

OPARB
Minutes of Wednesday, April 6, 2011 Meeting
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

David Wilma, Chair:	P	Steve Freng, Member:	P
Melissa Bartholomew, Member	P	Martha Norberg, Member:	E
Tina Bueche, Vice Chair:	P	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; Kathryn Olson, OPA Director; Bill, Reporter and Photographer, Q13

Minutes - The minutes of the March 17 meeting were adopted with clerical change.

Constituent Letter – Receipt of and response to a letter from Ms. Richard was acknowledged.

Auditor Report – The Chair asked the Auditor to provide an update on the website project. Anne recapped that the goal of this project is to make the website easier to navigate, and more user friendly. For instance, a user should not require knowledge of the OPA system, or who is responsible for which aspects of it, in order to be able to find information. The challenges in getting website improvements made, particularly given the goal of an integrated site, include competing citywide and SPD I.T. demands, multiple points of responsibility among SPD, City and Council I.T. staff, and the Auditor traditionally not having a website presence or I.T. staff, so needing to have others take the lead in any website work. Anne reported that the primary approach is to provide information currently found in a variety of places, make it easier to find without having to drill down and provide for a helpful search functionality to be able to quickly get answers to such things as what kind of complaints does OPA get, what happens to them, how does that compare to past years or to other cities.. In a nutshell, the effort is to make searching for information much easier and make the system more transparent. One part of the overhaul would be to allow citizens and officers the ability to track their complaints. That's a complicated part, and will most likely be one of the later features. David is the point person for OPARB and Kathryn on behalf of OPA.

Tim Burgess' Visit to OPARB – One member got the idea that Tim had not expected the board to do much file review. Another remembered that the Board clarified to CM Burgess that the board cannot request individual cases, but instead reviews cases by class, e.g., use of force. One member remembered that CM Burgess felt that case review was redundant, since OPA and the Auditor and now DOJ is reviewing cases, but others felt that they were able to clarify that concern to Tim's satisfaction. Many of the members feel there is great value in case review, despite the concern that cases are so old by the time they're reviewed by the board that they lose relevance.

There was discussion of CM Burgess' request for recommendations and opinions, and if there are no recommendations, to state that clearly. Members felt that they've been in information gathering mode, and are just now at the point where their body of knowledge is sufficient that they can draw conclusions and make recommendations. Michael suggested that members be more proactive - to bring their products forward, request time on the Public Safety Committee agenda. He contrasted examples between "what we did" and "what we found/what we recommend". Ask for meetings with Tim as needed.

Work Groups –

Data Mining – Tina reminded the board that the goal of the data base project has been assessing ways to improve the use of data as a reporting and analysis tool and an OPA and SPD management tool. Tina has been OPARB lead, working with Kathryn and Anne on ways the AIM system can be used more robustly, such as dynamic reports that can be sorted in various ways to help identify trends and issues. One major problem is that due to past budget cuts OPA no longer has a technical person with system expertise system, or has sufficient time to devote to the issue of gathering, analyzing and reporting statistical information. It's hard to get timely reports in order to get data to answer questions. The end result is without clear and consistency data, people tend to rely on anecdotal information, or have difficulty substantiating information. Tina plans to recommend allocating money for at least a ½ time technical/statistical person in support of OPA, OPARB, and

police management so that all can use existing data more productively. Tina will craft a letter to that effect and route it to other members via email to expedite the process.

Closed File Review – Two files are ready for review under the current file request. David has reviewed the files, but others have not yet had the chance to do so. Melissa may need to step down from this group if she is not able to find times when she can fit file review into her full schedule. She will discuss options with Kathryn. The plan is to use a draft of the data-gathering matrix on this project, and refine it further through knowledge gained on this project. Michael suggested that reviewers record their concerns as they review each case, but hold them and discuss them in aggregate in executive session, or in smaller groups. That way you avoid focusing on the details of any one case. Focus on “what does this say about the system?”

Community Engagement – There was a great deal of discussion of this project and how to proceed. A great deal of community engagement from a variety of stakeholders is required. It will be important to learn from Jay Rothman and Marvin Johnson what possible outcomes may result as a product of their proposed relationship building visit. Is it something sustainable, that the community can support, both in time and money? Michael also emphasized that the effort be all-inclusive is directly related to the chance of success of the project. It will be a shared effort, and will be less likely to be seen as one agency’s agenda, and it will take continued commitment across communities to sustain any ongoing plans or programs.

Melissa will find out from Jay & Marvin what kind of time commitment local leaders may need to contribute. Stakeholders need to answer the question in advance – What do Seattle stakeholders need to know/who needs to be on board – before we engage these consultants? Also, What does Seattle need to know in order to assess resultant options on how to apply the lessons they’ll learn during this engagement? Tina and Melissa are the point people on this project.

Because it had not been done before, the members formally adopted the Community Engagement Work Group goal.

Kathryn stated that SPD’s community outreach section has formalized procedures around incidents, and that there is a notification protocol that is now set in motion.

OPA Director Report – The DOJ is moving ahead with their investigation. The chief is being as open and transparent as possible, so that as much as possible can be learned from their efforts. Kathryn was asked to check to see if any of the cases requested by OPARB in January have since closed.

Human Rights Commission Work Plan – Nancy will send all board members the video of the March 16 meeting of the Energy, Technology and Civil Rights Committee meeting, where the Seattle Human Rights Commission announced their 2011 work plan. One aspect will focus on looking at best practices for civilian oversight. The committee chair stated that they may consult with others and mentioned that they had talked with OPARB members who stepped down in 2008. The current board will offer their support as constructively as possible.

Homework – Review the MEDC and Loren Miller meeting notes prior to the next meeting.

Reminder – Who would like to attend the Latino Bar Association meeting Thursday, April 28 at Seattle U (6:00?). Melissa will send clarifying detailed information. Members agreed to discuss how they would present themselves and the board at the next meeting, prior to attending the LBA meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05.

Notes taken by Nancy Roberts

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 21 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.