

CITY OF MEMPHIS CIVILIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT REVIEW BOARD

**Minutes
May 9, 2019**

Call to Order:

The meeting of the Civilian Law Enforcement Review Board was called to order at approximately 4:30 p.m., on May 9, 2019, at the Benjamin Hooks Central Library, 3030 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee, by Chairman Casey Bryant. Present in the audience were visitors as notated on a separate sign-in sheet.

Board Members Present:

Casey Bryant, Chairman
David Acey
Nicholas Bragorgos
Ricky Floyd
Florida Jackson
Hazel Moore
Sandeep Pednekar

Board Members Absent:

June Chinn-Jointer
Marie Finney
Dwan Gilliom
Ralph White, Assistant Chairman
Jamita Swearngen, Council Liaison

Also Present:

Mary Grambergs, Sr. Assistant City Attorney
Virginia Wilson, CLERB Administrator
Arthur Robinson, CLERB Investigator

Approval of the Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes from the January 10, 2019, meeting was offered by Mr. Bragorgos and seconded by Mr. Acey. The motion carried with all ayes and no nays.

Old Business/President's Comments:

Chairman Bryant led a discussion discussing the role of the CLERB members and asking for more focused commitment to their roles as representatives of the community and their individual committee assignments. In addition, there was agreement that the board will continue to pursue efforts to obtain a subpoena for an officer to come testify to CLERB about his role in a case that was reviewed previously.

Chairman Bryant reviewed a recent meeting she had with Director Rallings and provided some insight to the way MPD receives and considers feedback from the CLERB and shared that MPD believes that by the time it does an internal review of a complaint, after considering the feedback from the officers and reviewing video footage available and considering the law and rules and regulations of the department, MPD has invested a lot of time, consideration, and energy into the review process, and when CLERB writes a letter suggesting the officer needs more sensitivity training, etc., MPD believes it has already accomplished that using its own review methods and outcomes. Chairman Bryant suggested that the board reconsider the way it presents their recommendations to MPD perhaps reframe what the board is requesting.

As the board discussed Chairman Bryant's comments, the board members agreed that the board's responsibility is to represent the citizens in the community and as the board continues to request MPD to reevaluate its officers' actions, those requests, over time, causes change. There was agreement that part of the work of the board is to continue to call for MPD to reconsider its policies and practices, and that while it may take time, change does come eventually as the public and CLERB continue to make their voices heard calling for that change. CLERB can assist with this as it continues to build relationships with MPD, build relationships with the citizens through ongoing outreach efforts, and represent the community to accomplish the same goal, a safe Memphis.

Mr. Acey requested outreach efforts to include informing citizens of their basic rights and suggestions on how to respond to law enforcement requests for identification, etc., and suggested a pamphlet be developed which could be handed out. Chairman Bryant advised that she has requested a line item in the CLERB budget for such items.

Mr. Floyd shared an experience he had mentoring a youth group when they had a police officer come speak and share his experiences, and how that created positive feelings and more understanding. There was acknowledgement that CLERB members should be reaching out to mentoring groups and trying to work with them to reach their audiences.

Ms. Moore shared some discussions she has had with community members and she relayed they have noted that the CLERB board is working for the community, and how people are noticing, and how it is important to be a good listener when people share their concerns.

Ms. Jackson observed that the role of CLERB is not to be a public relations effort for the police, rather it is to continue to be the voice of the community in calling out for change when officers act inappropriately, and to bring those instances to light.

Chairman Bryant thanked the board for the discussion.

Committee Reports:

No committee reports were presented.

New Business:

The complainant, Mr. Mario Shields, was unable to attend the meeting to present his case.

Annual Report:

Ms. Wilson reviewed efforts she was making to present an annual report to the city council and including information for the city council members to know what cases had been presented affecting citizens in their respective districts. Chairman Bryant offered a motion approving that Ms. Wilson present the annual report to the city council, seconded by Mr. Acey. The motion carried with all ayes and no nays.

Ms. Grambergs and Chairman Bryant discussed a new state law that has recently passed restricting community oversight boards from having subpoena power. This will not affect Memphis as the law was modeled after Memphis' ordinance.

Ms. Grambergs discussed that the new state law also requires board members to submit to a background check to confirm that they are registered voters. Unclear at this time whether that needs to be done annually, or just at the time of inception to the board.

Ms. Grambergs also discussed that the state law requires that a report be presented to the state legislature (in addition to the city council), and that Dabney Ring had said she would check on what the format for that submission should be.

Adjournment:

Mr. Bragorgos offered a motion to conclude the meeting, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, July 11, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. at City Hall, in the City Council Conference Room, Fifth Floor, Room 501, 125 North Main Street, Memphis.