

Seattle Community Police Commission



OUR CITY. OUR SAFETY. OUR POLICE. BETTER TOGETHER.

For immediate release
June 26, 2019

Contact
Jesse Franz
(206) 678-4861
Jesse.Franz@Seattle.Gov

CPC tracking developments relating to Federal judge's ruling

The Community Police Commission (CPC) continues to track developments from the Mayor's Office relating to Federal Judge James Robart's order that the parties propose a path forward to remedy flaws in the recent police union contracts relating to accountability.

Last week, Mayor Durkan informed the CPC Co-Chairs that the City had chosen a group of largely out-of-state consultants to assess Seattle's accountability system.

We don't know what mandate the consultants have been given. We do know that none of the four were involved in the hard work from 2013 to 2017 that culminated in the passage of Seattle's accountability ordinance, which was hailed by city leaders as a triumph and national model. Mayor Durkan also supported that legislation.

There is important work to be done to bring the accountability provisions of the contract into alignment with reforms. But we didn't need to delay that work by having consultants come in and rethink what our accountability system should look like. That work has already been done, by people who worked in and lived with Seattle's accountability system for decades. Moving the goal posts at this late date devalues the work of community and smacks of "Seattle process."

The City, the Department of Justice, the Federal Monitor Team, and the CPC have been closely examining the accountability system for years. In recent times, the City has invested greatly in establishing and beefing up its police accountability bodies. With an independent Office of the Inspector General and independent Community Police Commission—not to mention the wealth of community experts on this subject—why are we turning to outside, paid consultants?

The CPC has not had an opportunity to meet the consultants. We are not aware of meetings between them and any of the community organizations that united to call for the Department of Justice investigation all those years ago and that advocated for the accountability ordinance. The public can rest

assured we are working with the Mayor's Office to set time aside for the consultants at an upcoming CPC meeting.

"Instead of following through on commitments made to the community and telling the court by July 15 how and when the city will remedy those, the city apparently intends to deny those weaknesses exist, hire its own 'independent experts,' ignore the court's direction, and argue that Seattle's system is better than other cities," said (Ret.) Judge Anne Levinson.

The news of the consultant's hiring comes less than a week after more than two dozen community organizations called on the mayor and other city leaders to live up to the promises they've made over the years to have a stronger police accountability system – one that the community can trust.

Michelle Storms, Executive Director of the ACLU of Washington, said, "Judge Robart's finding was clear: The City has partially fallen out of compliance with the federal consent decree with regard to discipline and accountability. Every denial creates delay and every delay in establishing a system of true and effective police accountability reduces public safety, erodes community trust in law enforcement, and most significantly, costs lives. Neither the City nor its communities can afford to bear the heavy costs of denial and delay."

We need to work together to make sure the promises made to community are kept. We're confident we can do that in an earnest and effective way, if we work together as the judge ordered.

###