



INDEPENDENT CITIZEN POLICE REVIEW BOARD

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Draft of
05/25/2021

Minutes of the Regular CPRB Meeting Held on May 25, 2021 (Mtg. No. 233)

Online Zoom Webinar # 847 3314 2092

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Neighborhood: Citywide

Video of the meeting: <https://cprbpg.org/2821>

Members Present: Dr. Emma Lucas-Darby Chair Mr. Thomas C. Waters Vice Chair Dr. Mary Jo Guercio Ms. Karen McLellan, LEP Mr. Sheldon Williams, LEP Solicitor: Atty. William F. Ward Staff Present: Ms. Elizabeth C. Pittinger, Exec. Director Ms. Stephanie Hampton, Asst. Exec. Director Ms. Michelle Gamble, Lead Investigator Ms. Sherri Bridgett, Investigator Mr. David Ellwood, Investigator	Excused Members: Absent: Mr. Sheldon Williams Vacancy: None Excused staff: All present.
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The entire meeting may be viewed here: [Independent CPRB Meeting 05/25/2021](#)

Dr. Lucas-Darby, Chair, called the online Zoom meeting to order at approximately 6:05 p.m.
Dr. Darby recognized Board members present and the excused member.

Opening remarks by Chair:

Dr. Darby read a statement, commemorating the anniversary of George Floyd's murder. Dr. Darby's remarks are attached.

Dr. Darby commended Ms. Elizabeth Pittinger, Executive Director of the CPRB for being appointed Vice President of the Pennsylvania State Law Enforcement Advisory Commission.

Executive Director's Report:

Ms. Pittinger informed the Board that PBP Sergeant Tiffany Kline-Costa will present an overview of the Community Engagement Unit.

Ms. Pittinger shared with Members that the Alpha Alpha Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority honored Dr. Darby on [Facebook](#).

Pittinger reported that three terms will expire on October 31, 2021:

Seat #2: City Council appointment, designated Law Enforcement Pro. seat

Incumbent: Ms. Karen McLellan, Law Enforcement Professional

Retained: 11/1/2017 Ms. McLellan is a Law Enforcement Professional.

Seat #4: City Council appointment, non-law enforcement seat

Incumbent: Dr. Mary Jo Guercio

Retained: 11/1/2017. Dr. Guercio is not a Law Enforcement Professional.

Seat #5: Mayoral appointment, non-law enforcement seat

Incumbent: Sr. Patrice Hughes (To be vacated due to residential change)

Appointed: 11/1/2017 to term expiring 10/30/2021 This is not designated as a Law Enforcement Professional.

Notice of the seats' status was published in The New Pittsburgh Courier, Pittsburgh City Paper and, The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Dr. Lucas-Darby will provide notice to the Mayor and City Council during the first week of June.

The City Controller's performance audit has concluded and the report published. is complete. Copies were distributed to all members of the Board. The audit report is available here: [City Controller - CPRB Performance Audit.](#)

A joint performance audit of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police (PBP) in conjunction with the City Controller's has commenced. CPRB will report back to the board as appropriate but more than likely not until the audit has been completed which is the protocol followed by the Controller's office.

The application window for the open Investigator position has closed. Applications will be screened for residency and reviewed.

Pittinger acknowledged the 24th anniversary of community activism and the election that resulted in the creation of the CPRB, May 20, 1997.

The recent primary election resulted in the Democratic nomination of Ed Gainey for the office of Mayor. There was no Republican candidate presented or nominated. Pittinger confirmed staff availability to discuss matters of police accountability if requested by the nominee.

Unfinished Business:

No unfinished business.

New Business:

No new business

Dr. Darby called for a motion to approve the minutes of the regular Board meeting conducted on April 27, 2021. A motion to approve April 27, 2021, meeting minutes was offered by Ms. McLellan and seconded by Dr. Guercio and the motion was approved unanimously.

Case Review:

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

Mr. Waters asked if the pilot program utilizing social workers partnering with police is something ongoing or if there is currently a mechanism by which social workers can be summoned to assist police. Dr. Lucas-Darby noted the recent appointment of Dr. Sheila Roth as the Continuum of Support Manager in the Office of Community Health ([5/17/21 City Press Release](#)). She anticipates emergence of a more prominent role for professional social workers as support resources for police.

Mr. Waters expressed support of a disposition vote for Case # 022-21 as unfounded but asked that staff follow up and advise the Board if there is any further action in the case.

Dr. Darby asked Ms. Pittinger how much involvement the Board can have in terms of knowing what happens once Case # 022-21 is dismissed as unfounded. Ms. Pittinger replied that she asked the Investigator to follow up with the individual and determine if any social service support has been rendered to the individual. Additionally, the Investigator reached out to the Lieutenant of the individual's former residential area and encouraged contact with the receiving police zone to smooth the individual's transition and avoid unnecessary involvement with the police.

