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Community Police Commission Public Meeting

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Agency: Cleveland Community Police Commission (CPC)

Date: Oct. 25, 2023

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Summary

- The CPC finished selecting grant recipients, with 26 selected out of more than 90 applicants.
- Mark Wallach was approved by the commission to hire as the outside legal counsel.
- Public commenters asked CPC members to handle conflict more collaboratively and be more communicative with the public in the future.

Follow-Up Questions

- What is the status of the CPD collective bargaining agreement?
- How will grant writing processes be improved in the future?
- How can improvements be made to hiring processes or commission protocol in general while an active process is in place?

Notes

The meeting started with roll call, adoption of the agenda, and approval of minutes. Everyone was in attendance aside from commissioners Alana Garrett-Ferguson and Piet van Lier, and the only change to the agenda was that the Outreach Committee report was under the Police Committees section, not CPC Operations Committees.

The minutes from both the Sept. 27 and Oct. 19 meetings were approved, but Commissioner Teri Wang voted no on the grounds of having provided line edits that were not adopted in the final versions, which she said lacked sufficient detail. Commissioner Sharena Zayed abstained from voting.

Public comment period

LaTonya Goldsby from Black Lives Matter Cleveland echoed Commissioner Wang's

concerns about the minutes of previous meetings being inaccurate. She also said the CPC's process of issuing grants was exasperating because of the time it took and did not include enough grassroots recipients. She added that she was glad it went well and that the commission didn't have to return funding to the city.

The next commenter was not identified, but she named herself on the livestream as the Citizens for Safer Cleveland founder. She said that as the commissioners disagree, it should happen as a learning experience, not to demean people. She said, "Ms. Ridgeway is the chair, and might have to hit her gavel. You might not agree, but you can tell her yourself, not under the cameras."

Next, Loh from the Homeless Congress said, "Issue 24 was voted in, but you all are not elected officials even if there was a process to bring you in; the process was not fully transparent. Most of you are appointed. If you already consider your own ideology most important, that is a conflict of interest."

Loh said that the commission should be focused on reforming the police.

Shannon from [Showing Up for Racial Justice NEO](#) (SURJ) thanked commissioners for their work. She said it was hard to see so much conflict happening and that it was better to have greater detail in meeting minutes.

Also from SURJ, commenter Kayla said that, in recent months, it's felt as though there hasn't been much going on in the public eye. Many CPC meetings had been canceled, she said, and she wanted to be active and helpful.

The last commenter was unnamed but said he was formerly with the Cleveland Division of Police. He said that the commission should not be focused on the police directly at the moment, but rather on organizing the commission and giving it a foundation for years to come. He said that conflict is OK as long as you can work through it.

Reports

For the **Co-Chair report**, Commissioner Audrianna Rodriguez said that they will make sure minutes are posted for committees as they want to be transparent.

Commissioner Jan Ridgeway applauded the commission for completing the grant selection process, saying that there were 90+ applications and 26 recipients. She said people on the CPC worked really hard and it showed the ability of this commission to

collaborate.

Ridgeway said, “Sometimes when we aren’t visible to the community, we’re working.” She also said that this is a freshman year, but they are moving towards more of a collaborative focus.

For the **Executive Director report**, Jason Goodrick spoke as the interim executive director. He congratulated people on the Budgets and Grants committee, stating that the CPC is now working to get funding out to the community.

He gave an update on the Consent Decree Status Conference and the [Monitoring Team’s 13th Semiannual Report](#). Highlights included the determinations around whether compliance has improved for Cleveland Division of Police (CPD) in areas such as data for search and seizure. He said they are slow, largely because sorting collected data is a huge and time-consuming process.

For search and seizure, he said, they need to have good data to assess what’s actually happening and recommend policy.

Goodrick said one win is that the commission was finally able to address Judge Solomon Oliver from the U.S. District Court.

One area of focus was around the collective bargaining process for the CDP union. “The city needs to look at work schedule, pay—how they jive,” Goodrick said. “Policing is very competitive right now, the applicant pool is low...the union wants discipline to be addressed in a different way,” with the latter part referring to discipline for things such as what are called group 1/low level violations.

It was mentioned that the CDP union agreements need to be compliant with the consent decree.

At this point, Commissioner Shandra Benito asked if they could see a draft of the bargaining agreements. Goodrick said that they could not, that it was protected by Ohio law. It is possible, however, to make a request. [Editor’s note: Contracts are public record after they are ratified and formally adopted.]

Goodrich then gave operational updates, including that there is a position posted for an assistant director of law. The previous candidate withdrew their acceptance.

He also stated that as far as meeting minutes go, there is always a video recording posted on the website, which, under the [Sunshine Law](#), counts as interim minutes.

He also said that the Policy Committee has requested several records from the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) as part of the [RISE Initiative](#).

At this point, Commissioner Wang said she had made many requests but was told by OPS that because OPS is independent of the city, it is not required to provide records unless the whole commission votes to request them.

Co-Chair Ridgeway then said that an attorney who works with OPS is on paternity leave, and that discussion on meeting records requests is ongoing and that the co-chairs of CPC (Ridgeway and Rodriguez) have met with Administrator Marcus Perez of the OPS.

Next were committee status reports. There was no **Internal Training Committee report** for this meeting.

