

Cleveland Community Police Commission

Full Commission Meeting

Minutes

May 24, 2023

6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Mt. Sinai Friendship United Baptist Church, 7510 Woodland Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104

Co-chair Ridgeway, presiding, gavels in at 6:10

Attendance roll call:

Adams – present
Benito – present
Chura – absent (excused)
Donaldson – present
Earley – present
Garrett-Ferguson – absent (excused)
Kennedy – absent (excused)
Reaves – present
Ridgeway – present
Rodriguez – present
van Lier – present
Wang – present
Zayed – present

Staff in attendance:

Interim Executive Director Jason Goodrick
Community Engagement & Project Coordinator Shalenah Williams
Communications Specialist Sara Anderson
Senior Policy Analyst Ryan M. Walker

Unanimous consent to approve last meeting's minutes.

Guest presenters:

Mister Jackson, President of the Black Shields
Sgt. Manny Velez, President of the Hispanic Police Officers Association

Sgt. Velez described the history and current operations of the HPOA. In the 1980s the CDP started to recruit officers from the Hispanic community in Cleveland; in 1995 the HPOA fully incorporated. The goal is to support Hispanic police officers. It has student outreach programs with scholarships and events. The HPOA has a working relationship with the bargaining units (CPPA & FOP). Since the Jackson administration the President and Vice President of the HOPA are full time staff.

Below are some of the questions that the Commissioners had for Sgt. Velez:

Question: in one of the CPC trainings, I asked if Hispanic police officers were assigned to Hispanic areas, they said no as that would be discriminatory, I was surprised by that, if you are a Spanish speaker, you have the ability to build rapport, do CPOP, etc. How do Hispanic officers feel about that? And how can the CPC support the work you are doing?

Answer: This has been a long time discussion for many years. The department does not identify Spanish speaking officers and does not put them in Spanish speaking areas. Sometimes you call the same officer to translate consistently. This might be overwhelming. Maybe certified Spanish or any non-English speaking officers should be compensated extra for their extra work. When we are talking about cultural competency, it is important to consider those things. To your second question, I appreciate you offering support, we're the type of organization that is volunteer, save two, and they have a lot of work to do. We are trying to get staff. If we had more people it would help. The leverage of the commission can support us in that.

Question: Reflections on that your class was the most academically successful recruit class, how can we get new officers up to that standard?

Answer: he was proud, it is difficult to gage what the Commission can do, but supporting the academy is one way to help. He was previously was a building inspector, meeting up with citizens made him want to be a police officer.

Question: how many Hispanic officers are there? Do you recruit from your community?

Answer: about 9% of officers, we have 140 members, but not all are CDP. We recruit from the community, for all safety positions.

Question: do you work on CPOP?

Answer: no not directly. We do some organically, but it is not part of what this organization does. We are looking to have our work memorialized within the city's report.

Question: 127, or about 10% of force, 12% of the community. What are the prevailing, what is the variation among the nationalities?

Answer: there is a lot of diversity and nuance and we know that, for example Puerto Ricans are not concerned about immigration, whereas other nationalities do, so they might be less likely to engage. New arrivals often need more help.

Question: we have a training committee, one of the issues seems to be is that there is a recruitment problem, one of my students commented that no one wants to be a police officer any more. What are the biggest issues that make young people not want to go into policing?

Answer: that is difficult, the career is not as attractive as it was 10 years ago, and we have find a way to highlight progress. When you highlight successes it helps. It is important to enmesh ourselves in the community, they have to see an example of what it is like to serve. The Jane Campbell period where there were no hiring it caused a big gap, then in 2012. That has a lasting impact, that and retirements.

Question: are you asked if you speak Spanish when you join?

Answer: yes, but it has no impact on assignments.

Question: just to confirm there is no extra pay for being bilingual? Are Spanish speaking officers often end up called in to translate?

Answer: it varies, normally if there is a language barrier they will radio in and they will send an officer out to translate. I have known that the circumstances where they end up also writing the report, which is challenging.

Question: do the Hispanic officers feel overwhelmed by the translation duties.

Answer: honestly, I have not it come up recently, but over my career I have heard it multiple times. We would like to be paid for the extra duties.

Below are some of the questions that the Commissioners had for Mister Jackson:

Mister Jackson described the history and current work done by the Black Shields, which was created in 1946. The Black Shields have worked with the community and the CPC. There is a culture of racial tension, this makes recruitment really hard. Black Shield officers' shift does not end when they take their uniforms off, they live in the neighborhoods they patrol, ones that have these issues.

Question: I just did a bit of research on the Black Shields, there seems to be an important case in 1972 where the Black Shield sued the City, has there been any analysis of pay discrimination based on race? And it seems that not many black and Hispanic women get promoted above sergeant lieutenant.

Answer: to my knowledge no, there is not difference in salary. What I will say that historically there was a lack of promotion, that has improved but it still is concerning.

Question: 24% of officers vs. 48% of the population, what are the types of issues that having more Black officers can resolve? Or will it make a difference?

Answers: having more Black officers, in my experience, you have better community relations.

Question: do you feel like your members are getting the support they need to address the trauma exposure they have experienced?

Answer: the city is doing what they can.

Question: is there disparity in discipline for non-white police officers.

Answer: we are still looking into it and it is still an issue.

Question: how many members does the Black Shields have?

Answers: about 300, not all in CDP.

Question: what types of community engagement are you engaging in?

Answers: we have many events throughout the year. In terms of recruitment, whenever we are out we try to recruit.

Question: do you also have staffing issues?

