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Committee of the Whole

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Agency: [Cleveland City Council](#)

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Summary

- City Council was not 100% in agreement with all the boards/committees that came before them. Council Member Mike Polensek said that they are all there to work together.
- There are many boards and commissions in the City Of Cleveland
- Cleveland narcotics police shared 2024 accomplishments.

Follow-Up Questions

- Who picks the board/commissions that go in front of the council?
- If the City of Cleveland didn't pay for things, who would?

Notes

Cleveland City Council's **Committee of the Whole** allows all 17 council members to meet and act as a committee Essentially, it serves as an extra step in the process of discussing topics or vetting legislation before council officially votes on legislation.

Council Member Michael Polensek started the meeting at about 10:20 a.m.

The meeting is again one of the operational reviews that Cleveland City Council is holding for every city department and division prior to the 2025 budget hearings. The meeting is a review of the safety-related boards and commissions.

COMMUNITY POLICE COMMISSION (CPC)

The CPC's purpose is to bring community voices into the process of police reform. The duties are given by City Charter Section 115.5, which voters approved in 2021, and include police discipline authority, subpoena power, final authority over recruitment policies, and final authority over police procedures and training. The CPC is also tasked

with conducting community outreach, overseeing community collaboration, and providing community feedback to various city police accountability entities. The original CPC – before voters gave it more authority in 2021 – was created by the [consent decree](#), an agreement between Cleveland and the U.S. Department of Justice that requires police reforms. Lastly, CPC also gives out [community grants](#) for violence protection mediation and restorative justice.

CPC officials provided these updates in a [presentation](#) to the committee:

2024 achievements

- Approved 13 police policies; 14 policies are pending approval
- 18 trainings approved, six pending
- 11 full meetings held
- Three special events held
- Four discipline reviews
- One case pending (have not heard any cases yet)

2023 grant information

- 26 awards given out (grantees) totaling \$1,080,000
- Disbursed \$263,000 to 12 organizations
- Two organizations have received their full grant money while another 10 may have got half of the money so far

2024 grant update

- Enlisted the United Black Fund of Greater Cleveland to [manage the grants program](#)
- Grant cycle open through Nov. 8, 2024

Vacancies

- Administrative manager
- Assistant administrator
- CPC legal counsel position was vacant but is about to be filled, according to CPC Co-chair John Adams

2025 priorities

- Onboarding (retreat) / training new commissioners
- Finalize hearing procedures and begin hearing police discipline cases
- Adjusting to spring grant cycle
- Grant reporting

- Eliminating policy backlog
- Consent decree compliance
- Hiring a permanent executive director and filling all vacancies
- Obtain direct public records access
- Increase community outreach

Polensek asked if there were any vacancies among the 13 voting commission members. Adams replied that currently there are no vacancies but as of December there will be nine vacancies. Six commission members' terms are expiring and three have resigned. Four of the nine reapplied. The commission is waiting on Mayor Justin Bibb to announce his nine nominations, Adams said.

Polensek: How does one apply to be on the commission?

Adams said there is an application process, and an estimated 50 people applied.
[Editor's note: The application window is closed.]

Polensek addressed concerns expressed to him by the Cleveland Division of Police (CDP). CDP sent the commission its recommendations for commanders for the First and Fourth Districts and the special services unit. Also, Polensek said the commission has the general police order (GPOs are updates to police and department policies) regarding the use of police drones. He asked where those were in the vetting process.

Adams said the commission couldn't review all the candidate records because they were not given full disciplinary records. The commission does not feel they can make a recommendation due to that. Civilian complaints were received about some of the candidates for the positions. CPC is asking for full access to records to get this resolved.

Jason Goodrick, CPC's interim executive director, said they received the proposed police drone policy on Oct. 10. So, they are still working on it and aim to get it done by the end of the year.