The entire meeting may be viewed here: [Independent CPRB Meeting 05/25/2021](#)

Next Meeting:

Dr. Darby announced the time and location of the next Board meeting: Tuesday, June 22, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom. The meeting link will be posted on the [cprbpg.org](#) website and Face Book page.

Public Comment:

Question from the chat: "Curious about when the Kopy's report will be discussed"

Dr. Darby replied the report is available to the public. She emphasized any discussion around the report must be structured and relevant to the material within the report..

Mr. Waters replied that he requested a discussion of the report and that tentatively the discussion would be during the June 2021 meeting. He expressed his belief that the board has done the public a disservice by not having the discussion.

Mr. Green replied that the question becomes how we can put the information before the public in a way that is more effective than what the Board has done so far.

Ms. McLellan cautioned that the Board does not skew the report by a discussion but allow the report to stand on its merit and the public can view it on the CPRB's website.

Mr. Green does not believe mentioning the report in a meeting that maybe only 1-3 citizens attend is not an adequate way, in his opinion, to get the word out to the general public. Maybe some PR activity is necessary.

Ms. Pittinger reminded the Board that the case is in litigation which is partially why the board did not have a more transparent conversation with the Chief of Police and the Assistant Chief at the October 2020 meeting. CPRB is the only community entity that kept the case alive.

Mr. Waters agreed that the Board did keep the case open but the Board had community members that stayed on the Board and he believes the Board owes them a big thank you for not giving up and continuing to come to meetings demanding to know what was going on with the investigation.

Dr. Darby asked Ms. Pittinger to provide some guidance on what possible future discussion could be in regards to the report.

Ms. Pittinger replied she would follow up with the Bureau regarding the discussion from October. Dr. Darby asked that any further discussion be held for the June meeting.

The entire meeting may be viewed here: [Independent CPRB Meeting 05/25/2021](#)

Ms. Pittinger introduced Sgt. Tiffany Kline-Costa who leads the PBP Community Engagement Unit, and serves as liaison between the community and the police.

Sgt. Kline-Costa provided an overview of her unit which was established in 2019 as a means to establish a non-threatening relationship between the community and the police built on trust and engagement.

Sergeant Kline-Costa's discussion may be heard: [Independent CPRB Meeting 05/25/2021](#)

Q: Will you move "Chess with the Police to the communities or keep it in Market Square?

A: If you invite me somewhere I will be there, but Market Square was just easy and accessible. We are considering many of the Park Conservancy spaces throughout the City.

Q: To what degree do you facilitate or interact with the Behavioral Health Services?

A: PBP has been working with Mr. Dan Palka and Allegheny Health Network and has established a co-response/community referral initiative or police referral initiative. The co-response model is activated when police respond to a call for some sort of substance abuse, abuse, a homeless person or individual experiencing a non-violent behavioral crisis,

Dan and his team respond with the officers and intervene or initiate referrals for support, as appropriate. Dan and his team are working in Zones 1, 2 & 5 and monitor the radio from 8-4 daily.

Sergeant Kline-Costa asked for any ideas of ways in which the police and community members can get involved to promote community policing and relationship-based policing and also promote a sense of public safety and security in their own neighborhood. Her contact information was provided in the chat.

Q: Are you working with any of the block watch folks?

A: Yes, we do some work like that.

Sgt. Kline-Costa was thanked and extended an open invitation to come back anytime.

Dr. Darby called for a motion to adjourn, and the motion was offered by Dr. Guercio and seconded by Ms. McLellan and the motion was adopted unanimously.

The entire meeting may be viewed here: [Independent CPRB Meeting 05/25/2021](#)

Respectfully Submitted,



Stephanie M. Dorman
Assistant Executive Director

Attachments (1): 05/25/2021 Case Review Actions
(2): Dr. Emma Lucas-Darby, Chair Comments