Answer: yes.

Question: is there any tension between the Black Shields (and the Hispanic Officers) and the CPPA? Or do you feel equally incorporated into those organizations? Is there resentment or exclusion?

Answer: currently we have a good relationship with the CPPA and FOP, historically that was not the case. Our members are members of those, there are some issues and divisions, but they are our bargaining units and work with them.

Sgt. Perez: we also have a good relationship with the FOP and CPPA. HPOA and Black Shields are always invited to board meetings of the bargaining units. It does help to be a part of the leadership process.

Public Comments

Loh: Is the nationwide attention to incidents of bad policing helping to make young people less likely to apply to be police officers?

Sgt. Perez: partially. This is why I think we need to focus on good things because that is a counter to that.

Citizen Lidia of Collinwood, Ward 10: at a community meeting they discussed somatic like 37 missing teens, are there efforts to work with teens?

Mister Jackson: yes we have officers visit people

Jay Williams: have the organizations ever told on a police officer?

Sgt. Perez: yes, the CDP has a policy that if you come into knowledge of misconduct, you have to report it.

Jay Williams: I meant warning citizens about certain officers.

Sgt. Perez: if the department makes it public knowledge, it is something the CPC would look into. It is important to highlight progress. Part of educating the community is being transparent. It is important to educate the public. Within the CPPA people are being held accountable on a regular basis. We sit in the discipline hearings for transparency. Appeal to the Commission to let us attend Chief's hearings.

Question from Commissioner: we have spoken about disparities have you done a study?

Sgt. Perez: No.

Commissioner: Do you advocate during hearings?

Sgt. Perez: No the bargaining units do that. We are in the room to look for disparity.

Mister Jackson declined to comment about ongoing Vincent Montague case.

Citizen: are you willing to work with outside groups to do more community interaction.

Mister Jackson: yes.

Mellissa Johnson, Euclid beach: what about the seniors, people use to come out and visit, but not lately. They like to see police who are not just arresting someone. Food is nice, but we don't eat as much as we use to.

Mister Jackson: we will come there.

Loh made a comment about the importance of community engagement.

Executive director report

No significant spending at this moment. Pending, we asked for Commissioners if they would commit to going to NACOLE. 10 commissioners responded, we will budget for that.

Public records requests: asked for Brady-Giglio letters on April 17, followed up on May 8, they said they could not answer that as Safety Director Howard was out of the office. We asked about police use of technology on May 5, we got 90% of what we asked for, they cannot comply with the rest because Howard is out of the office. On May 23, we requested the IG applications.

The Commission has its first job posting out publically, this is for an office and finance position.

Co-chair Ridgeway: public safety director has been called up for military duty.

Committee Reports

Internal training (Earley): On Saturday June 3, we have an all-day training that will bring us to 40 hours of training so far.

Budget and Grants (Adams): we have a draft application ready, we got input from the law department. We need feedback from Commissioners by Friday. We also in the process of having informational sessions. Lastly, we are considering some changes to the timeline, we were somewhat ambitious, but as this was the first time we had to run it through law, we will push the dates back. They will be ready to go once the applications are in.

Rules committee (Wang): we will vote on the following rules for consideration:

2.1 deals with oversight coordination and CPC management and dispute resolution.

Wang made the motion to adopt, Benito seconded.

Adams – aye

Benito – aye

Chura – absent

Donaldson – aye

Earley – aye

Garrett-Ferguson – absent

Kennedy – absent

Reaves – aye

van Lier – aye

Wang – aye

Zayed – aye

Ridgeway – aye

Rodriguez –aye

Motion adopted 10-0

2.2 concerns the flow of information documents and testimony
Wang made the motion to adopt, Benito seconded.

Adams – aye
Benito – aye
Chura – absent
Donaldson – aye
Earley – aye
Garrett-Ferguson – absent
Kennedy – absent
Reaves – aye
van Lier – aye
Wang – aye
Zayed – aye
Ridgeway – aye
Rodriguez – aye

Motion adopted 10-0

Hiring (Donaldson): Wang has joined and we rescheduled our meetings.

Old business

Commissioner Benito has been in contact with the Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC), and has been tasked to serve as the Commissioner's liaison.

Co-Chair Ramirez for Benito to join the MHRAC on behalf of the CPC, seconded.

Adams – aye
Benito – aye
Chura – absent
Donaldson – aye
Earley – aye
Garrett-Ferguson – absent
Kennedy – absent
Reaves – aye
van Lier – aye
Wang – aye
Zayed – aye
Ridgeway – aye
Rodriguez – aye

Motion carries 10-0

New Business

Benito: thank you for the opportunity to be a liaison to MHRAC, we have the CIT program you should consider attending them, the next is in October.

Adams: the police would like to have their training document drafted by July. They are open to us helping them draft it. Maybe form a small work group.

Reaves made a motion is to cancel the June meeting, Co-chair Ridgeway seconded,

Jason: we have the coordinator for the IG speaking, it was a challenge to coordinate that and it would take a while to reschedule.

Adams – no

Benito – no

Chura – absent

Donaldson – no

Earley – nay

Garrett-Ferguson – absent

Kennedy – absent

Reaves – nay

van Lier – nay

Wang – nay

Zayed – nay

Ridgeway – nay

Rodriguez –nay

Motion fails 0-10

Commissioner Adams thanked his fellow commissioners for their support after the death of mother and grandmother.

Co-chair Ridgeway moves to adjourn, without objection. Adjourned at 8:15

Attached are the newly adopted rules.