Polensek said council passed legislation more than two years ago for the drones and said drones will have a great impact on pursuits as well as creating safer environments for law enforcement personnel and residents. Polensek said there are 10 drones just sitting in an office, and they want them implemented. It's a priority of the council to get those drones up.

OFFICIAL QUORUM FOR LEGISLATION

The committee advanced the following legislation:

[1117-2024](#) - if passed by council, it would authorize the Director of Public Safety to extend the existing lease with Cuyahoga County for the current Cleveland Division of Police Headquarters at 1300 Ontario St. for one year beginning Oct. 2 with the option to renew for an additional one year and to include space for the Clerk of the Cleveland Municipal Court on the fourth floor. *[Editor's note: The city previously owned the space it now rents from the county. As of February 2022, [the city was on track to pay more in total rent than what it sold the space for.](#)]*

[1115-2024](#) - authorizing the Director of Public Safety to apply for and accept a grant from the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services for the fiscal year 2024 Recovery Ohio LE Program to provide funding for the operation of [the Cartel Gang Narcotics Laundering Task Force](#).

- Director of Public Safety Wayne Drummond: Grant total is \$65,000
 - Expenses to be reimbursed
 - \$35,051.15 is for police overtime
 - \$9,145 surveillance equipment
 - \$3,500 office supplies, Narcan Safe Kits
 - \$3,160 vehicle maintenance
 - \$14,143.85 cell data plan, confidential cost

CDP Sergeant Mike McNeeley said that in almost one year there have been 80 search warrants, 45 with indictment/arrests, 21,000 fentanyl pills seized and 154 pounds of fentanyl powder seized. Overdoses are down 47% from 2023. Through October 2023, there were 281 fatal overdoses, and this year so far only 147.

[1116-2024](#) - authorizing the Director of Public Safety to apply for and accept a \$150,000 grant from the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services for the fiscal year 2024 State Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant. Legislation provides funding for the operation of the Cartel Gang Narcotic Laundering Task Force.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD (CRB) PRESENTATION

Mission - "To promote amicable relations among the racial and cultural groups within the community."

Objective - "...mandated to promote understanding and cooperation among racially and culturally diverse groups within the community. Alleviate inequalities, prejudice, and other sources of intergroup conflict."

Overview - Staff includes five district representatives who cover the five police districts, three cultural and faith liaisons, Youth Diversion Program personnel, and CRB Street Outreach Specialist Team members.

Responsibilities and priorities -

- Community engagement/ Quality of life
- Youth in court system/ safe streets/ safe schools
- Cultural engagement/ mutual harmony

Staffing levels

- 2024 budget headcount - 23
- Full-time headcount as of Sept. 30 - 19
- Current vacancies currently posted - project coordinator (downtown representative), district representative III (Local 100), administrative secretary

Polensek asked if CRB is aligned with what City Council allocated when the budget passed in April.

CRB Director Angela Shute-Woodson said yes they are, but they are also asking for an increase in budget for the following year. Leticia Maldonado, a City of Cleveland grants administrator, laid out the request: \$20,000 increase for personnel, from \$15,000 to \$40,000 for training, and \$50,000 of increases for contractual services. *[Editor's note: Budget hearings typically begin in February].*

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS PRESENTATION

- Leadership priorities
 - Focus
 - People
 - Readiness
 - Modernization
 - Quality of life
 - Vested leadership
 - Health/wellness
 - Competitive wages
 - Rewards and recognitions
 - Dignity and respect
 - Work-life balance

- Mentor and be mentored
- Team building
- Get outside of your comfort zone
- Think outside the box
- Timely and succinct reports, investigations, hearing
- Have fun

2023-2028 five-year strategy plan - “aims to establish Cleveland Police Oversight model as the leading investigative framework in the nation. Achieving this goal is contingent upon prioritizing initiatives and resources effectively.”

Increase budget proposals coming for [OPS](#) and the [Civilian Police Review Board](#).

