

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

Claudia D’Allegri, Member	P	Martha Norberg, Member	E
Dale Tiffany, Member	P	Melissa Bartholomew, Member	P
George Davenport, Member	P	Pat Sainsbury, Member	E
Liz Holohan, Member	P		
Michael Pendleton, Consultant:	P		

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

Guests: Kathryn Olson, OPA Director; Judge Anne Levinson (ret.), OPA Auditor

The meeting began at 5:35 pm.

Minutes – There were no minutes to be approved.

OPA Director’s Report – The NACOLE conference in September was very well received. The Department of Justice was in New Orleans at the time and the NACOLE board had an opportunity to meet with them to discuss investigations and other business. Kathryn gave an overview of NACOLE and how its resources would benefit the new OPARB members. NACOLE is developing core competencies for members; the topics they include will be used to provide NACOLE members with resources and will provide focus for NACOLE conferences. The core competencies might be of use in organizing training for new OPARB members.

Kathryn and command staff from Seattle, Vancouver BC and Portland recently met to discuss current emerging issues. Kathryn spoke on oversight, and found it affirming to have various command staff acknowledge the important role civilian oversight plays. She has also participated in a number of outreach opportunities with Native American groups in recent months, and there is talk of expanding the restorative circle concept and practice beyond the Native American communities.

Kathryn spoke of an innovative program out of the Department of Defense. DARPA is the research arm of the DOD and they have a new program to develop training to teach soldiers to build peace. They realized that this is similar to what police do, and they reached out to connect and learn from SPD because they consider SPD the gold standard in professionalism, acknowledged the relatively low use of force by SPD, and SPD’s reputation around the country. Researchers, including psychologists and anthropologists, are coming to Seattle to study police methods, with the goal of developing simulation training (game-like electronic teaching exercises) to increase positive police/citizen interaction.

Bernie Melekian, the director of the DOJ COPS (Community-Oriented Policing Services) program, was the keynote speaker at the NACOLE conference this year. King County, working with SPD, just received a COPS grant to develop a curriculum on justice-based policing. Justice-based policing is based on the concept that the public confers power and authority to police. This program utilizes the principle of LEED – Listen and Explain with Equity and Dignity. Door to door, on-line and other surveys have, and will be, taken to measure the size and scope of the problem and efficacy of the training.

Kathryn suggested that new members review files and become familiar with cases, but the Director and Auditor thought it would be more helpful to do any file review after new members have received some training and orientation from Kathryn and Anne. Kathryn and Anne are open to meeting with the new members at any time to provide orientation. Kathryn also suggested that new members look into various models of oversight, each of which has its pros and cons. The NACOLE website has lots of information about oversight agencies throughout the US and around the world.

Auditor’s Report – The Director and Auditor meet weekly to review new complaints and to determine how to classify them. The Auditor reviews all completed investigations and may have questions or request further investigation, including additional interviews, witnesses or gathering of other evidence. During the last quarter,

Anne started reviewing certain files at an earlier stage, with the goals of further increasing the timeliness of investigations and enhancing the value and effectiveness of any additional investigation requested. She will evaluate if this parallel review is faster and more effective than the traditional sequential review and will continue to 'beta test' improvements to process whenever possible. The Auditor and Director are also reviewing all correspondence between OPA the complainant (and witnesses) as well as between OPA and officers. This was a recommendation from the Auditor's semi-annual report to make sure that all communications are as understandable and helpful as possible.

Review of use of In-Car Video is also now underway. There have been several issues raised in the Auditor's and Director's reports that are being addressed. Training, public disclosure barriers, policy concerns (e.g., is the policy as clear as it should be about when video is required and the responsibilities of the officers and supervisor), and technological issues. As well, use of on-person videos is currently being tested in a pilot.

The Auditor and Director left as the members went into closed session to discuss the Phase I draft report.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Notes taken by Nancy Roberts.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 17 at 5:30 pm in the AI Rochester room on the 2nd floor at City Hall.