

CIVILIAN APPEAL BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 16, 2022

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: 4:07 PM at City Hall Commission Chambers

Members: Present: Huemartin Robinson II (*Chairperson*)
John Weiss (*Vice-Chair*)
Briana Trudell
Michelle Williams
Russell Olmsted

Member(s): Absent: Sophia Brewer

Non-Members Present: Brandon Davis, Director of Oversight and Public
Accountability (*Board Liaison*)
Philip Strom, Deputy City Attorney
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 4:07 PM on February 16, 2022, at City Hall Commission Chambers by Chairperson 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 according to City Commission Policy #800-02 for finding facts made by the Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD), concerning 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 who were present are listed above.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson Robinson called a motion for approval of the minutes of the regular meeting of the Board on October 20, 2021.

- Moved by Russell Olmsted and Seconded Briana Trudell.
- Motion passed.

BOARD LIAISON REPORT

- **New Police Chief**

Mr. Davis informed the Board that Eric Winstrom will start his new position as Police Chief next month and that he believes the new Chief will be a great addition to the police department and the City's Team. Mr. Davis also informed the Board that the GRPD Internal Affairs Unit has new staff, including Lt. Forner whom he will invite to greet the Board at a future meeting.

- **2022 Board Business**

- **Annual Board Meeting Schedule:** Chairperson Robinson called a motion to continue Board meetings on the third Wednesday of every month at 4:00 PM.
 - Motion moved by Russell Olmsted and seconded by Michelle Williams.
 - Motion passed.

The schedule will be posted on the City's Website and distributed to Board Members.

- **Board Member Terms of Appointment/Re-Appointment:** Mr. Davis said he would discuss new appointments of Board Members and terms at the next Board meeting. Mr. Davis added that since there are no pending appeals, and if there are no other Board matters, he will recommend that the meeting in be canceled.
- **Update – Letter to City Manager:** Mr. Davis informed the Board that the City Manager received the letter concerning the inadequacy of the supplemental investigation from the Labor Relations Division in the Slater case. Mr. Davis said the City Manager immediately addressed concerns with City Staff and has taken action to ensure adequate preparation and response to case investigations, including assistance from the Human Resources Department and the City Attorney's Office.

OLD BUSINESS

Civilian Appeal Board Annual Report

A draft of CAB Annual report was provided to Board Members for review before the meeting. The CAB Annual Report Committee thanked the OPA Staff for their help putting the report together. Board Members discussed whether or not to include the names of appellants and officers involved in the complaint cases. After the discussion, including legal considerations, Chairperson Robinson called a motion for a vote to exclude the names of appellants from the annual report. Motion moved by Michelle Williams and seconded by Briana Trudell.

VOTE:

Yes

Huemartin Robinson II
John Weiss
Briana Trudell
Michelle Williams
Russell Olmsted

Motion **passed** unanimously. Appellant's names will be excluded from the report.

Chairperson Robinson called a second motion for a vote to include the names of officers in the annual report. Motion moved by Russell Olmsted and seconded by Briana Trudell.

VOTE:

Yes

Russell Olmsted
Briana Trudell

No

Huemartin Robinson II
John Weiss
Michelle Williams

Motion **failed** with 3 no and 2 yes. The names of officers will be replaced with "officer," or "officer 1" and "officer 2".

OPEN DISCUSSION

Inclusion/Exclusion of Names in the Annual Report

The Board further discussed why they decided to exclude appellants' names from the case summaries and why they considered including the names of officers. The Board stated that the appellants are private citizens, and when they filed the complaints, no one informed them that their names were going to be in a public report. Board Members said adding their names might damage trust from the community and discourage community members from filing complaints. The Board stated that contrary to appellants, police officers are non-exempt public employees and should expect their names to be used in public reports if there are complaints against them.

Board Members expressed a desire to make the Board's functions as transparent as possible and its annual report honest and transparent, and that excluding the names of the officers would appear suspicious to the community since their names were in open hearings.

Board Members also expressed concern about the negative impact this could have on Board functions. Board Members stated that they did not want anything to deter belief and trust in the process and that when there is inconsistency in transparency, it can erode trust.

Upon conclusion of the discussion, Chairperson Robinson thanked Russell Olmsted and Briana Trudell for their work on the annual report and said it's a model for future reports. Chairperson Robinson also said he believes the report is honest and transparent. After Board Members provided additional edits, Chairperson Robinson called a motion for a vote to adopt the 2020-2021 CAB Annual Report with amendments. Motion moved by Briana Trudell and seconded by Michelle Williams.

VOTE:

Yes

Huemartin Robinson II

John Weiss

Michelle Williams

Briana Trudell

Russell Olmsted

Motion **passed** unanimously. The amended report will be distributed to City Commission and posted to the City's Website. The Committee thanked the Board for its support.

Board Terms

Board Members said someone asked them to apply for the upcoming term, and they have reapplied for additional terms at the end of each year instead of every two years. Mr. Davis said he would find out about members' terms and appointment dates and provide the information to the Board. Board Members expressed concern about the terms of current members ending at the same time and suggested that the chairperson and vice-chair positions be staggered in the future to avoid this. Mr. Davis said he would consider a staggered board term in the reimagining process.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

NEXT MEETING

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 16, 2022, at 4:00 PM. A notice will go out to attendees if the meeting gets canceled.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 PM by Chairperson Robinson.