CLEVELAND COMMUNITY POLICE COMMISSION (CPC)  
ST. PHILLIP NERI FAMILY CENTER/CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
799 EAST 82ND STREET, CLEVELAND, OH 44144  
MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 24, 2016

ATTENDEES: Anthony Body, Kathy Clegg, Mario Clopton, Yvonne Conner, Tim Higgins, Amanda King, Dylan Sellers, Rhonda Y. Williams

ABSENT: Craig Boise, Steve Loomis, Lynn Hampton, Lee Fisher

STAFFERS: Sylvia Pérez, Cleveland Foundation; Sharyna Cloud, City of Cleveland

Co-Chairs Update
Reviewed work-to-date and forthcoming deadlines, as well as an update on the CPC’s Budget Hearing before City Council.

CDP Mission Statement
- Rev. Yvonne provided an overview of the work-to-date regarding the CDP Mission Statement survey: 108 responses, 8 of our 17 wards, and all 5 of the police districts were represented, as well as persons who work in Cleveland and live outside of the City limits.
- Mentioned that not all people were responding to the demographic questions, and that we needed a broader diversity of people represented.

IG Job Description
- The Commissioners decided, based on the pressing deadlines before it, to target March 30 to have a full commission vote on the Inspector General Job Description.

Policy and Procedure Assessment Committee -- Updates

Bias Free Policing Work Group
Rev. Yvonne gave the update, providing some highlights from some of the feedback and sharing that the deadline for the work is due March 7, 2016.

- Highlight next meetings
  - Feb. 25: CPC information and summaries due to Lee to help compile information, to prepare a draft document for the March 3rd.
  - Feb. 25: Bias Free Work Group Meeting with the Muslim Community at the ACLU office
  - March 3: We want to leave that meeting with a document that we can get to our Co-Chairs, and have it finalized by Commissioners.

- Questions from Commissioners after the report:
  - The CDP Mission Statement survey was revisited, and a question was raised about how to bring forth change to get more and diverse input? Given the responses we have now, will these recommendations truly fulfill the mandate?
  - Rev. Yvonne responded that it might be frustrating, and we might be a little disappointed, but we as Commissioners make our best effort to get information out and
move forward. We have to build engagement. She invited ideas about how to deal with it.

- Commissioners discussed thinking more concretely about an engagement strategy. Thanks were given to all the people in the room who regularly attend the meetings, as well as those who were attending their first meeting.
- A commissioner requested more time to provide her bias-free recommendations, especially given the Bias Free Work Group community meeting with the Muslim Community tomorrow.
- It was stated that the commissioner should provide as much as input as possible, but that Commissioners were sure the process would not be shut down. This was just to get the process of drafting the document started.
- A Commissioner raised a question about statistical relevance.
- A commissioner responded that we could find out the question regarding pool and statistical validity, but affirmed that qualitative measures are important as well. Also stated that the CPC and community will have another opportunity to get more input on its various required recommendations.

**Budget, IT, and Infrastructure Committee**

- Though the budget and the resources allocated within, the Commission will work towards meeting its mandates in the Consent Decree and ensuring the inclusion of the people of Cleveland in our work. The CPC will establish a staff to execute the directives and needs of the Commission, and also provides the tools, resources and supplies needed to efficiently complete their work.
- The CPC reviewed the staffing positions and roles it would seek to fill through the budget. The positions presented and discussed at the hearing included:
  - An Executive Director, responsible for planning, managing, coordinating and administering activities of the CPC.
  - An Administrative Assistant providing secretarial support to the Executive Director
  - A Community Engagement Coordinator responsible for the implementation and evaluation the CPC’s community engagement activities, including CPC community meeting and Commission presence at non-Commission community events.
  - A Policy Analyst responsible for drafting, executing and analyzing community feedback, survey information and recommendations of the Commission.
- City Council expressed support for the staffing structure and the budget, generally speaking.
- As next steps, the Budget, IT and Infrastructure Committee will electronically conduct a vote to approve a formal resolution supporting the proposed budget. It will also draft the staffing positions for the Commissioner’s review and comment.

