

Minutes of Thursday, October 21, 2010 Meeting
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

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

*(Absent = A, Present = P, Excused = E, * = by phone)*

Guests: OPA Director Kathryn Olson (on phone), OPA Auditor Anne Levinson, citizens Michael Fuller and Miss Richard

Public Comment – Ms. Richard discussed calling a woman whose son, Michael Ely, was killed by police. He had been tasered by police, but charges were dropped. Demetrius Price, a person who is related to her, was also beaten by police in the South End. He chose to run from police, and ended up with stitches. She still feels unsafe, and doesn't think anything has been changed. Families are left grief stricken.

Michael Fuller discussed the Williams case, which made him cry. Police should have had training when they were hired. If you kill someone, you should be tried in court. There shouldn't be an inquest; it violates ADA and the Fair Housing Act. Why did police bother Williams, a deaf man?

Minutes – There was no quorum at the October 6 meeting, so there were no minutes to approve.

NACOLE Update - The two Board vacancies were filled. They had been announced on the listserve. Processing of financial matters is being delayed because of the changeover of treasurers. Financial numbers on the conference will be available in a few weeks. Kathryn plans to call the Seattle attendees together for a post-conference discussion meeting.

El Centro Meeting – Estela Ortega invited the group to pick any date to meet. The Board wants to meet at El Centro on a regular evening meeting date. The Board will try to hold their regular December 16 evening meeting at El Centro.

Active Case Update – Shall the board continue to inquire about active cases? Limit inquiry to non-confidential information and find out when the case closes. Kathryn and Anne met with Lisa Thoreau of Boston Strategies for Youth to discuss possible new training for officers related to de-escalation strategies for interactions with youth. This is part of SPD's review of training currently offered by the Department and the Academy. Their approach was originally developed in response to the large number of interactions transit officials and officers in the Boston area were having with youth. BSY provided training for both officers and youth.

Anne mentioned that one aspect of this and other training emphasizing youth is to help explain to officers how adolescent brain development affects decision-making and behavior.

Pat has reached out to connect with the Native American community as part of OPARB's community outreach. He's identified 2 – 4 leaders, whom he will contact and then start the process. Chris Stearns is one of the contacts.

Advice from the City Attorney – remove active cases from our agenda. The board agrees that they can look at closed cases.

OPARB's Semi-Annual report has been filed with the Clerk's office and will be presented to the City Council in early December. It was decided that rather than sending the semi-annual report to stakeholders as an attachment, it should go as a link. Nancy will ask IT to gather stats on how many hits the site gets both before and after distribution.

Pat brought up the issue of whether to publish the Diverse Communities report. Michael stated that the important finding is what wasn't found. Martha and Steve said they want to finish their work and then recommend whether to issue a report.

Martha wondered whether the board wanted to wait until there is a full report about Diverse Communities. It was decided that the Board should read what they have so far, and make comments. They were unable to look for homeless-specific cases, since they're not classified as such, but will have to do with reviewing cases with crimes commonly associated with homeless to see what they can glean. Michael suggested that this group may not file complaints. Since data from OPA are limited, perhaps other community leaders may provide additional insight as to most frequent types of issues that arise.

Tina said she has been doing a lot with the OPA data study, and will report more later.

Kathryn stated that Chief Diaz is pursuing the idea of the Use of Force panel, but no final decision about a panel or timing has been made.

OPARB Use of Force work group earlier had decided to wait and see the results of the SPD task force on UOF and the next SPD UOF report. Kathryn corrected that the study is being conducted by SPD, with Kathryn's contribution, but they're now holding off, awaiting the Chief's current review of recent cases and the work of the Use of Force panel. OPARB awaits both reports. The Board does want to start reviewing use of force closed cases.

Strategic Plan - Pat stated the need to re-examine the board's work plan to see if item II timing needs to be changed because SPD has postponed their use of force studies. Michael reported that he and Pat met with Tim Burgess, who strongly requested that OPARB start to show their independence and review cases. Michael urged the Board again to start looking at all use of force closed cases.

Further context of the Pat/Michael/Tim Burgess meeting was when is the report coming? Tim's office is in the midst of the appointment process for Sharon's vacated seat. Tim felt that the report is important. He's hearing rumbles about "what is the board doing?" He stressed independence, system review and oversight, and case review as opposed to responding to current events. Pat and Michael told him that the board is re-examining the work plan and their focus. They told him of the statistical, recordkeeping and analysis review the board plans to do, and Tim was excited. He also recommended that the board finalize their current report on the OPA statistics report. It was a direct, pointed meeting.

Tina wants to redraft the statistics report and relate it to our workplan. She wants to use Michael's emailed comments and suggestions of July 20, which Michael will resend to her. Pat will resend Michael's more recent email on the same subject to all members.

Michael shared the previous board's protocols on reviewing cases with David. David stated that the group needs to decide what the process will be – how many to review, what is being looked for? Fairness and completeness, whether protocols represent good or bad policy, adherence to current policy were mentioned. Michael (and Sharon and Tina) have templates for reviewing cases. Various perspectives are valuable, and Michael suggested that they each make independent notes on cases, and process them together afterwards.

David and Michael are drafting case review criteria and will present them at the next meeting. The goal is for all members to have read at least a couple of cases by December 1.

David and Michael will work out the protocol, which involves calling Kathryn and requesting cases.

Strategic Plan – 1C – Review of OPA information management system and annual statistical report -

Tina and Anne reported that the database project is moving forward. This effort is a collaborative approach among OPARB, OPA Auditor and OPA Director to review the OPA information management system and make recommendations for enhanced complaint tracking, management, reporting and analysis tools. They are starting by laying out what would be more helpful to have and for what purposes and looking at existing system

capacity to accomplish those goals. The former database manager is no longer at SPD. Sonja is taking training on their database soon so their first target date was to help inform what priorities for that training might be.

Suggestions for more effective data gathering – members wanted the ability to track and analyze data, use data for internal use and distribution (leading to more prompt ability to intervene). They want to be able to spot trends (which may require different fields to be established). One example of a task included in the project is to see if additional mandatory fields should be identified so that information cannot be skipped that will provide helpful data.

Anne and Tina asked members to be clear as to why certain data are wanted. Since lots of people are interested in all sorts of things, they want to make sure the focus is on “toward what end”; what goal will it help achieve. In some instances there may be reasons why data can’t be analyzed or presented in a certain way. One example is the level of integration with other officer HR data. The statistics that are provided should be able to show outcomes, to quantify progress or efficacy.

Email your thoughts and suggestions to Anne and Tina quickly (cc all board members) – this information needs to be submitted before Friday, 10/29 before Sonja goes to the AIM conference.

Elections – Submit your nominations for chair and vice-chair of OPARB, along with a brief statement of why this person should be nominated. Nancy will compile a list, along with the qualifications paragraph. Vote will be by a show of hands. NOTE: Nancy has received one nomination to date.

Michael Pendleton Contract – The Board held a closed session to discuss this issue.

The meeting was convened at 5:30 p.m. and adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Notes taken by Nancy Roberts and David Wilma

The next meeting will be held November 3, 2010 at 11:30 a.m. in the Boards & Commissions Room L280, City Hall.