

# OFFICIAL STATEMENT



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GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. –The ongoing pandemic has caused significant disruptions to many areas of life and have extended to the Civilian Appeal Board’s (CAB) ability to review appeals. I want you to know this is not something that myself or City Management take lightly. The complainants, the community, the officers involved, and the CAB deserve an opportunity to have these cases adjudicated. All of us, myself included, are understandably frustrated by the current state of affairs. Just as boards, councils and commissions across the country have had difficulty finding ways to function, we too have struggled with a way to conduct hearings safely and securely within the narrow parameters allowed.

CAB is a quasi-judicial board and its work is guided by State law, City Commission Policy and Labor Agreements. As such, some of the confidential documents included in CAB appeals require in-person review. Unfortunately, other entities including courts have also had to adjourn cases including constitutionally guaranteed trials due to legal and procedural complexities presented by the pandemic. Simply put, the existing rules, laws, processes, and procedures never envisioned circumstances that would create this type of prolonged disruption.

Although hearings have been delayed, City Staff continue to meet regularly and work diligently toward finding solutions to the legal and procedural complexities with which we are currently faced. In order to ensure the integrity of CAB’s decisions and best protect those decisions from being overturned, it is important that all procedural and legal requirements are met. The downward trend in COVID cases is promising and now allows us to implement our plan to provide CAB with the necessary in-person Use of Force trainings and to return the Civilian Appeal Board to its core function or reviewing appeals of Internal Affairs cases.

The Office of Oversight and Public Accountability remains committed to accountability and transparency and will continue to work to evaluate and improve processes to better serve our community and help ensure that all people feel safe and are safe at all times in Grand Rapids.

In service,

*Brandon D. Davis*

Director of Oversight & Public Accountability