

OPARB
Minutes of Wednesday, October 3, 2012 Meeting
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Dale Tiffany, Chair	P	Liz Holohan, Member	P
Claudia D'Allegri, Member	P	Pat Sainsbury, Member	P
Joe Hawe, Member	P		

Michael Pendleton, Consultant: P

Guest: Amy Radil, KUOW Radio

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

The meeting began at 11:40 am.

The minutes of the September 5 and September 20 meetings were approved.

Retaliation - OPA does not have a retaliation policy specific to their unit; they use the retaliation policy in the SPD manual, which primarily addresses retaliation in the workplace.

The Board will define retaliation in the OPA setting more specifically, and seek to have that information included on the website and in the manual. They will talk with the Director, Auditor, and City Attorney, and make a recommendation to OPA and the Council. It is important that the term and its implications be understood by all.

Individuals inside the OPA system report that retaliation is rare; citizens feel it is common. The Board proposes to review current policy, training, evaluation and assessment protocol, and other practices and make a recommendation to the chief and council. Information on how to navigate the system and get information is not clear and accessible to the public.

How can the gap between perceptions and experience of “those on the inside” and that of the public be bridged? Suggestions included the need for an advocate for complainants, much as a victim’s advocate in court, an ombudsman, or a social worker in a hospital. Perhaps OPARB could use interns to research best practices.

The Board should act as a translational group. The Board can listen to a broad spectrum of citizens, not just the vocal minority, to provide better customer service. The loudest voices are not always those with the greatest merit.

There are many variables that affect perception, including mental health issues, alcohol, and drugs. Lack of communication (sometimes due to privacy or other professional concerns) exists between emergency professionals such as police, paramedics, and emergency room attendants. In many cases, body cameras may provide needed information.

The Board needs to define a process to use to address allegations of retaliation or other issues as they emerge. A template that includes a timetable and defined deliverables, among other criteria, would allow more timely and responsive gathering of information and subsequent issuing of reports. Robust reports include input from a wide variety of sources.

Dale, Liz, and Claudia agreed to form a subcommittee to develop retaliation policy recommendations. Michael recommended that the full board also be involved to ensure broad

input and analysis, and he agreed to guide the process. The group agreed to meet for 2 hours after the next scheduled committee meeting. The next meeting is Wednesday, October 24, from 5:30 – 7:30, and the retaliation policy group will meet from 7:30 – 9:30.

On this same issue, Michael asked if OPA had a conflict of interest policy. The topic is specific to retaliation, but has broader relevance as well.

Pat, Claudia, and Joe will network at NACOLE to see how other jurisdictions address retaliation. Dale will talk to Pete Holmes to get his thoughts – does this case highlight the need for policy on conflict of interest?

The issue of not being able to review active cases continues to hamstring OPARB. Liz agreed to formalize a request to CM Harrell about this and other important issues to keep these concerns in the forefront.

OPA Director Reappointment – OPARB has received requests from the media to comment on the director's reappointment.

CM Harrell has requested public comment on the reappointment, and the Seattle Human Rights Commission has indicated that they will comment. The Board's report had two recommendations with regard to the OPA Director: that the Board formally review the Director's performance, and that the Board manage outreach and intake of comment from stakeholders.

If the Board chooses to comment, they should approach the issue from an organized, structured way. One approach is to describe the "ideal" Director - independent, committed to transparency, has specific professional expertise for the position, etc. Focus on the system or institution, not the individual.

Dale will take the lead in developing tools to support the report's ten recommendations, e.g. a tool to evaluate the OPA Director.

Amy Radil from KUOW spent the balance of the meeting interviewing members for a piece on citizens who have worked on police accountability.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30.

Notes taken by Nancy Roberts.

The next scheduled public meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 24, at 5:30 pm in the Al Rochester room on the 2nd floor at City Hall. This meeting will be immediately followed by a special working meeting from 7:30 – 9:30 pm.