Action Date:
05/25/2021

CPRB CASE REVIEW AGENDA 5/25/2021

CPRB CASE NO. INVESTIGATOR	ALLEGATION(S)	SUMMARY	RECOMMENDATION	RATIONALE
PUBLIC HEARING (0)				
FULL INVESTIGATION (1)				
070-21 Bridgett	Conduct Unbecoming a Member 16-1 (3.6) Conduct Toward the Public 16-1 (3.7) Arrests 44-1	Cx was pulled over on 03/05/2021 and was informed there was a warrant for his arrest from a previous traffic stop that occurred on 08/20/2020. The Cx believes his constitutional rights were violated.	Authorize full investigation	Preliminary evidence provides cause to advance the investigation.
30 DAY EXTENSION OF FULL INVESTIGATION (5)				
041-21 Bridgett	16-1 (3.6.) Conduct Unbecoming a Member 16-1 (3.7) Conduct Toward the Public 16-1 (3.13) Neglect of Duty	Cx alleges that on several occasions she tried to have the PBP assist her with the harassment she received from her neighbor W#3. and instead of police taking reports, she has been charged with harassment.	Authorize 30-day Extension	More time is needed for the investigation.
040-21 Ellwood	12-06(5.0) Use of Force 12-10 Critical Incident Procedures Involving Police	Cx alleges that her son, the Victim, was shot and killed by the SO on 03/05/20 during a traffic stop and she had not heard from the DA's office if the SO will be charged, Cx added the SOs were not wearing body cameras.	Authorize 30-day Extension	More time is needed for the investigation.
039-21 Bridgett	16-1 (3.6.) Conduct Unbecoming a Member 16-1 (3.7) Conduct Toward the Public 12-6 (5.0) Use of Force	The Cx alleges the SO removed his service weapon from his holster and pointed it at his head.	Authorize 30-day Extension	More time is needed for the investigation.
038-21 Ellwood	44-1(4.0) Arrests – Physical, Summons, or Warrant 12-06(3.0) Use of Force	Cx alleges he was arrested while trying to enter his home while the SOs were serving a search warrant to obtain video from his surveillance system from a homicide that happened in his neighborhood.	Authorize 30-day Extension	More time is needed for the investigation.
008-21 Bridgett	16-1 (3.6) Conduct Unbecoming a Member 10-1 Code of Ethics	The Cx alleges the SO began a romantic/sexual relationship with her girlfriend after he responded to a call where she and her girlfriend were assaulted.	Authorize 30-day Extension	More time is needed for the investigation.

CPRB CASE No. INVESTIGATOR	ALLEGATION(S)	SUMMARY	RECOMMENDATION	RATIONALE
UNSUSTAINABLE (0)				
UNFOUNDED (1)				
022-21 ELLWOOD	16-01(3.7) Conduct Toward the Public. 40-19(5.1.5) Mandatory Reports By Bureau Policy	Cx alleges on 12/28/20 SOs #1 and #2 were disrespectful and took a 'false report' from the neighbor that was against her.	Dismiss as unfounded	Statement from the property manager both corroborates the statement from SO#5 as well as sheds light on the mental state of the Cx. Includes recommendation to convene meeting & seek PBP-SW intervention.
OTHER (0)				
SUSPENSION (2)				
031-21 Bridgett	16-1 (3.6) Conduct Unbecoming a Member 16-1 (3.7) Conduct Toward the Public 16-1 (3.13) Neglect of Duty	The Cx alleges the SOs failed to investigate allegations against him and he ended up in jail for two months because the false reports violated his probation.	Authorize suspension until June 2021	Waiting for SO statements from OMI
028-21 Bridgett	16-1 (3.6.) Conduct Unbecoming a Member 16-1 (3.7) Conduct Toward the Public 12-6 Use of Force	The Cx alleges the SOs used excessive force against her when the Resolve Crisis Center was trying to 302 (Involuntary Commitment) her.	Authorize suspension until June 2021	Waiting for SO statements from OMI

Suspensions follow

CONTINUED SUSPENSIONS (18)
SUMMARIES PROVIDED UPON REQUEST OF MEMBER

CPRB CASE NO. INVESTIGATOR	ALLEGATION(S)	REASON FOR CONTINUED INVESTIGATION	POSSIBLE CLOSING DATE
019-21 Ellwood	Lost-Stolen-Abandoned-Property 37-01 Evidence Procedures 36-01,(6.0)	Waiting for SO Statements	TBD
012-21 Bridgett	Conduct Unbecoming a Member 16-1 (3.6) Conduct Toward the Public 16-1 (3.7) Neglect of Duty 16-1 (3.13)	Waiting for SO statements from OMI	TBD
252-20 Ellwood	Conduct Toward the Public 16-01 (3.7.1) Motor Vehicle Stops 40-04	Waiting for SO statements.	TBD
247-20 Bridgett	Conduct Unbecoming a Member 16-1 (3.6) Conduct Towards the Public 16-1 Use of Force 12-6 (3.2) Truthfulness 16-1 (3.19)	Police Criminal Complaint was received on 04/13/2021 and is being reviewed.	TBD
225-20 Ellwood	Towing Procedures; Reasons for Towing 41-04.01 (11.0 Parking Violations)	Waiting for SO statements.	TBD
192-20 Ellwood	Unbiased Policing 11-3, 4.1.1 4.1.2 Use of Force 12-6, 3.1 Continuum of Control12-8 3.0	Waiting for SO statements.	TBD
130-20 Bridgett	Conduct Unbecoming a Member 16-1 (3.6) Property Room Procedures 36-2	Waiting on a follow up with the Chief	TBD
112-20 Bridgett	Unbiased Policing 11-3 Conduct Unbecoming a Member 16-1, (3.6) Conduct Toward the Public 16-1, (3.07)	Waiting on for the Daily Activity Log/ Running Sheet	TBD
057-20 Ellwood	Unbiased Policing 11-3 Conduct Unbecoming a Member 16-1, (3.6) Conduct Toward the Public 16-1, (3.07)	Cx alleges that the SO is harassing her and falsely arrested her.	TBD