**Police Review Board Working Group**

Dr. Williams updated the Commission on the work of the Police Review Board (PRB) Working Group. She commented on their review of the Office of Professional Standards Handbook, as well as feedback received from the Dept. of Justice regarding the CPC’s originally submitted PRB charter amendment recommendations.

The CPC received feedback from the City on their recommendations for revisions to the City’s Ordinance (specifically Section 115-2). One of the City’s responses was to suggest that the CPC review the Office of Professional Standards Handbook to determine if some of the charter recommendations were more appropriate for the handbook. The CPC will provide feedback on the manual on March 17th.
The CPC also received feedback on its PRB recommendations from the Department of Justice (DOJ). Combined with the comments received from the city, the CPC will take all the feedback received back to the PRB Working Group. The co-chairs along with the monitoring group, the DOJ and the City must meet on or before March 30th to discuss the CPC’s comprehensive approach to its policy recommendations. The final draft of the Ordinance must be approved by City Council by the end of June if it is to be placed on the November ballot, for the community’s vote.

The tentative date for the next PRB WG meeting is March 3rd, from 12:30pm to 2:00pm. Final meeting details will be available on the website.

Ms. King expressed concern that if the CPC’s recommendations were to be limited to the literal scope of the mandate (Section 115-2 with regard to the PRB Charter Amendment proposal), then the reforms needed will not be as effective. She reminded the Commissioners that they initially approved a broader more comprehensive approach to its PRB recommendations, because they felt that the broader changes were necessary to insure the success of the minimal revisions requested in the Consent Decree. It was suggested that the working group invite Dir. Langhenry, Director of the City’s Law Department to its meeting to better understand her comments about the CPC’s recommendations, as well as explain the rationale behind the CPC’s approach.

**Bias Free Work Group**
The Bias Free Working Group is continuing its outreach to the community and its research. It is on schedule to meet the March 7th deadline to submit its policy recommendations to the DOJ, City, and the Monitoring Team.

**Use of Force Work Group**
The deadline for CPC’s policy recommendation regarding the CDP’s Use of Force Policies is March 17th. These recommendations will summarize the community input received to date, as collected through public surveys, commission meetings and townhalls, and direct communication between commissioners and the community. The written report is due March 17th. The CDP will consider this report as a resource, as it develops a draft of its new policies. Later in the year, the CPC will have the opportunity to comment on a final draft produced by the CDP.

The first meeting of the work group is tentatively scheduled for this week, Friday, Feb. 26th from 6:30pm to 8pm. The meeting date, time, and location will be shared on the CPC website.

The working group is also working with the Community Engagement Committee to hold a townhall on the topic of use of force. The townhall is scheduled for March 9th, from 6pm – 8pm. The townhall will include an educational component about use of force, after which the community will be invited to engage in conversation about use of force and potential policy recommendations. The CPC is currently considering a variety of speakers who can speak to the topic of use of force from the civil rights perspective, the family perspective, and other perspectives as identified by the work group. Community suggestions for speakers are welcome and should be sent to Commissioner Rev. Yvonne Conner.

Mr. Body suggested specific community groups that should be invited to the townhall, including CMHA youth, youth and staff of juvenile detention centers, schools officials (youth have interaction with the police in their schools), vice officers and the gang unit. These groups represent members of the Cleveland community who have frequent interactions with the police and have often experienced a use
of force in those interactions. The commission also expressed an interest in reaching out to reform minded police officers to hear their perspective of use of force.

Dr. Rhonda commented that she posted an executive summary of a recent report – “Use of Force: Taking Police to a Higher Standard,” which is saved to the CPC’s shared documents.

The next full commission meeting is March 15th, two days before the recommendations are due. The Commission will be asked to comment on the recommendations at that time, as well as engage in the draft process through e-collaboration.

