

OPARB
Minutes of Thursday, August 18, 2011 Meeting
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

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

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

Guests: Roger Stephan Plott; Lotus Plott; Shawn Bell; Micah Babinski; Judge Anne Levinson (ret.), OPA Auditor

The meeting began at 5:30 pm.

Minutes - The version of the July 21 meeting minutes was incomplete, so Nancy will check her records and provide a more current/complete version for adoption at the September 15 meeting.

Public Comment – Mr. Roger Stephan Plott addressed the group about problems he had experienced with the police, including Seattle police officers. These contacts occurred in 1998, 2003 and 2005. His mother, Lotus Plott, was present at at least one incident. They have filed at least one claim with the city of Seattle, but did not know the disposition or status. Mr. Plott provided copies of documentation.

OPA Director's Report – Kathryn discussed the impact of the recent Washington Supreme Court ruling about public disclosure of closed misconduct files. The DOJ is returning September 20 and 21, and want to talk to Martha and David since they were unable to meet with them previously. Kathryn will let them know where/when proposed meetings will be held.

Auditor Report – Anne just completed her quarterly audit of open cases to evaluate them for 180-day compliance. She found no cases that exceeded the 180 window during this period. Anne and Kathryn continue to look for efficiencies in the way OPA processes cases. Anne attended training at the academy recently. There is a new training commander, the former Lacey police commander. They are continuing to make changes in training consistent with best practices but as a joint academy have to be responsive to the varied needs among departments.

Findings and Classifications Proposal – This is the joint proposal from the working group to make investigation findings and classifications easier to understand, clarify terminology and address lower level complaints more quickly at the precinct level. Anne stated that an issue they considered in decentralizing complaints in this manner was how to ensure that comprehensive information is captured for accountability, analysis and trends. There needs to be a process to integrate information, whether complaints are handled in OPA or at the precinct. Comprehensive data gathering is important. Kathryn characterized the changes in the proposal as recognition of supporting the value of supervisors working closely with officers to improve performance, not as changes in working conditions. Anne mentioned the working group's agreement that the option of supervisory intervention, now called training referral, is an important option for education-based discipline, which is not often found in other systems. Steve moved that the proposal be adopted, Martha seconded it, and all present voted to adopt this proposal.

Semi-Annual Report – Martha moved to adopt the report; Steve seconded it; all present voted to adopt the report. There was some discussion of tabling this decision after the vote, since questions arose after the vote. The Board agreed to add one change proposed by Martha. She will draft language for approval by David.

Community Engagement/Collaborative Process – Michael reported on the phone call he and Melissa had with Jay. It was decided that Jay and Marvin will focus their time on meeting with small groups during Phase One. Their first goal is a focused assessment. Jay and Marvin will be in Seattle September 19 and 20, and hope to meet with board members Sunday the 18th. Michael and Melissa are identifying stakeholders to invite.

Jay and Marvin will certainly acknowledge the many ongoing community efforts currently underway and make efforts to integrate and collaborate with existing programs where possible.

OPA Statistics Report Review – Kathryn, Anne and Tina had done work in this area prior to Tina's departure as part of their overall data management work group, so it was decided to hold the current OPARB report while. Pat continues to work with Kathryn and Anne in Tina's stead. OPA technology issues continue to be stymied by lack of staff support.

Closed File Review – David and Pat met with Kathryn and Anne to discuss the OPARB members' perspectives with regard to the files they've reviewed. Martha asked if there was any process to record such discussions to log concerns for future follow-up, as a way to ensure that concerns are not forgotten. There was discussion about whether any such record would be productive, and whether it may be subject to public disclosure in a way that would be found to violate OPARB's constraints under the contract. David suggested that if a concern is systemic, it would appear in reports, and not be specifically tied to a single case. Anne suggested creating a matrix to show numbers and frequency of similar concerns. By maintaining ongoing lists by type of case over a span of time, you can track whether issues increase or decrease over time.

Comments to City Council Letter – My notes are too cryptic here – can someone help? Mine say "...carry forward, probably obligated to make comment...":

New Business – Brief discussion of the Bay area's recent shut down of cell phone towers as a public safety measure. The Board may want to take a position some time.

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 7:00 pm.

Notes taken by Nancy Roberts.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 15 at 5:30 pm in the Al Rochester room on the 2nd floor at City Hall.