

CIVILIAN APPEAL BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 21, 2020

These minutes are a summary of the discussions that took place during the last meeting of the Civilian Appeal Board. They are not a verbatim transcription of the remarks made by any individual.

CALL TO ORDER: 4:02 PM at City Hall Commission Chambers

Members: Present: Huemartin Robinson II (*Chairperson*)
Sophia Brewer
Briana Trudell
Michelle Williams
Russell Olmsted
John Weiss

Members: Absent: George Storms (*Vice Chairperson*)

Non-Members Present: Brandon Davis, Director of Oversight and Public
Accountability (*Board Liaison*)
Philip Strom, Deputy City Attorney
Nathan Mead, GRPD Internal Affairs
Lieutenant Joe Trigg, GRPD Internal Affairs
Chad McKersie, GRPD Training Unit (virtual)
Kevin Curiel-Vazquez, OPA Administrative Aide
Claudette Henry, OPA Exec. Asst. (*Board Secretary*)

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Civilian Appeal Board (CAB) of the City of Grand Rapids was called to order at 4:02 PM on October 21, 2020 in the City Hall Commission Chambers by Chairperson Huemartin Robinson. Chairperson Robinson welcomed everyone and explained the purpose of the CAB. Chairperson Robinson stated that the purpose of the CAB is to act as a review body pursuant to City Commission Policy #800-02 for finding fact made by the Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD) with respect to complaints made by individuals who believe that they have been mistreated by police officers through the use of excessive force, falsification/lying, civil rights violations; and/or conduct committed in a context of racial animosity or prejudice.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was conducted. Members present and absent are listed above.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Chairperson Robinson to approve the minutes of the special meeting of the Board on October 7, 2020.

- Motion by Briana Trudell, seconded by Russell Olmsted.
- Motion carried: Unanimously.

BOARD LIAISON REPORT

A. Current Appeal Case: CR 19-171

At the October 7, 2020 meeting, the Board tabled the decision on this case pending further investigation. Mr. Davis reminded Board Members to submit questions related to the case for the supplemental investigation, including those that were brought up in the Board meeting on October 7th. Mr. Davis stated that the questions should be more of an outline of topic areas/questions that the Board would like addressed. Mr. Davis asked Board Members to submit their questions to the Office of Oversight and Public Accountability (OPA) via e-mail by October 28th.

B. New Appeal(s)

Brandon Davis informed Board Members of an appeal scheduled for the next Board meeting. Mr. Davis informed Board Members that they will receive the documentation by regular mail and will have approximately two weeks to review the documents before the scheduled Board meeting. Additionally, Board Members were informed that Section 8 materials will be available for review between 2:00 PM and 4:00 PM on the day of the Board meeting. Board Members may schedule additional time to view the materials, if needed, by contacting Claudette.

There was a question as to whether or not the Board could hear a new appeal case prior to closing out an old one. Mr. Davis confirmed that the Board is permitted to hear a new case while another is pending, ensuring that the facts of each case are kept separate. Regarding appeal documents, a question was asked as to where departmental policy or procedural violation information could be found. Mr. Davis responded stating that if the complaint refers to a specific policy or procedure, OPA will provide the information in the packet to Board Members for future appeal cases, but if the complaint is broadly written, a review of the entire policy or procedure manual may be necessary.

C. Board Vacancy

John Van Tholen resigned from the Board. This information was submitted to the City Clerk's Office to submit to the Committee on Appointments.

D. OPA Appeal Case Procedures

Mr. Davis stated that OPA is relatively new and that it is still working out procedures for how things are done. OPA is working with the GRPD and the City Attorney's Office on information that would be helpful and appropriate for the Board. One of which is a formal introduction to the GRPD Internal Affairs Unit (IA/IAU). In future meetings without appeals, training opportunities for Board Members will be included. One that is being discussed is *Use of Force/Decision Making*. The logistics are being worked out, and OPA will coordinate with Board Members and the GRPD on a date in December for Board Members to participate in the training. Covid-19 precautions will be in place.

E. INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Lieutenant Joe Trigg and Sergeant Nathan Mead gave a presentation on IAU's goals, responsibilities, complaint procedures, investigative process, and CAB-eligible cases and statistics. Lt. Trigg and Sgt. Mead then fielded questions from Board Members regarding IAU, including questions about training, transparency in IAU's actions, fact finding, and interviewing other police officers.

In response to a question regarding disciplinary actions of police officers, Mr. Davis stated that the Board is not to consider disciplinary outcome as part of its decision making in an appeal case.

RECOMMENDATION TO COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS RE: VACATED BOARD POSITIONS

Mr. Davis stated that there are two vacancies on the Civilian Appeal Board. One was officially vacated and the other, a vice chair position, is still on the records. The CAB's Bylaws allow the Board to recommend to the Committee on Appointments that the individual be removed from the records and proceed with filling the vacancies. Mr. Davis recommended that the Board considers a motion to recommend to the Committee on Appointments to remove George Storms from the Civilian Appeal Board, based on attendance violation with the caveat that Mr. Storms had informed the Board that he was leaving to serve in the military.

Motion to recommend to the Committee on Appointments to remove George Storms from the Board.

Motion moved by Michelle Williams and supported by Russell Olmsted.

Vote:

Yes

Huemartin Robinson II
Sophia Brewer
Briana Trudell

Michelle Williams
Russell Olmsted
John Weiss

Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Davis thanked Mr. Storms for serving on the Board and all wished him well.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Mr. Davis provided a brief description of the responsibilities of the vice chair, and explained that the position is second in command to the chair and stands in when the chair is unavailable, or if the chair has a conflict of interest, which prevents the chair from presiding over a particular appeal case.

The Board discussed the nomination of a new vice chair and extended the position to current Members of the Board. John Weiss accepted nomination for the vice chair position.

Motion by Chairperson Robinson to recommend to the Committee on Appointments that John Weiss be approved as vice chair for the Civilian Appeal Board.

Motion by Russell Olmsted and seconded by Michelle Williams.

Vote:

Yes

Huemartin Robinson II
Sophia Brewer
Briana Trudell
Michelle Williams
Russell Olmsted
John Weiss

Motion passed unanimously.

OPEN DISCUSSION

A. Updates: Current Appeal Case (CR 19-171)

Mr. Davis stated that there were no updates on the appeal case discussed at the last Board meeting, except for the above-mentioned discussion with GRPD Internal Affairs on appeal process.

B. Training for Board Members

City Staff discussed independent participation in courses offered by the GRPD, e.g., Citizens' Police Academy, which allows participants to learn how the police department operates. This course includes information on procedures, use of force, investigations and simulation exercises. Participants have the opportunity to ask officers questions and may also have the opportunity to ride with a patrol officer and witness some of the day-to-day activities witnessed by officers. Board Members were encouraged to participate.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Board will be at 4:00 PM on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at the City Hall Commission Chambers.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:23 PM by Chairperson Robinson.