Highlights from **Budget and Grants Committee**: Chair John Adams

- They had eight commissioners working on grants 24/7
- If it looked like things weren't happening, work was happening in the background
- Special shoutouts
 - Chair Rodriguez - Giving her weekend to help them finish the review process
 - Chair Zayed - she and Chair van Lier kept work going when I had to take personal leave and had the idea to tape interviews so we could watch if we couldn't attend
- You can agree/disagree with the list of final recipients. Commissioners tried their best, knowing there would be criticism

Highlights from **Rules Committee**: Chair Teri Wang

- Would like to refine rules for grant-making processes in the future
 - If they'd followed their timeline, they wouldn't have had many issues
 - Requested grant applications - did not get any recusals or information about conflicts of interests
 - Never saw rubric. In the future, wants to work collaboratively and transparently
 - Really applaud everyone for hard work, but the CPC needs to be able to hold each other accountable
- Wang issued a letter on Oct. 4 to the co-chair about another commissioner in

violation of attendance policies, “but it was ignored”

- Would like to refine rules around attendance

Highlights from **Outreach Committee**: Chair Sharena Zayed

- Would appreciate patience and support from the public
- The committee has not recently met but is developing a framework for sending surveys and a community outreach plan
- Cait Kennedy gave shout-outs to Zayed and Adams for being great to work with
 - Agreed with critiques, but also wanted to appreciate really amazing leaders who deserve to be acknowledged and uplifted

Highlights from **Police Policy** committee: Commissioner Shandra Benito, in lieu of Chair Piet van Lier

- The committee didn't meet in October
- They have work groups, and this Monday (10/30/23) is the first meeting of the Surveillance Technology work group, led by Wang and Garrett-Ferguson
- Benito and van Lier will attend the Behavioral Crisis work group

Highlights from **Police Accountability** committee: Chair Teri Wang

- The group has met twice and has made initial records requests. It is hoping the city will fulfill those requests in the time allotted
- Reiterated concern around OPS, saying they didn't have to fulfill requests of individual commissioners, and about the co-chairs meeting privately with OPS officials

Highlights from **Police Training** committee: Chair John Adams

- Donaldson and Chura are leading the work group
- Use-of-force training event will be held Saturday, Dec. 16
 - Public will get to see different ways officers receive training

At this point, we reached the **Old Business** section in the agenda.

Commissioner Wang wanted to make a motion for Mark Wallach for the outside legal counsel

- Cleveland Law Director Mark Griffin sent a letter on July 16 saying there was a conflict with law because Wallach was not publicly interviewed
 - Wang said that if they had to interview every attorney, they'd have to wait for monthly meetings and they needed to move on this
 - They talked to 12 attorneys

- When the CPC was initially tasked with selecting a counsel by Griffin, they were not asked to formally and publicly interview candidates until a month later
- Question from Adams: Will an interview be conducted for the public?
 - Public deserves to see whoever we're interviewing; it's been a big point of transparency
 - If there are additional candidates, we should open up
- Question from Donaldson: Has the committee collectively met to make the determination of hiring Wallach or was it meetings with individual commissioners?
 - Wang: The committee has met, wrote a memo on 12 instances in which she said Co-Chairs Rodriguez and Ridgeway tried to obstruct the process coordination with Director Griffin
 - Said she asked on Oct. 11 to talk to Griffin - Rodriguez tried to not include me in the process
 - Rodriguez then denied this statement
- Comment from Benito: "First, I want to wrap up this discussion so we can get back to police reform. The public commenters said they want us to handle disagreements more collaboratively."
 - Agreed with Wang - "We were outlined a process; those steps were taken and followed; I would like to offer grace to Director Griffin and co-chairs, who likely wanted to create a different process in the future...[but] In the middle of a process, it's not the right time since it's prolonging an inevitable situation.
 - Very open to idea that, when seeking future counsel, more transparency and a public interview would be great
 - Zayed and Earley commented, agreeing with Benito
- Kennedy: Agreed with Benito - issue has taken so much public meeting time
 - "Frankly, I'm very weary on this issue...I'll be voting no, not because of outside attorney issue itself; I'm concerned that problems with the commission are being weaponized against my colleagues."
- Comment from Ridgeway: "I never questioned [the] capability of Mark Wallach - I don't know him, haven't spoken to him. To imply that I'm making negative statements around him is inappropriate and untrue. The reason I asked about the interview is because yesterday I checked with Mark Griffin, and he said there must be a public interview."
- The discussion continued for some time, and after all commissioners made a statement, the decision came to a vote, with Commissioners Kennedy and Rodriguez voting no and the rest of the CPC voting yes on hiring Wallach for outside legal counsel, **passing the motion.**

Commissioner Benito then brought forth a **new business** item, requesting that the CPC vote to ask the CDP for the current collective bargaining agreement. The motion passed unanimously besides Co-Chair Ridgeway, who abstained, saying that the discussion should also be heard in the consent decree meeting.

At this point, there were more public comments.

Loh from Homeless Congress: "Great job on the grants, but they won't resolve culture in policing, hiring, training, disciplinary issues. Please focus on these [and resolve your internal conflict]...We want the community to heal, other harms are still coming to community; in this case, [what you are doing] becomes counterproductive."

Hamzah Kabir then spoke of the need to create communication between the police and community. Both are echo chambers, he said, and any surveys sent out need to be followed with interviews.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Single Signal

In a few words, what is **one topic** you are sitting with after this meeting that you think we as a community should look further into or better explain for residents? This is for internal use and won't be included in your published notes.

- The [Monitoring Team's 13th semiannual report](#)

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