

COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT TASK FORCE

PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

7 March 2018

Present at the meeting were Community Oversight Task Force (COTF) members Marvin McKenstry (chair), Denise Duval (co-chair), Daniel Levine (secretary), Jeff Anderson, Catalina Byrd, Ray Kelly, and Danielle Kushner.

Also present were:

- Charles Byrd, Office of Civil Rights
- Kevin Rector, Baltimore Sun

Summary of motions passed:

- 21 February 2018 minutes adopted with minor revision
- Public statement approved without further revision

I. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 6:08PM.

II. Introduction of Catalina Byrd

Marvin McKenstry welcomed Catalina Byrd as Ed Jackson's replacement on the COTF. He lauded her as an honor to work with and spoke of her long involvement in Baltimore politics and activism.

III. Introduction of Charles Byrd

Mr. McKenstry invited Charles Byrd, the new Deputy Director of the Office of Civil Rights, to introduce himself to the COTF. Mr. Byrd said that he hoped to have a collaborative relationship with the COTF to serve the interests of the people of Baltimore.

IV. Acknowledgement of Denise Duval

Mr. McKenstry formally acknowledged Denise Duval, as this was the first (non-working-session) meeting of the COTF with her as the vice-chair.

V. 21 February minutes

Danielle Kushner presented the minutes she had prepared from the 21 February meeting, with thanks from Daniel Levine, the secretary, for taking over while he chaired. Jeff Anderson moved that the minutes be adopted with minor typographical revisions; Dr. Levine seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

VI. Confirmation of Darryl De Sousa

Mr. McKenstry noted that he and Ms. Duval had attended the hearing on incoming Chief of Police De Sousa as COTF members on 21 February, and that Ms. Byrd and Ray Kelly had been in attendance representing other organizations. Mr. Kelly noted that Chief De Sousa would be the fourth commissioner he had worked with since the No Boundaries Coalition had begun its safety

initiative in 2010.

VII. Public Statement

Mr. McKenstry asked Dr. Levine to briefly explain the purpose of the public statement. Dr. Levine explained that the purpose of the statement was to have a document that expressed the core values that the COTF was pursuing in a coherent way, so that it could be communicated effectively to the public as the Task Force moved forward. Mr. McKenstry added that it represented a summary of much work and discussion on the task force, and that doing that work had so far been the focus of the COTF. Mr. Kelly and Dr. Anderson noted that some specifics of the COTF's proposed approach were not included in the statement, pending a deeper discussion of details on the task force. Dr. Anderson moved that the COTF adopt the document as a public statement; Mr. Kelly seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Public Presence

Dr. Kushner informed the COTF that, as part of the search for the writer, she had come across an individual who was not ultimately selected as the writer, but that the Open Society Institute – Baltimore (OSI) had permitted the COTF to recruit as an outreach coordinator, Colby Sangree. Mx. Sangree will be assisting with public forum logistics, travel and guest logistics, and the COTF's social media presence. Dr. Kushner will handle requests for Mx. Sangree's assistance.

IX. Writer

Mr. McKenstry informed the COTF that, after interviewing a number of candidates, he and Dr. Kushner had decided to form a partnership with Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle (LBS) to serve as the writer. LBS has members with high-level technical writing skills, and the organization brings knowledge and community connections to the process as well. Given LBS' strong organizational stances on issues relevant to the work of the COTF, Mr. McKenstry assured the task force that LBS had agreed that, in their capacity as writer, they would be willing to convey the views of the COTF rather than their own, should they disagree. Mr. McKenstry will handle requests for the writer's assistance.

COTF members were asked to place their preliminary recommendation documents and any research materials to share into a Google Drive folder to be created by Dr. Kushner.

X. Working Session

Mr. McKenstry proposed that, rather than holding a usual 2-hour evening meeting as originally planned, on 14 March, the COTF hold another 4-hour working session on 18 March in the afternoon. There was general consensus to do so.

XI. Public Forums

After some discussion, it was decided that rather than hold nine public forums, one in each police district, as initially discussed, the COTF would plan for five public forums: Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest, and Central-West.

Dr. Levine explained one possible format for the forums. The COTF had heard from other public events and organizations that many people in Baltimore were becoming impatient with requests to speak about their views on police accountability in general, as it gave the impression of little forward

motion. To allow for discussion and refinement of specific proposals, public forums could begin with an open question/comment period with light facilitation. Then, participants could be asked to break out into smaller groups, each with a facilitator/scribe, to discuss particular proposed recommendations, and each group could report back to the full forum. Further discussion of the format for public forums was set aside for the 18 March working session.

After some discussion of time-frame, the COTF tentatively decided that the five forums would be held between 1 April and 1 June, permitting time to incorporate public feedback before the report was posted for public comment on 30 June.

Ms. Byrd noted that she had some documents from her work with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) that would help ensure that the language used in COTF documents was consistent with that used throughout the country – while at the same time remaining, as Mr. Kelly emphasized, reflective of the community of Baltimore City.

XII. Monitor check-ins

Ms. Duval noted that COTF members were meeting with the consent decree monitor team monthly as the monitor worked through its timeline. Dr. Anderson would be the point of contact for putting out to the COTF items on which the monitor needed task force input.

XIII. Reaching out to guests and field sites

Mr. Kelly reported that he had reached out to New York City's Brennan Commission as a possible host for a field visit by the COTF or to send a guest speaker to Baltimore. Ms. Byrd suggested that the COTF also reach out to Neill Franklin of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership and Terrence Cunningham of the IACP. Dr. Levine suggested Sanja Ivkovic, a professor at Michigan State University. Mr. McKenstry suggested New Orleans as a city that had similarities to Baltimore and a consent decree process from which the COTF could learn.

XIV. Meetings with the Baltimore Police Department (BPD)

Ms. Duval reported that members of the COTF had begun having bi-weekly meetings with the consent decree compliance group at the BPD. She said that the BPD genuinely wanted COTF input, and that the meetings were an opportunity to build bridges with the BPD and build police understanding of and support for COTF recommendations. Mr. McKenstry added that members of the BPD had agreed to come to a COTF meeting and present on their views.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25PM