

Minutes of Thursday, January 20, 2011 Meeting
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

David Wilma, Chair:	P	Steve Freng, Member:	P
Melissa Bartholomew, Member	P	Martha Norberg, Member:	P
Tina Bueche, Vice Chair:	A	Pat Sainsbury, Member:	P
George Davenport, Member:	A		
Michael Pendleton, Consultant:	P		

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

Guests: Anne Levinson, OPA Auditor

Minutes - The minutes of the January 5, 2011 meeting were adopted.

Report from the Auditor – Anne attended a Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) meeting that was well attended by police officers and students. Both formed a panel and there was a lively discussion. SAVE students are involved in training by the Urban League and other organizations relating to dealing with the police. The students' website is save.org.

The recent high-profile cases raise the issue of public awareness of the system. Anne encouraged OPARB members to continue our outreach efforts to inform the public about the accountability system.

McKay Chadwell Letter - OPARB received a copy of a letter from McKay Chadwell dated January 18, 2011, in which they informed the City of their intentions to sue the City for SPD's alleged violation of their client's civil rights. One issue raised in this letter involves concern about the process for making findings. It was agreed that the letter and attached exhibits would be scanned and sent to all OPARB members for our review because some of the issues raised by the letter are important for members to be aware of.

Report from OPA Director - Kathryn Olson was at a NACOLE meeting.

Reports from Work Groups -

Diverse Communities

On January 19, 2011, Martha Norberg and David Wilma attended a GSBA "Meet the Chief" luncheon during which Chief Diaz and A/C Dick Reed provided answers to GSBA members' questions. Of note, Chief Diaz stated that a top priority of his for 2011 is community relations, and he cited a number of changes that he has made to the department that reflect that value. The Chiefs were asked what SPD is doing to train officers in the cultural issues specific to Seattle. A/C Reed described the training process, starting with the 720 hours of basic training at the state training academy, and after that 200 hours of classroom and practical exercise training at SPD, and after that the officers undergo field training with a more experienced field training officer. A/C Reed stated that during the Seattle phase the officers receive Seattle-specific training in cultural, ordinance and other local issues. He said SPD is working with Sheriff Rahr and the head of the state academy to maintain a current curriculum at the state basic academy.

David Wilma reminded the group that in collaboration with the Women's Commission last year, it came out that the DV training at the state academy was taught by a prosecutor and focused on DV law rather than practical aspects of responding to a highly volatile situation.

Another update from the Diverse Communities group was that on January 18, 2011, David Wilma, Martha Norberg and Melissa Bartholomew (in part), met with Estela Ortega of El Centro de la Raza and Leslea Bowling of MEDC. The focus of the meeting was outreach. Highlights of that meeting included the following:

Estela provided a number of organizations that she suggested we contact. It was agreed that OPARB would create a letter or some type of mailing that we will send to MEDC, which in turn will send it out to

their 127 member organizations. El Centro also agreed to do that, and asked us to send them a link to our website so she can include that in El Centro's eMailing, which she said is an even broader distribution.

Estela and Leslea encouraged OPARB to take an approach of partnership with the organizations we contact, creating a relationship with them rather than a one-time contact.

Estela suggested that instead of calling a big general meeting and inviting a broad range of people to attend, we should approach existing smaller groups such as El Centro's Parent Group, or their Women's Group. In this way people would be more likely to attend, because it is difficult to get some groups to come to a big general meeting. She also suggested that we ask our contacts what the best way is to organize the people in the various communities. We were advised that it will take time to create relationships with community groups and "getting out and seeing the faces in the community" will have the biggest impact.

Estela also asked if there is a standard by which "threat" can be measured, since officers seem to justify their actions by saying they felt threatened. She also said that she would make her caseworkers available to take SPD training that might give them additional information. Additionally, Michael will check to see if Force Science has any instructional material that helps people understand the complexities of video evidence.

We asked what issues they saw the community having with the police. One issue was that it is very frustrating to see the videos, like the one of the African American male retrieving his property from the jail and being arrested and beaten by SPD officers. They expressed frustration that people see the video - "it's in black and white" - and yet the police don't get charged. When asked what information they might need to be satisfied that the finding is correct, they said "some reasonable rationale why the police should be exonerated."

A discussion ensued about how OPARB could facilitate a community forum to open awareness of the accountability system, including how there is usually a lot more to a situation than what is visible in videos.

Force Science Institute – David and Pat described the work of the Institute (David had earlier circulated materials to the Board) and its role in clearing two BART officers who had been fired based upon misinterpreted video evidence in the aftermath of the Oscar Grant shooting for which Officer Mehserle was convicted. The group expressed interest in having Force Science present public training in Seattle on how to view a video carefully. A suggested alternative was to see if the Institute could produce a video or Powerpoint on the subject that could be used nationwide.

Closed File Review – Pat, George and Melissa learned that there were 63 OPA Unnecessary Force cases closed in 2010, about half were worthy of investigation. What is the best way to approach review of 30 cases/year? Thirty is too many to handle. They propose reviewing the eight cases identified in the ACLU letter to the US Attorney and the Department of Justice and the recent letter from McKay Chadwell. Three or four of them are closed already. They would not read to review the outcome, but they are self-identified as having "issues" around them. They will review them to evaluate OPA's work and for any policies or practices that may need revision.

Pat went through the steps on the Strategic plan's Goal 3C project, and a concern arose about asking for "specific" cases. Michael suggested that they request "high profile community cases identified by the ACLU", which is a class of cases, not asking for specific cases. The group also agreed that the only proper process for requesting closed OPA files is that the majority of the Board must agree to any request. No subcommittee or individual may request cases.

The Board voted to approve the work group's project plan and amend the strategic plan as proposed in the project plan.

Pat will draft a request for the eight files identified above.

Community Outreach – Melissa has been in email contact with the Loren Miller Bar Association, which is the African-American bar association. They meet the second Monday of the month, and will discuss OPARB's proposal to hold an OPARB meeting in conjunction with their regular meeting. The Latina & Latino Bar Association was very receptive to the idea, and will also discuss the issue with their board. They meet the fourth Thursday of the month. The Race & Criminal Justice System Task Force will meet at Seattle U at 5:30 on February 24. There will be a community reception and a CLE held the same day. Fe Lopez, president of the Latina/o Bar Association of Washington, is a member, and stated that they would welcome an OPARB member to their Task Force board.

The Reverend Harriett Walden's group, Mothers for Police Accountability, meets the first Thursday each month. Melissa continues to work her way through her list. She is developing a community engagement and outreach plan. She cited historical issues and developments in Cincinnati and a subsequent agreement as a model that seems to be working well. More information on this model can be found on the Chicago ACLU website and on the NACOLE website.

Semiannual Report – David has one more component to collect, and he's extended the date of the report through December 31. He's almost done and will circulate the report soon, with the hope of adopting it at the next meeting.

Has anyone heard of a new group – Community Coalition for Law Enforcement Accountability?
http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/2011894195_coalition19m.html

Training for Community Meetings – Michael is looking at trainers. There is generally a four-hour minimum. He also identified books – *Resolving Identity-Based Conflicts* by Jay Rothman (the author also was a special mediator in the Cincinnati agreement referenced above), and *Standing in the Fire* by Larry Dressler are both books Michael is reading, both of which he finds compelling.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30.

Notes taken by Martha Norberg and Nancy Roberts

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 2 at 11:30 in the Al Rochester room on the 2nd floor at City Hall.