

OPARB
Minutes of Wednesday, March 2, 2011 Meeting
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Guests: Anne Levinson, OPA Auditor; Kathryn Olson, OPA Director

Minutes - The minutes of the February 17 meeting were adopted with one change.

Auditor Report – Anne has completed a review of cases with regard to the 180 day time constraints, and found that there have been no missed deadlines in cases where disciplinary action was at issue. She has found that there were more complaints filed in 2010, resulting in more investigations. There were substantially more investigations as a percentage of filings as well. Any time there are use of force allegations, the time constraints that are imposed pose challenges to the investigators. There were no cases in 2010 where union protocol was not followed.

Anne also noted that reports were being submitted from a wide array of avenues, which hopefully means the word is getting out that there are many ways to lodge a complaint. The types of allegations were varied. Anne considered that some of the increase in filings may be related to high profile cases.

OPA Director Report – Some high profile cases are nearing closure in the OPA process. A change in sergeants in the OPA program is currently underway. Kathryn recently met with DOJ and NIJ representatives, as well as representatives from SPD, King County, the state, and the Law Enforcement Academy as part of a procedural justice group. They are working to develop curriculum about how law enforcement staff can interface with the community in a way that will enhance trust and increase the level of dignity. The program they are developing is for all levels of officers and management, statewide, and is aimed at increasing the public’s perception of the legitimacy of law enforcement.

The DOJ is looking at the John T. Williams case independent from previous investigations into the same case. One of OPA’s goals for 2011 is to decrease case processing time by 30 days.

Kathryn mentioned the book “Switch – How to Change Things When Change is Hard” by Chip and Dan Heath as an excellent resource.

Work Group Reports –

Diverse Communities – No update at this time.

Data Mining – A meeting is planned for later today.

File Review – The group is reviewing the matrix Pat drafted. David is working with Kathryn’s staff to get the requested files ready for review. Melissa will send the draft matrix to David as well.

Findings & Classification – A meeting is set for March 22.

Outreach – Melissa has been invited to the Loren Miller Bar Association meeting Monday, March 14. Michael, and perhaps Tina, plan to attend as well. The meeting will be held at K & L Gates. The public education aspect of outreach is still alive and well. A meeting with MEDC is planned for March 17.

Meeting with Tim Burgess – David and Martha met this last week with Tim. He wanted to know what the Board is doing. David stated that he was frustrated by contractual limitations. Tim wants to see increased findings and conclusions. He wants definitive statements from the board. He's getting flak from others who are asking what the board is doing. Bottom line: Tim wants the board to be more visible. Tim will be attending the next meeting, March 17, and will hopefully provide more information.

Web Site Frustrations – There was discussion about complaints about OPA/OPARB information being difficult to find on the web. Citywide, the website is undergoing changes, which limits each department's ability to make any changes in a more timely manner. Nancy and Anne will discuss after Nancy talks with Betsy.

Guardian Article – The board discussed their confusion about their role in the midst of high profile cases and subsequent press and allegations. Should OPARB respond? Via what venue? How can any response be timely – it can be cumbersome to collaborate with other board members within a twice/monthly meeting structure. Must all responses be official board responses, or is there room for individual opinions to be voiced? The group did agree on some general tenets –

- Don't blindside your colleagues – inform them first of your opinions
- If you send a letter as a board member, be clear that you're speaking for yourself, but not for the entire board
- Alternatively, you can speak as a citizen only, without mentioning board affiliation. Be clear that this is your personal opinion. Note, however, that by not mentioning your board affiliation, your opinion as a private citizen may not carry as much weight.

Method of responding – There is a distinction between responding as a board, which may go out via a press release to a wide media distribution, and responding as an individual board member, which may be sent as a targeted op ed.

High profile cases are an opportunity for the board to be proactive about their role and get exposure when much attention is being paid to the issue at hand.

Training – Michael talked to Jay Rothman, the consultant who worked with Cincinnati, Ohio to address police-community conflict. The board is looking into the possibility of working with him on that issue. Michael also talked with Sgt, Nevin at San Francisco PD regarding the Force Science article on videotape evidence training. Would this type of training be useful in Seattle? Who is the audience you want to target? Be sensitive to the timing of any such training – it may be more or less appropriate, depending on the timing.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30.

Notes taken by Nancy Roberts

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 17 at 5:30 in the Al Rochester room on the 2nd floor at City Hall. Reception will be closed, so come to the east door on 2nd floor and knock to be let in.