CPRB CASE NO. INVESTIGATOR	ALLEGATION(S)	REASON FOR CONTINUED INVESTIGATION	POSSIBLE CLOSING DATE
041-20 Ellwood	Use of Force 12-6 (3.2) Conduct Unbecoming a Member 16-1, (3.6) Conduct Toward the Public 16-1, (3.07)	Cx alleges the SOs used excessive force in their arrest of them during a domestic violence call to Complaint daughters house	TBD
006-20 Ellwood	Crash Response Investigations and Reports 41-03 (3.3.6, 3.4.4, 4.1.1, 4.1.3)	Outstanding details must be resolved	TBD
003-20 Ellwood	Conduct Unbecoming 16-1 (3.6) Conduct Toward the Public 16-1 (3.7) Neglect of Duty 16-1 (3.13)	Waiting on SO statements	TBD
230-19 Ellwood	Warrantless Searches and Seizures 45-2 (10.0) Use of Force 12-06 Motor Vehicle Stops 40-04 (03.2, 03.4)	Waiting for transcripts of BWC from OMI	TBD
217-19 Ellwood	Conduct Toward the Public 16-01 (3.7) Arrest 44-1 Unlawful Search and Seizure 45-2	Waiting on Abel's arbitration.	TBD
190-19 Bridgett	Conduct Unbecoming a Member 16-1 (3.6) Conduct Toward the Public 16-1 (3.7) Police-Response-to-Domestic-Violence-Incidents 40-12	Reviewing SO statement.	TBD
029-19 Bridgett	Obedience to orders/ laws 16-1 (3.1) Conduct unbecoming a member 16-1 (3.6) Insubordination, 16-1 (3.9) Truthfulness 16-1 (3.19) False report 62-1 (2.10)	Waiting on SO statements	TBD
016-19 Bridgett	Conduct unbecoming a member 16-1 (3.6) Neglect of duty 16-1(3.13)	W#1 has not been apprehended. The DAs office will prosecute when W#1 is arrested.	TBD
87-18-ED Gamble	Use of Force 12-6 Discharge of firearms 12-7 Conduct unbecoming a member 16-1 (3.6) Truthfulness 16-1(3.19) Records/Reports/Files 62-1	Waiting for witnesses to cooperate.	TBD

In Commemoration of the First Anniversary of the Death of Mr. George Floyd
Dr. Emma Lucas-Darby, Chair, May 25, 2021

Today marks one year since the death, or more accurately stated the murder, of George Floyd. In an effort to secure a policy that would address such a tragedy in the future, legislation bearing his name was introduced in Congress. It is stalled with no projected date for passage. The lingering question is why? Can we agree on the sacredness of human life? We have mourned, honored the man at the heart of this situation, expressed shock that this event could occur today, and felt sorrow over this murder. We have marched peacefully, held many public and private conversations, engaged in repeated personal self-reflections, participated on committees and task forces focused on societal change and attended webinars in the hope that disrespect for the lives of people of color would cease. But time and time again, much too often, we hear of vicious, disastrous, and unlawful attacks on these individuals.

We have seen increased efforts for police reform and accountability. These efforts must not play to some sentiments, but we must have real commitment to work continuously for change. Personal attitudes, beliefs and ingrained positionalities of privilege must be confronted and called out so that individuals are made aware of this thinking, behaviors, and actions. Silence is not acceptable when human lives are disrespected.

As a member of this Board, I vow to represent the public's interest while also carefully understanding and scrutinizing actions of the police. We must hold law enforcement accountable for these actions – whether reasonable and certainly when not, and we will exercise fair judgments as we consider concerns and issues from both sides. Racism and oppression cannot continue at the level we have seen lately and this Board will take appropriate actions when investigating and make fair decisions involving all parties.

My commitment is to represent the public while maintaining balance in the decision-making process involving law enforcement personnel. As we face the future, I want to be optimistic that we will have a more unified world where human respect reigns for all no matter the race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, culture, religious background, or political practices.

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