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM (PAT) PRESENTATION

Objective - “...to promote justice and integrity in law enforcement by diligently implementing the consent decree’s terms...fostering transparency, strengthening community engagement, and providing data-driven insight to ensure accountability within the City of Cleveland.”

Goal - “...build trust in law enforcement by supporting efforts to uphold high ethical standards, ensuring accountability, and advocating for the rights of all community members. We are dedicated to recommending policy reform that improves public safety while safeguarding individual liabilities ... We work to create lasting reforms that strengthen public trust, protect civil rights, and ensure fair and equitable policing for all.”

Departmental overview - “Continuous collaboration with the Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) and other city partners. Policy reviews, audits, and critical data analysis to capture results and make recommendations for appropriate modifications. Ensure the continued implementation of the 21st century best practices and constitutional policing and eventual termination of the consent decree. Meeting with the Department of Justice and monitoring team as they assess compliance.”

Responsibilities

Conduct assessments and analyses, complete performance audits, execute comparative analyses, support continuous compliance efforts, produce advocacy documents.

Priorities - compliance assessments

- 2024 assessments on police use of force, crisis intervention, search and seizure.

- Determination of the 2025 priority areas
- Outreach to internal and external stakeholders

Process of assessment of progress with the consent decree:

- Create reform policy
- Training and implementation
- Audits and assessment of compliance

Ongoing work: Outreach, technical assistance awarded, legislation implementation, key documents produced.

Staffing levels

- 2024 budget headcount: Five
- Full-time headcount as of Sept. 30: is five
- Current vacancies: 0
- 2025 approved positions: 0

Office of Prevention, Intervention and Opportunities presentation

There are three levels of violence prevention

1. Primary prevention
2. Secondary prevention (intervention)
3. Tertiary prevention (response)

Mission - “The mission of the Mayor's Office of Prevention Intervention and Opportunity is to address the root causes of trauma and violence through a human development framework and broad-based efforts that improve the overall well-being and quality of life outcomes for children, youth, and their families.”

Main areas of work are employment and expanded program space, social support services, trauma-informed spaces and overall violence prevention strategy.

Staffing

- 22 staff members in the office
- Two vacancies in the social support specialist unit and a temp worker for an administrative assistant role.

2024 achievements

Sherry Ulery, from the office, spoke about the trauma-informed care initiative, which is to transform the neighborhood resource and recreation centers into trauma-informed neighborhood resource and recreation centers. With the help of Case Western Reserve University, OPIO is able to provide professional development to managers and the social support services unit, Ulery said.

Ulery: “The sessions are focused on how our brain organizes around trauma, changes trauma makes to the brain and a co-healing model all focused on teaching managers and specialists how to mitigate the impact of trauma. In addition, the staff from Case Western Reserve University has been working with the neighborhood resource and recreation center managers and leadership team to implement standards and a progressive monitoring tool used to assess the implementation of these standards. Through our partnership with Kent State University, we are providing training to the center managers and recreation staff.”

- Youth employment
 - Summer employment and academy opportunities provided by Youth Opportunities Unlimited
 - Lifeguard training - 34 participants, 28 certified, 21 hired
 - Marketing Academy - 10 participants received certification in coding and marketing.
- *Expanded programming*
 - Youth and adult education
 - Job and career readiness
 - Health and wellness
 - Youth leadership development mentorship and community service
 - The arts
 - Sports and recreation

2024 accomplishments

Expanded programs: total of 36

- Youth and adult education - 12 programs
- Job and career readiness - Two programs
- Health and wellness - Two programs
- Youth leadership, development mentorship and community service - Four programs
- The arts- 12 programs

- Sports and recreation - Four programs

2025 priorities

- Neighborhood resource and recreation centers transformational initiative - provide ongoing trauma-informed care and healing professional development.
- Social support service unit -continue to connect community members to resources and wraparound support services
- Expanded programs and youth employment-expand youth employment opportunities
- System-level transformation initiatives - institutionalize a common agenda and accountability metrics for children and youth outcome

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