



Police Review Commission

POLICE REVIEW COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 27, 2010
7:00 P.M.

South Berkeley Senior Center
2939 Ellis Street, Berkeley

1. CALL TO ORDER BY CHAIRPERSON GEORGE PEREZVELEZ AT 7:00 P.M. ROLL CALL AND ATTENDANCE:

Present: Chairperson George Perezvelez
Vice Chair Russell Bloom
Commissioner Kamau Edwards
Commissioner Vonnie Gurgin
Commissioner Jonathan Huang
Commissioner Sharon Kidd
Commissioner Michael Sherman
Commissioner Sherry Smith
Commissioner William White

Absent: None.

PRC Staff: Lillian Mayers, Acting PRC Officer

BPD Staff: Lt. Randy Files, Sgt. Jennifer Wilson, Officer Bartalini and Officer Wellington.

2. ORDER OF AGENDA

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** *Speakers are generally allotted up to three minutes. To ensure adequate time for action items on the Agenda, the Commission may limit the number of public speakers during the public comment period.*

Officer Wellington announced that Chief Meehan's swearing-in ceremony would be held on January 28, 2010, at 2:00 p.m. at the Freight and Salvage on Addison Street.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: January 13, 2010.

Motion to approve minutes as amended by Chair Perezvelez.

M/S/C (Bloom/Gurgin) Motion carried.

Ayes: Bloom, Edwards, Gurgin, Huang, Kidd, Perezvelez, Sherman, Smith, and White.

Noes: None. **Abstain:** Smith, Huang and Kidd **Absent:** None.

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5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Autism awareness.

Commissioner Huang asked if the BPD provides any training related to autism awareness, specifically, or to other types of disabilities that might complicate police-citizen interactions. Officer Bartalini mentioned a training video that covers broad aspects of communication, and Officer Wellington mentioned, as an example, that diabetic symptoms could be mistaken for intoxication (drunkenness). The training was not specific to autism awareness.

Commissioner Huang emphasized the importance of fostering an awareness of disabilities that could impact police interactions with citizens. Chair Perezvelez proposed that this item be put on the next agenda for further discussion with the Chief.

- ### B. Commissioner Sherman submitted a written attachment to the agenda expressing his concern that the December 9, 2009 minutes did not accurately reflect his observations and concerns about problems that occur when Alameda County Sheriffs are called to Berkeley. There was no opposition, so his written comments are included in the minutes of this meeting.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update on increasing community awareness. (PRC Brochure.)

The Commissioners and the BPD raised their concerns about some of the wording in the brochure. Commissioners and the BPD were invited to forward their suggestions to Ms. Mayers, who will try to incorporate them in the brochure.

After discussion there was a motion to table this item.

M/S/C (Smith/Sherman) Motion carried.

Ayes: Bloom, Edwards, Gurgin, Huang, Kidd, Perezvelez, Sherman, Smith, and White.

Noes: None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** None.

- ### B. Discuss 2008 Statistical Report on increase in the number of African-American complainants.

a) Staff update: Ms. Mayers stated that she looked at the 2009 statistics, which reflect a decline in the percentage of African-American complainants. Of the 30 complainants who filed in 2009, 14 were African-American; 8 were Caucasian; 2 were Hispanic; 2 were Asian; and 4 did not report their race. These statistics tend to indicate that the 2008 percentage figures are not indicative of an upward trend.

- ### C. Comparison of police officer composition as of January 2005, January 2007 and September 2009, pursuant to Commissioner White's request.

Commissioner White submitted a document titled "City of Berkeley Police Department Workforce Analysis as of June 2009," and discussed his concerns that the number of African-Americans in higher ranks was declining. Officer Wellington explained that the City has high standards and strict hiring practices and is hiring older recruits than in the past. Another reason for the decline is the observation that well-educated African-Americans tend to pursue other professions. It was noted that the BPD has increased the number of female police officers, is hiring multilingual officers, and has a highly educated and diverse group of officers who are able to relate to much of the community.

7. PRC OFFICER'S REPORT (For Discussion or Action)

A. Hearing update. One board of inquiry is scheduled for February 19. We are hoping to schedule another one in February.

B. Status of complaints. Currently there are 22 open cases.

C. Comments: *The PRC Officer may make announcements or provide information to the Commission in the form of an oral report. The Commission will not take action on such items but may request that the PRC Officer place an item on a future agenda for discussion.*

8. BERKELEY POLICE DEPARTMENT'S REPORT

A. Chief's report: none at this time.

9. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS (For Discussion or Action)

A. Mutual aid subcommittee – update.

Ms. Mayers stated that Sgt. Curtin replied and said that he is responsible for the revisions/update and hopes to have the work done by mid February. Chair Perezvelez stated that the process is as follows: it comes to the subcommittee; the subcommittee reviews it in its entirety; it comes back to the full Commission; and then it goes to City Council. Vice Chair Bloom stated his concern that federal mutual aid pacts were removed in the first place and expressed his displeasure with the process thus far.

10. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Attached.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT: Limited to item 12 only.

Closed Session

The Police Review Commission will recess into closed session to discuss and take action on the following item:

12. RECOMMENDATION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE CLOSURE

A. Case No. 2225 – Complainant Ari Silva.

Motion to approve above referenced file for administrative closure. (Sherman/White)

Motion carried.

Ayes: Bloom, Edwards, Gurgin, Huang, Kidd, Perezvelez, Sherman, Smith, and White.

Noes: _____ **Abstain:** _____ **Absent:** _____

13. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.