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Community Police Commission Public Meeting

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Agency: Cleveland Community Police Commission (CPC)

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Summary

- Some public commenters and commissioners are concerned with the commission's [meeting minutes](#).
- The city and police unions negotiated new contracts that would result only in a warning for officers who commit low-level civil offenses, and there are concerns the negotiations were made in bad faith, CPC Interim Executive Director Jason Goodrick said. *[Editor's note: Investigators who work on civil complaints filed by residents sometimes discover policy violations made by officers who are not the subject of the complaint. This change would apply only to those officers. City Council still must approve the new contracts, [but this change may violate the consent decree](#).]*
- Commissioners [remain in disagreement](#) about the hiring process for outside counsel, but they voted to move forward with Mark Wallach.

Follow-Up Questions

- What are "low-level offenses," or group 1 discipline, for police?
- How is the CPC handling current use of force from police officers in the Cleveland community?
- Is the CPC being included in City Hall decisions, and, if not, why?

Notes

CPC Co-chair Audrianna Rodriguez welcomed everyone to the meeting.

CPC commissioners:

- John Adams
- Shandra Benito
- James Chura

- Charles Donaldson
- Kyle Early
- Alana Garrett-Ferguson - Absent
- Cait Kennedy
- Gregory Reaves
- Co-chair Jan Ridgeway
- Piet van Lier - Absent
- Rodriguez
- Teri Wang
- Sharena Zayed

There was a [quorum](#).

Wang, regarding CPC's meeting minutes: "Asking the public to watch a two and a half hour meeting in order to determine if there's something that they're interested in—I think is not the best service to the public. I do not think the minutes that have been revised fulfill that standard. The standard should be that it is for the public...this is an issue that needs to be addressed."

CPC proceeded to vote on accepting the minutes or seeking further refinement for the minutes distributed for the Sept 27. meeting. Minutes approved with nine yes votes, with only no from Wang. Zayed abstained.

Wang expressed concern with no discussion regarding the quality and accuracy of meeting minutes and just voting on them.

Meeting minutes distributed for an [Oct. 19 special meeting about community grants](#). Same voting outcome.

Public comment

LaTonya Goldsby, president and co-founder of Black Lives Matter Cleveland, addressing Wang's concern about the minutes: "It's kind of alarming for a citizen or a resident to go on your website to try to obtain minutes and they're not there. Then to hear that there are inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the minutes, it's alarming. Because when we go to those websites to get those minutes, we want full transparency and documentations of what's happening within these meetings. It's required within the [public records act](#) that those minutes be documented and made available to the public, so I just want to echo her concerns about that."

Goldsby also addressed the process of the community grants, as she believes many grassroots organizations did not receive funding.

Brenda Bickerstaff, founder of Citizens for a Safer Cleveland, which led the charge for the [Issue 24](#) charter amendments, spoke next. “Sometimes we agree to disagree, and that happens when you’re in an establishment. But it’s how you disagree, and I think you guys know where I’m coming from with this. Sometimes you’re gonna agree to disagree, and you don’t have to do it in public.”

Loh, [a community activist](#), spoke: “It’s how to disagree, it’s also what to disagree. If you already consider your own ideology as the most important thing, [and] based on that you disagree with other commissioners, then please think twice. The community would not like to see this continue.”

Loh encouraged members to focus on the issues they’re there to address, such as police misconduct.

[Editor’s note: Some CPC members have had [contentious exchanges](#) in past meetings.]

Shannon, a Tremont resident and member of [SURJ](#), was also in favor of more detail in the minutes.

Kayla Pincus- “I think that when you’re part of something that has a strong democratic element, one of the best ways to show support for it is to be constructively critical. I mention that to say it feels like there has not been a lot that’s been going on recently with the commission.” Pincus expressed concern about community members making more of an effort on some items -- such as scheduling [work group meetings](#) -- than the commissioners.

Capt. Johnny Hamm, Cleveland police - “Your focus doesn’t have to be the police right now; your focus should be getting this commission right.”

Update on the Cleveland Police Monitoring Team’s [13th semiannual report](#) and consent decree status hearing

Interim Executive Director of CPC Jason Goodrick: This report is more condensed than other monitoring team reports. It includes recommendations for community and problem-oriented policing. A lot of their time is sorting bad data out. Would be ideal for

the commission to also have access to that data.

Regarding search and seizure: “Everyone’s in agreement that there has been a tremendous amount of policy written...and training has been delivered, but what we don’t know is the efficacy of those things on those streets. We don’t know who the police are stopping, we don’t know why they’re stopping them, and if they’re using their training or if they’re being constitutional compliant.”

Goodrick on items not mentioned in the report: There was a consent decree status hearing Oct. 25 with U.S. District Judge Solomon Oliver Jr. The Fraternal Order of Police Associates and the Cleveland Police Patrolmen’s Association, want discipline to be addressed in a different way, and they’ve agreed to new contracts that reflect that. No new contracts have been affirmed yet by City Council. The federal court, monitoring team and Department of Justice are concerned that negotiations were made in bad faith because they weren’t told about the disciplinary changes. Officers who commit low-level offenses (group 1) but are not the subject of a civilian complaint could receive only a warning letter for the offenses.

Other updates from Goodrick

CPC is searching for a [good, experienced attorney](#) with a civil rights background.

Nov. 8: CPC called to City Council for operational review ahead of next February’s budget hearings. Public is encouraged to attend.

Wang: Discipline through the Office of Professional Standards ([OPS](#)), which investigates civilian complaints of police misconduct, is not capturing the accountability that is needed. And as of right now the CPC committee that deals with accountability is not able to receive the records it needs from OPS and the Civilian Police Review Board ([CRPB](#)), which makes discipline decisions following OPS investigations. Wang encouraged the public to express concerns if they have any.

Adams addressed some concerns from the public comments: Commissioners had to put commissioning to the side for a bit because eight of them were working on grants 24/7.

Rules Committee updates

Wang requested a grant making process rule. She is concerned with the grants process because she did not receive any rubric or read any of the grants. Wang wrote a letter on

Oct. 4 to the city about a commissioner in violation of attendance policy; the co-chair did not notify the mayor for two months and was not shared with the commission, Wang said, adding that Mayor Bibb refused to intervene. Wang would like to reform the rules so commissioners can show up and be included.

Police Accountability Committee updates

Wang expressed concern about getting requested records and said co-chairs are meeting in private about the issue rather than including committee chairs. She wants that process to change.

Police Training Committee updates

There will be a use-of-force training event on Dec. 16. It will include surveys and breakout sessions, and it will be open to the public to illustrate police use-of-force training.

Old business

Motion to move forward with Mark Wallach as outside counsel for an issue of a [conflict of interest with Mayor Justin Bibb](#) (regarding his past refusal to approve the selection of an executive director). Debate on if the interview should be held publicly with Wallach. Recommendation to follow the process already in place (which does not include public interview). Many minutes were spent on this issue. **Motion carried.**

New business

Motion to request copy of city's tentative bargaining agreements with police unions, based on CPC's authority over police discipline. Send a letter on behalf of the entire commission in an effort to obtain the draft of the contracts. **Motion carried.** Draft of letter to be sent at the end of the week or beginning of next week.

Wang argued that the commission should be present in person during negotiation, not just receive a draft. Goodrick expressed concern about things moving forward in City Hall and CPC not being involved.

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