The commissioners then commented on the broad goals that they would like to implement through the policy reform on use of force. They discussed the aspects and characteristics of reform they would like to see drive the policy development process, and specifically mentioned:

● Using de-escalation techniques as the go-to strategy, before police officers consider using their weapons. In the Bias-free presentation at the last town hall, an example was shared that highlighted the importance of involving multiple officers at different stages of the interaction as a de-escalation tactic (e.g. the first officer deescalates a situation and the second officer applies the handcuffs).
● In recognition of the legal standard of “reasonable fear,” which is often used to justify an officer’s use of force, the CPC’s recommendations should include policies that consider “fear” from both sides (the officers and the alleged perpetrator) in an effort to understand that fear might also drive uncommon and usual actions on behalf of the victim.
● An agency’s policies, and the CPC’s recommendations, should go beyond the legal standard, in recognition that the standard is necessary but not sufficient.
● Policy reforms need to lead to a change in culture in the police force.
● The CPC’s recommendations should be coordinated with the mental health advisory committee.
● If the problem is deemed to be the implementation of the use of force policy, and not the policy itself, then the CPC’s recommendations should include a strong focus on training.
● The CPC’s recommendations should acknowledge that use of force is not only physical, but also verbal. There is a recommendation included in the bias-free policy report that addresses the use of verbal force and explicit states that it should include biased language.
● It will be important to talk to individual police officers to better understand where the cultural obstacles are when trying to enforce use of force policies.
● The CPC is interested in participating in available trainings and simulations that would help them understand the training recurrently received.
● It was recommended that the commissioners conduct a ride-along with a police officer at night.
● In addition to ride-alongs, commissioners should also hang out with community members on the street to observe how community members and police officers interact on a daily basis.
● We should look at the use of force not only when an individual is interacting directly with an officer, but also when the individual is in transport.
● The use of force continuum consists of six steps before lethal force and the commissioners should be aware of this continuum.
● We should explore the impact of desensitization and instances of use of force. Commissioners have witnessed instances of extreme insensitivity that could lead to use of violence. Should we consider recommending limitations on time spent in certain roles or certain geographies to reduce the chance of desensitization of individual officers to specific community needs and individuals?
Dr. Williams read aloud GPO 1.103, standards of conduct and courtesy, which addresses how the police will interact with the general public.

Mr. Higgins commented that when a GPO is violated, the complaint is either referred to the office of professional standards, or, if viewed and reported by another officer, a charge against the violating officer is written up. Mr. Higgins volunteered to follow up with the Chief of Police regarding ride-alongs for Commissioners.

It was suggested that the CPC invite Det. Kevin Freedman to its bias-free policing meetings. He is a reform minded officer and would be a good person to reach out to. The CPC could also reach out to district commanders, FOP, CPPA, the Black Shield, and the Hispanic association of officers.

Public Comment
Mr. Clopton reiterated the CPC’s ground rules for public comment. He then invited the public to comment on issues the CPC should consider when developing its recommendations regarding use of force.

- The Use of Force policies are generally adequate. The systemic issues are: what is an arrest-able offense? There are too many actions that are considered an arrestable offenses that shouldn’t be. By reducing arrest through the issuing of summons and fines, we can reduce an officer’s use of force.
- This summer, the RNC will be in Cleveland and we will have a lot of interstate and intercity police forces coming into Cleveland. What will be the oversight and accountability system be for the “out of town” police forces? Is anyone keeping track of the military police force entering Cleveland for the RNC?
- A comment was made about the Brelo verdict. He stated that the verdict was an insult to American democracy and that it widened the door to genocide of black individuals.
- The CPC speaks a lot about training. It should also focus on the prosecution of officers who violate the law.
- Has the CPC considered the question of residence in any of the CPC’s deliberations? The CPC responded that yes, they have. When the CPC raised the issue before, they were told that residency requirements for police officer is regulated by state law and that the City of Cleveland did not have the authority to enforce a residency requirement when hiring officers. One recommendation that was suggested was to create incentives to encourage police officers to live in the City of Cleveland.
- One speaker stated that he had seen individuals arrested in downtown Cleveland for not signing a ticket.
- Can the CPC provide a summary of the training that police officers currently receive?
- A Rep. from the NEO Chapter of Standing Up for Racial Justice – thanked the commission for its work. This is a network organizing white people for social justice and integrating them into a multiracial effort to achieve social justice.

The next CPC meeting is March 15th, but that is the date of primary election. The CPC will consider moving the date. If revised the new date will be posted on the CPC website.

Adjourned at 7:55pm.