

Minutes of Civilian Review Board Public Meeting
City Hall, basement
605 East Main Street, Charlottesville, VA 22901
August 28, 2018

Present:

- Gloria Beard, Josh Bowers, Sarah Burke, Don Gathers, Juan Gonzalez, Rosia Parker, Katrina Turner, and Guillermo Ubilla (full board)

Meeting Leader:

- Don Gathers

Secretary:

- Josh Bowers

Agenda:

- Welcome
- Review and Acceptance of Minutes
- Community Input
- Comments/Information from City Staff
- Old Business
- New Business
 - Presentation by UVA law students re: best practices for civilian review boards
- Discussion of Board
 - Creating subcommittees
 - Appointing city council member as a point of contact
 - Adoption of a working mission statement
 - Procedures for documentation of research
- Adjournment

Welcome:

- Don Gathers opened discussion and welcomed all present.

Review and Acceptance of Minutes:

- The Board reviewed the minutes of the August 16th meeting, circulated and posted to the website earlier by Josh Bowers and city administrative staff. On motion and second, the Board accepted the minutes unanimously.

Community Input:

- No community member spoke during the community input portion of the agenda.

Comments/Information from City Staff:

- In addition to others, the following officials were present, representing city staff: Mayor Nikuyah Walker, Vice Mayor Heather Hill, and City Attorney John Blair. Previously, the Board had emailed a set of questions to the city, inquiring about the Board’s mission, independence, composition, and authority—specifically, with respect to the subjects of retaining outside counsel and appointing new members. Vice Mayor Hill had previously emailed responses to those questions, informed by her discussions with other council members and city attorney, John Blair. Building off of the earlier email exchange, the Board members and city staff now had a wide-ranging conversation about whether the Board should draft preliminary bylaws for the task at hand over the coming year, whether the Board needed outside counsel, and what it would take to appoint new Board members. As to the first two questions, no decision was reached or vote taken. However, Blair corrected the previous record to make clear that some boards, including the civilian review board in Fairfax County, Virginia, does employ outside counsel. As to the question of whether a new Board member could be appointed, city staff indicated that it could not be done without reopening the selection process—an unlikely and probably undesirable process.
- The Board members and the city staff then took up one of the later agenda items. Specifically, the Board members discussed whether a city council member ought to be appointed as a point of contact, to attend as many meeting as possible and to provide a liaison between the Board and city staff. No consensus was reached, so the Board tabled the question without a vote.

Old Business:

- All old business was covered by the (above-mentioned) discussion with city staff and the (below-mentioned) discussion of the board.

New Business:

- Adeola Ogunkeyede, the head of the Legal Aid Justice Center’s civil rights practice, accompanied UVA Law student, Taylor Mitchell, who presented findings on best practices for civilian review boards. A slide show was included in the presentation. The slide show has been made a part of the public record.

Discussion from Board:

- By this point, the meeting had stretched to nearly two hours. The Board tabled the agenda items, “Adoption of a working mission statement” and “Procedures for documentation of research.” Instead, the Board took up only the question of creating and breaking into subcommittees. After an extensive discussion, the Board agreed unanimously to create the following subcommittees, staffed as indicated in the parentheticals:
 - Bylaws and Rules (Sarah Burke and Juan Gonzalez)
 - Community Outreach (Katrina Turner and Rosia Parker)
 - Police Department Outreach (Josh Bowers and Gloria Beard)
 - Public Official Outreach (Don Gathers)
 - External Research (Guillermo Ubilla and Rosia Parker)

Adjourn

- Prior to adjourning, the Board expressed to city staff a desire to meet elsewhere over the coming sessions. City staff promised to look into alternative locations. At approximately 9 p.m., Don Gathers adjourned the meeting.