



Office of Professional Accountability Review Board (OPARB)

**Minutes of Wednesday, June 24, 2009 Meeting
Annual Retreat
9:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.**

Patrick Sainsbury, Chair:	P	Steve Freng, Member:	P
Tina Bueche, Member:	P	Martha Norberg, Member:	P
George Davenport, Member:	P	David Wilma, Member:	P
Sharon Dear, Member:	P	Michael Pendleton, Consultant:	P

(Absent = A, Present = P, Excused = E)

Guest(s): Kate Pflaumer, Outgoing OPA Auditor; Kathryn Olson, OPA Director; Michael Spearman, OPA Auditor

The meeting was convened at 9:30 a.m.

The group reviewed the legislation in order to understand the role of the board. Kathryn understood that the PARP recommended that OPARB and OPA jointly identify three areas for review, although that is not stated in the ordinance. Kate wondered whether the board should look at closed files, and to what extent? Beyond OPA files, does looking at training and other policies and procedures fit within the guidelines. David Wilma felt the guidelines were pretty broad, and that it makes sense to have the auditor extract information because of access to unredacted files.

Sharon stated that the *public* believes that OPARB reviews cases, so the board should keep some aspect of that. Kate stated that the public does not understand the auditor's role.

Council and OPARB are supposed to jointly host a public hearing at least 90 days before guild negotiations begin. Nancy will check with the Burgess office to determine when that date is.

David stated that working with redacted files is a big barrier, and he'd rather avoid the issue until the redaction issue is settled. Kate said that the negotiators need to be prepared going into session. OPARB needs to communicate with the negotiators early and often; Kathryn will be involved in negotiations.

OPARB will determine its priorities prior to guild negotiations. Kate advised care and diplomacy in approaching negotiators.

OPARB needs to look at trends and best practices in other jurisdictions. What methods should they use?

The group reviewed outreach data, read Tim Burgess' email and his thoughts on OPARB priorities, and solicited input from Kate and Kathryn. There is a general lack of awareness and understanding of the system, even within SPD. Officers need training, and it would be helpful to have a "mentorship"-type program to help officers mature on the job. Guild issues complicate things.



Office of Professional Accountability Review Board (OPARB)

Some of the topics suggested for focus of the work plan are youth violence, domestic violence, immigration, officer selection criteria (psychological), and officer training. Pat wondered if OPARB's interest in youth violence would be superfluous – there's already so much focus on that issue. It was suggested that not just youth are affected. Officers are arbiters of all kinds of behavior, and officers need special training.

Outreach themes:

- Guild vs. review process
- Long standing _____ w/SPD vs. _____
- People affected by SPD (arrested) are not generally happy about it
- Lack of information on OPA/Review process
- Lack of encouragement to use the system
- "Rookie respect" training issues
- Guild vs. city issues
- Low number of officers

There was a discussion of tasers. Rather than look at individual cases, look at standards across the nation. The issue may be how and when used, where and when (concrete vs. grass when they fall). There is a lot of information available. Perhaps OPARB could look at the broader issue of use force and training.

The group wanted to continue their outreach to diverse communities, but who should do what? The auditor did report on diverse communities – should OPARB report on it as well?

Kathryn suggested examining the OPA process with respect to Loudermill, which is something Tim Burgess wants as well. She is troubled by the confusing classification system. How can the auditor be involved in the process earlier? (Refer to the OPA complaint process flow chart, which is already out of date).

Michael Spearman asked what anyone knows about complaints not filed? There is ignorance about the process and concern about the ability to remain anonymous. Those who know about the process felt it takes too long and is exhausting. Many circumvent the system by calling their contacts at the precinct to work out issues. A level of cynicism exists about the efficiency of the system. Supervisory actions are often "off radar" and not recorded.

OPARB may want to talk to the administrator of the Early Intervention System. There are indicators and triggers of which they are aware. Note – the EIS is a personnel action, separate from OPA process. It is tracked in human resources, and is not shared. OPA issues may be referred to EIS, but not vice versa.

Kathryn suggested that the classification/findings scheme could be simplified. Look at the complaint process; not the "professional" aspect, but overall, including how and when RB (???) and the auditor impact the process.

Kate mentioned the importance of meaningful, responsive follow-up with a closing letter to the complainant. Kathryn mentioned a meeting she attended in Vancouver, WA regarding an education-based model of policing. She wants to look at more learning models about discipline and other



Office of Professional Accountability Review Board (OPARB)

topics. The traditional model is disciplinary and punitive, rather than focusing on learning. The education-based model involves classes, doing papers on various subjects, dialogue, and is more adult-focused. It may be likened to a community court model. SPOG would need to be involved in any changes.

Michael Spearman is interested in diverse communities, making the process more friendly and inviting participation. He would like to see wider distribution of auditor's reports in the community, perhaps via email. David suggested distributing reports to those who've given input to OPARB, while ensuring that SPD staff receive the report as well.

Tim Burgess' suggestions include multiple complaints, which is a management and training issue – what brought the officer to this point? Redaction is time consuming, and it's a slippery slope keeping officers' identification private. Tim is often asked about frequent flyers. Supervisors often know of "problem children" long before a problem is recognized in any system. There is concern about a "team" or "unit" effect.

The auditors and director left at this point.

There was a discussion about how to ensure that OPA and OPARB's identities remain separate.

Michael – I'm sure your notes are far better than mine at this point, when it came down to the top priorities. I didn't capture this well at all.

The group adjourned at approximately 4:15 p.m.

Notes taken by Nancy Roberts.

The next meeting will be held on July 16, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. in the Boards & Commissions Room, City Hall.