

OPARB
Minutes of Thursday, April 21, 2011 Meeting
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

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

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

Guests: Kathryn Olson, OPA Director

The meeting began at 5:30 pm. There were no changes to the agenda.

Minutes - The minutes of the April 6 meeting were adopted.

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

OPA Director Report – The Department of Justice investigation is underway. The City Attorney is handling the discovery requested by the DOJ and copies are being made and Bates stamped. OPA is not tasked with any of this, but is spending time locating and providing files as they are requested. It was mentioned that DOJ investigators have asked to speak with David Wilma and Martha Norberg.

Kathryn has begun work on the 2010 OPA Statistics Report. She is focused on making the report shorter and clearer.

There were questions regarding the recent criminal charges filed against Officer James Lee. OPA is not investigating at this time. The 180-day rule is tolled. Contractually OPA could proceed simultaneously, but OPA usually waits until the criminal case is resolved. There was a discussion of the issues of immunity surrounding an OPA investigation conducted before or parallel to the criminal investigation and prosecution.

Sgt. Brett Rogers has rotated out of OPA and has been replaced by Sgt. Nate Upton.

Community Engagement – There was much discussion of this project and how to proceed. A great deal of community engagement from a variety of stakeholders is required. Kathryn reported on her telephone conversation with Alphonse Gerhardstein, who was co-counsel for Cincinnati's Black United Front. He reported that Jay Rothman did a great job:

1. He determined who the stakeholders were.
2. He asked all stakeholders to answer three questions.
3. He then held many small group sessions that produced many powerful, candid statements that helped all stakeholders understand the perspectives of others. One person called it "structured venting." People learned how to listen to and understand those they previously had tuned out.
4. This work produced five general goals.

It was mentioned that Seattle already has in place some of the institutions that resulted from Cincinnati's process. The Board asked to see those results to help it decide what needs to be done in Seattle.

The Cincinnati process lasted 6-7 months and cost \$10 million. Gerhardstein observed that it worked to find ways to affirm community perceptions and then work from there. Michael Pendleton mentioned that he had spoken with the federal judge who instigated the process. She and Cincinnati's police chief at the time observed that the process brought people together in a focused way for the first time and established working relationships that continue today.

The Community Engagement template for the strategic plan was approved by the Board. Melissa mentioned that the Andrus Family Fund (<http://www.affund.org/>) has as one of its two missions specifically to fund community reconciliation efforts, and has funded other work by Jay Rothman.

There was discussion of meeting with former Cincinnati Chief Streicher. The Board decided that only the Board should meet with him at this time.

Melissa had asked Michael to prepare a paper of ideas on Phase I of the community engagement process. The paper was distributed. Melissa will email it to all board members for review and comment.

Loren Miller Bar Association Debriefing – The Loren Miller members thought (literally, not figuratively) that Rich O’Neill and SPOG run the police department, an impression formed from media reports. They view Rich as an impediment to any community reconciliation. They think Chief Diaz needs to be more vocal, to take charge in various situations and be perceived as in charge. This engendered much discussion of these issues and what SPD is and should be doing, including making it clear that SPOG is a union, not the police department.

There was also a discussion of how OPARB should present itself when meeting with community groups. It was observed that sometimes members emphasize what OPARB can’t do, instead of talking about what we can do and are doing. Kathryn mentioned that the discipline system is a small part of the police department and its work, and that OPARB’s greater functions are to report and comment on police practices and to conduct outreach.

Latino Bar Association – The date has been changed to Wednesday, April 27, 6 pm at the offices of Perkins Coie. Melissa, David and Pat will attend.

Work Groups –

Data Mining – Tina reminded the board that the budget problems have blocked the ideal solution, which would be 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 and the work group are refocused on a more strategic approach to using the AIM system.

Findings and Classifications – The work group has nearly completed a final draft recommending changes. The plan is to present the draft to OPARB for approval as a draft, then circulate it for comment using the contact list. David mentioned that it also could be posted on the website. David suggested that two OPARB meetings be available for those who want to comment in person. These meetings tentatively would be the last meeting in May and the first meeting in June. The work group would then prepare a final for approval by the Board at the second meeting in June. At the May 4 meeting the group will also decide whether to send the draft to the entire contact list, or only selected contacts.

Closed File Review – The group has been reviewing files. Five of the eight files have been available. Kathryn said that the John T. Williams/Ian Birk file now is closed, so it is available for review also. Eventually the group will discuss their thoughts after all files are reviewed. It appears from the two files involving the detective in the Lake Union incident that other subjects inquired of OPA about making complaints, after they had learned about the Lake Union incident from media reports. The Board agreed that David should request any other complaints of incidents after April 17 2010, the date of the Lake Union incident.

Retreat – Those in attendance selected June 4 as the date for the retreat and July 9 as a backup date, subject to the schedules of members not present.

San Francisco Video Training – The Board agreed to table this item in light of its current focus on the Community Engagement Project and to revisit the subject in the future as part of later phases of the Project.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Notes taken by Pat Sainsbury

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 4 at 11:30 am in the AI 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.