

COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT TASK FORCE

PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

December 14, 2017

Present at the meeting were Community Oversight Task Force (COTF) members Ed Jackson (co-chair), Daniel Levine (secretary), Jeff Anderson, Denise Duval, Ralph Hughes, Ray Kelly, Danielle Kushner and Andrew Reinel.

Summary of motions passed:

- November 30, 2017 minutes adopted without revision

I. Welcome

Marvin McKenstry called the meeting to order at 6:07PM. Danielle Kushner welcomed the COTF on behalf of the Mt. Pleasant Church, which hosted the meeting. In addition to thanking the church for the use of its space, Mr. McKenstry thanked the church and Bishop Clifford Johnson for hosting the memorial service for slain Detective Sean Suiter.

II. Adoption of minutes

Jeff Anderson moved that the November 30 minutes be adopted without revision. He was seconded by Ed Jackson; the motion passed unanimously.

III. Resignation of Valencia Johnson

Mr. McKenstry formally informed the COTF that Valencia Johnson had resigned from the Task Force, and that she would be replaced by Ray Kelly. The COTF expressed thanks for Dr. Johnson's service.

IV. Meeting with Civilian Review Board (CRB)

Several members of the COTF raised questions regarding an upcoming meeting with the CRB that had been scheduled at the CRB's invitation. One key concern was whether the proposed agenda from the CRB was "premature" insofar as it focused heavily on asking the COTF to report on the status of its work and recommendations. All COTF members saw value in hearing more from members of the CRB, particularly because previous meetings had been with CRB staff members, and not the volunteer members of the board. There was concern, however, that prematurely discussing specific recommendations with the CRB might be counterproductive. After discussing several options, the COTF decided to hold the meeting, but to request a shortened time frame (from four to two hours) and to request that the agenda be re-focused on hearing from board members, mutual learning, and strategy. Mr. Kelly also provided the COTF with information on research that the No Boundaries Coalition had previously conducted in West Baltimore on CRB issues.

V. Morgan State University (MSU) School of Social Work

Mr. McKenstry introduced Kevin Daniels, who in addition to his academic role at MSU, was one of Mr. McKenstry's mentors, a community leader, and a preacher. He indicated that MSU's School of Social Work would be able to provide interns to support the COTF's work.

Dr. Daniels said that, after the unrest that followed the death of Freddie Gray in police custody in

2015, the police commissioner asked that members of the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) receive more training in cultural competence. In response, MSU brought both veteran police and cadets to campus to provide such training, and learned that many police officers had limited understanding of the people who lived in the neighborhoods they ostensibly served. He argued that MSU, as well as other Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in Baltimore should be considered as part of recommendations for training and education that the COTF might make. Dr. Davis also expressed hope that a way to bring the community and BPD together in trainings could be found. Col. Jackson pointed out that Baltimore City Community College had, in the past, provided cultural diversity training as part of the training that was ended under the administration of Mayor Sheila Dixon, and that – unfortunately – cultural training was not part of the minimum state standards for police (though many departments statewide went beyond state minimums and provided it). Dr. Kushner and Col. Jackson agreed to follow up with Dr. Daniels on training/education issues.

VI. Sub-committee reports

A. Community Engagement

Dr. Kushner reported that, after COTF members had observed several other community engagement events around policing (e.g., the monitor engagement forums), it might be necessary to adjust the planned approach to public forums. In particular, citizens in attendance at other forums seemed to have a certain degree of fatigue regarding being asked for their overall views without the perception that specific action was being taken on the basis of those views. Rather than hold nine general forums on oversight (one in each district), it might be more productive to have meetings where participants were asked to comment on specific proposed recommendations, based on the COTF's research and publically available information on views expressed at other engagement events. There was also some discussion of inviting participants to engage in, or commit to, some action in support of improved oversight at the forums, though the appropriate action to present would need to be determined. The Mayor's "day's work for a day's pay" program, or Open Society Institute – Baltimore (OSI) funds available to the COTF could also potentially be used to support actions based on forums.

B. City Institutions/Comparative Institutions

Mr. McKenstry and Denise Duval discussed the ways in which the work of these two sub-committees were increasingly merging. As such, the work of the sub-committees would be re-organized, with Col. Jackson taking on primarily police-related matters, Dr. Anderson writing up the national-level research that had been done, and Ralph Hughes and Ms. Duval organizing meetings between COTF members and individuals from other cities – either by traveling to those cities or bringing representatives to Baltimore, using OSI funds.

Ms. Duval and Andrew Reinel also noted that they had met with representatives from the Department of Justice the previous week to go through the consent decree on a line-by-line basis to highlight where changes would require state legislative action, and where the COTF could become involved in aspects of the consent decree's implementation.

Ms. Duval also reported on a meeting with the City Solicitor, to discuss the City's vision for the decree, and the legal relationship between the Solicitor and the COTF. As the COTF is a public body but not a city commission or agency, it was clarified that the Solicitor did not represent the COTF in legal matters.

Mr. McKenstry proposed that Ms. Duval, Dr. Anderson, Mr. Reinel take the lead on writing up

recommendations and that Sen. Hughes and Mr. Kelly be beginning working on legislative strategy.

VII. Legal and political strategy discussions

Ms. Duval and Mr. McKenstry asked Daniel Levine to look into under what circumstances meetings could be closed consistent with the Open Meetings Act for the discussion of legal strategy.

Sen. Hughes also pointed out that political strategy might need to be discussed privately, if that were possible under Open Meetings rules. All members agreed that the COTF would need to increasingly discuss political strategy for getting the body's recommendations adopted. Mr. Reinel offered to share some of his research on legislative strategy.

VIII. Timeline extension

Dr. Anderson suggested that a concrete timeline would be helpful for any discussions regarding extending the mandate of the COTF past its current March 2018 expiration. Given the fact that some of the one year mandate contemplated in the consent decree was consumed before the COTF members were appointed, and that practical support for the work had been limited, it was believed that most parties would consider an extension reasonable, though a concrete goal and timeline was likely to be regarded as more legitimate. After some discussion, tentative consensus was reached on making a request for an extension through 30 June 2018, so that recommendations would be ready in time for any relevant legislation to be proposed during the 2019 legislative session.

IX. Scheduling

Due to scheduling conflicts, it was decided to move COTF meetings to Mondays after the new year, with the January meetings taking place on 8 and 22 January.

X. Meeting with the Fraternal Order of Police

Col. Jackson agreed to reach out to the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) personally for a meeting, as preparation for inviting FOP representatives to meet publicly with the COTF.

XI. Framework recommendations

Ms. Duval noted that the core recommendation that seemed to have consensus support on the COTF at this time was the creation of a larger independent oversight body that would subsume the functions of the current CRB for investigating particular complaints, as well as exercising oversight of training, policy, and administrative/personnel matters. She also noted that there would likely be resistance to adopting such a model in Baltimore.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14PM