CPRB's main office phone number and email.

Investigator Ellwood, constructed a plexi-glass shield so we are able to interview complainants safely. CPRB is still waiting to stock up on Sanitize wipes, hand sanitizer and masks that are currently in shortage, for our team's safety as well as the safety of all who visit CPRB's office. Ms. Dorman has ordered chairs that can be wiped off and is waiting for the delivery of them.

Intake is ongoing and all calls are being answered. Complaints are being logged and correspondents that need to go out are continuing to go out in a timely fashion. All members of CPRB have received a laptop with access to the City system and access to case files which makes working remotely seamless.

Ms Pittinger informed the board that she was alerted to a provocative video on Facebook related to a police training exercise. Investigator Ellwood has reached out to the PBP Training Academy and is awaiting a response regarding the nature and objective of the training exercise.

On May 25<sup>th</sup> George Floyd was killed by a Minneapolis police officer. The incident was captured on cellphone video that memorialized a Minneapolis police officer appearing to be kneeling on Mr. Floyd's neck while other officers looked on. Mr. Floyd was a black man, the officer a white man. In February Ahmaud Arbery, a young black man, was killed by a retired police officer and his son, both of whom are white. Racial tension and police bias are increasingly of concern.

Solicitor Ward updated the Board on the Office of Municipal Investigation's delay in answering subpoenas. Assistant City Solicitor Michael Kennedy apologized and acknowledged the delay was due to case preparation related to a federal civil suit. Mr. Kennedy assured Mr. Ward that he intends to address the matter after June 15<sup>th</sup> when discovery for the case closes.

Mr. Waters reported there was no unfinished business and no new business to discuss.

#### **Case Review:**

- Mr. Waters moved to the Case Review Agenda (copy attached). Each group of recommendations was voted upon as recorded on the attached Case Review Actions.

#### **Public Comment:**

- Mr. Waters invited public comment and asked commenters to limit remarks to 3-minutes. Mr. Waters announced there were 6 attendees and he would read their comments.
  - "A lot of people are doing a lot of work during this Covid 19 crisis. It sounds like the run around. The original case they are ignoring happened in October of 2018."
  - "Is it genuinely acceptable to ignore subpoenas with all that is going on right now until we all get back to the office? Is this acceptable in the courts? Seems like an excuse when I heard it before." Mr. Ward replied that no it is not acceptable to ignore a subpoena but we could have filed a petition to enforce the subpoena but it would have got caught up in the inactivity in the court system because the courts have been closed down, except for emergency situations, due to the Coronavirus and it could be a two year process followed by appeal. The alternative would be to take the approach of meeting with the law department and OMI which Ms.

Pittinger and Mr. Ward have done. Mr. Waters added that it is not just one subpoena we are having a problem with there are several subpoenas.

- “What are your thoughts about a timeline for the public hearing you were planning to have in January?” Mr. Waters replied we did have a plan to have a public hearing in January and that we as a Board will revisit the timeline because it is not unimportant to any of us.

Ms. Pittinger commented on the necessity to have the subpoenas answered. Subject officer statements provide us insight to the officer’s conduct. CPRB cannot make an informed decision without having both sides of the story.

### **Next Meeting**

- Mr. Waters announced the time and location of the next Board meeting: Tuesday June 23, 2020 at the Jewish Community Center, 5738 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15217 but due to COVID-19 precautions the Board may conduct June’s meeting as a Zoom meeting. Mr. Waters asked Ms. Pittinger when we would have a decision on where the Board meeting would be held. Ms. Pittinger responded that City Council is considering extending the stay at home order through June 2<sup>nd</sup> and CPRB is following the local guide lines.
- Mr. Waters Thanked Ms. Pittinger for informing the board about the training video and the staff for all the work they do. Mr. Waters also thanked everyone for attending the board meeting.

Dr. Guercio asked about the limitations when meeting in public. Mr. Waters suggested a motion to hold the June meeting on Zoom, Mr. Williams moved and Dr. Guercio seconded and the motion to have the June meeting as a Zoom meeting was unanimously approved.

Mr. Waters called for a motion to adjourn, and the motion to adjourn was adopted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Stephanie M. Dorman  
Assistant Executive Director

Attachments (1):  
5/26/20 Case Review Agenda