



**Police Review Board of the City of Geneva
Meeting Minutes
August 5, 2021 6:00pm**

Our mission is to openly, fairly, and impartially uphold City of Geneva Local Law 1-2021.

Attendance

Members attending: Ahmad Whitfield, Amaris Elliott-Engel, Brian Whitley, Charles “Rick” Barnard, Charles King, Jessica Farrell, RJ Rapoza, Theresa Johnson, Wil Wolf

Absent: None

Alternates attending: Andrew Spink, Carrie Corron

City Staff/Trainers attending: Erica Collins

Also Present: Clr. Anthony Noone

The Meeting of the Police Review Board (“PRB”) was called to order, Ms. Collins presiding, initially.

Election of Officers for 2021

The Board had voted (anonymously, Ms. Collins calculating votes) for who should be starting Chair and Vice Chair for the rest of 2021 based on statements submitted over email. Ms. Collins had announced that Ms. Farrell had prevailed for Chair, and that Ms. Johnson had then prevailed for Vice Chair. Only Mr. King had volunteered to serve as Secretary.

Mr. Barnard (seconded by Mr. Whitley) moved to appoint Ms. Farrell as Chair for 2021.
Unanimously APPROVED by voice vote.

Mr. Rapoza (seconded by Mr. Wolf) moved to appoint Ms. Johnson as Vice Chair for 2021.
Unanimously APPROVED by voice vote.

Mr. Wolf (seconded by Ms. Farrell) moved to appoint Mr. King as Secretary for 2021.
Unanimously APPROVED by voice vote.

Ms. Farrell presided from this point.

Mission Statement Discussion. The Board discussed various ways to summarize “Findings, Goals, and Purpose” from Local Law 1-2021 (“LL”) §15.2 into a Mission Statement and decided that the LL largely speaks for itself in that section, and that the Police Review Board mission should simply be:

“Our mission is to openly, fairly, and impartially uphold City of Geneva Local Law 1-2021.”

Mr. King (seconded by Ms. Johnson) moved to use that as the PRB mission statement.

Unanimously APPROVED by voice vote.

Discussion on Initial Subcommittees. Ms. Farrell’s draft of “PRB Initial Subcommittees” was used as a starting point. The first two committees are named the **Complaint Process Committee** and the **Review Process Committee**, following Ms. Farrell’s draft. The Board brainstormed ideas for the third committee’s title. Mr. Rapoza suggested the title **External Communications Committee**, which gained general support.

The Board had some discussion about the overall LL, how it would relate to subcommittees, and how the PRB should prepare for complaints processing and reviews. The Board talked about the timeline and how it might affect subcommittee activity. The Board had some general discussion about witness memory and the importance of encouraging a fully detailed rendered-to-writing complaint at the outset of each. Mr. Rapoza pointed out (referencing LL§15.7&8) that the PRB is not allowed to *investigate* on the front end, but the PRB can ask *clarifying* questions. Mr. King pointed out the list of items that the LL requires the PRB to track (LL§15.14.3) and suggested those are good clarifying questions. Ms. Collins pointed out that Public Defender Training will assist the PRB in understanding the difference between *clarifying* questions to a complainant and *investigative* questions.

Ms. Collins also reminded the Board that while the Chief has 45 days to do an investigation in the timeline, the Chief may complete some investigations much more quickly and the PRB’s process should be built to react to potentially much shorter reaction times.

Ms. Johnson suggested that a wise early emphasis in PRB training would be reading up on the Use of Force Policy.

Mr. Rapoza pointed out that if there is a change of policy in the General Orders and specifically the Use of Force Policy that the PRB will be responsible for assessing complaints on the version of the General Order that was in effect on the date of the incident under complaint, which might involve multiple readings of the same General Order that was effect at different points in time.

The Board had some general discussion about how the PRB should treat complaints that are initially directed to the Chief or other police officers through more informal channels/procedures. Mr. King gave an example of how he might make a request to the Chief directly over the phone that might be more of a suggestion for repeat-service best practices than a complaint. Mr. Whitley suggested that in these and other gray areas, the city as a whole should err on the side of documentation so that if there are repeated issues, there will be a paper trail.

For casual conversations between potential complainants and PRB members, Mr. Rapoza pointed out that the question “Do you want to make a formal complaint?” should be asked and is important when it comes to discerning between casual conversations and formal complaints.

Ms. Johnson (seconded by Mr. Wolf) moved that the PRB move forward with three initial subcommittees: **Complaint Process Committee, Review Process Committee and External Communication Committee.**

Unanimously APPROVED by voice vote.

Committee preferences for each Board Member were discussed. Top volunteer preferences were taken from each Board member. Members generally got their first choice, though Ms. Johnson volunteered to switch from her first choice #2 (Review) to #3 (Communication) to balance the committees. Ms. Farrell wished to participate in all committees initially as Chair.

The Board discussed the possibility of Alternates (Mr. Spink, Ms. Corron) being on subcommittees and this was agreed without objection. (No vote was needed, as members of the public serving on subcommittees conforms to generally understood Rules of Order.)

Subcommittee Finalization

Complaint Process: Mr. King, Mr. Wolf, Mr. Whitley, Mr. Barnard, Ms. Farrell (quorum, would be an Open Public Meeting [“OPM”] generally)

Review Process: Mr. Rapoza, Ms. Elliott-Engel, Mr. Whitfield, Ms. Farrell (would be OPM if 1+ other members attended)

External Communication: Ms. Johnson, Ms. Corron*, Mr. Spink*, Ms. Farrell (would be OPM if 3+ other members attended)

*Alternates

Ms. Collins reminded the PRB that staff needs to post notices and agendas for Open Public Meetings 72 hours in advance. She prefers to have 7 days for the notice, 72 hours for agendas. She can make determinations on whether the meeting should be open or not based on responses for intended attendance.

Ms. Farrell (seconded by Mr. King) moved that subcommittee liaisons be decided by individual subcommittees.

Unanimously APPROVED by voice vote.

Discussion of Trainings. Ms. Collins shared her perspective and ideas on training in the short and medium term, including the Public Defender’s Office trainings and ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and trauma-informed trainings. Ms. Farrell talked about combining resources with Rochester’s Police Accountability Board (“ROC PAB”) and her contact there, with possible shared meeting dates and trainings, and cost savings. After 5pm on Friday 8/20 set as initial goal to meet with the ROC PAB.

Mr. King (seconded by Ms. Johnson) moved that the PRB have a homework assignment of reading the working changes on the Geneva Police Department (“GPD”) General Orders that the Policing Reform and Reinvention Collective (“Collective”) have been working on before the PRB’s next monthly meeting. Ms. Collins will email the Board a link to the web page.

<http://cityofgenevany.com/police-reform>

Report on Other Police Boards. Ms. Collins reported that the Community Compact (“Compact”) will be breaking into subcommittees soon to address specific tasks, and briefly described the current

activities of the Collective with regard to General Orders. Mr. King pointed out that roles are complementary, as the Compact and Collective are pro-actively addressing police-community relations, while the PRB will be re-actively addressing them.

Future Meetings and Calendar Discussion. Ms. Farrell and Ms. Johnson will converse about Member terms (three groups expiring end of 2022, 2023, 2024 with the possibility of a renewal/reappointment).

Ms. Farrel will review calendars for a monthly meeting time and will to follow up with each subcommittee for meeting time ideas.

Mr. Barnard (seconded by Mr. Wolf) moved to adjourn. (8:05pm)
Unanimously APPROVED by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted by Charles King, Secretary