



City of New Haven Civilian Review Board

Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

January 25, 2021

Date: January 25, 2021, 6:00 pm

Minutes by Alyson Heimer, CRB Administrator

Approved by the Board: DRAFT

1. **Call to Order: 6:00 pm.** Al Lucas from the Office of the Board of Alders led the meeting and took the roll.

Attendance:

- a. **Present:** Avshalom-Smith (Newhallville), Carter, Counsel (Hill North), Crouse (Dwight), Fawcett (Newhallville), Hamm (Downtown/Wooster Square), Jenkins (Dixwell), Johnson (West Hills/Westville), Peralta (Edgewood/Beaver Hills), Pescatore (East Rock), Richardson (Hill South), Rivera-Berrios (East Shore), Ross-Lee (At-Large), Wingate (Board of Alders)
- b. **Absent:** None.
- c. **Guests:** Al Lucas (Board of Alders)
- d. **Members of the Public:** Mary O'Leary (Press), Aaron Goode.

2. Motion to amend Bylaws -

Member Hamm motioned to amend the Bylaws to add a fourth executive board position: Treasurer. Seconded by Member Carter.

The Civilian Review Board has a budget, member Hamm also noted that there wer 4 individuals who requested to be involved in the E-board and this would create roles for each person.

"Item 3.6 in the bylaws adds "Treasurer."

Item 3.7 adds Treasurer: The treasurer shall monitor the budget and spending of the Board to make sure we are not exceeding our budget and that all monies are spent properly to fulfill the responsibilities of the Board. The Treasurer shall report the status of the budget monthly, and, in addition, every six months will evaluate and describe the state of the budget and spending and propose changes in financial strategy or execution, if needed."

Discussion: Pescatore asked How much funding will be available for this board? He also noted that adding a fourth position would make it difficult to have votes as an executive board, since it could be a tie vote.



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Rivera-Berrios: Is someone from the city already tasked with the responsibilities of a treasurer?

Lucas: There will be a budget for the board and the Department of Finance will be responsible for the funds. Generally for a board like this there may be a member of the board who works with the staff person.

Wingate: Also worried about breaking a 4 person executive board tie vote. Also there are other priorities for the board and let the city handle the budget.

Jenkins agreed.

Ross-Lee: How would the treasurer be operating - who writes the checks? What are the logistics?

Rivera-Berrios: Since there is a budget, can there be an outside person who isn't on the board who can handle the finances?

Johnson: There is supposed to be a paid coordinator position. Is that person going to be tasked with handling financial transactions?

Lucas: Yes you have a staff person and you may have more staff down the road if you see fit.

Hamm: The treasurer wouldn't handle day to day financial tasks - that's the coordinator. The Treasurer is someone who takes responsibility to watch the money. Oversight is important. The person would also make reports to keep the board aware, and make sure budget allocations and requests are in line with Board goals.

Pescatore: We need time to learn our jobs. We don't yet understand the rules that govern us before we change the bylaws.

Avshalom-Smith: Support the treasurer position. There is value in oversight on financial matters and strategic use of funding.

Peralta: What is the role of the coordinator - would they be able to do the monthly report?

Lucas: the staff person would report at every meeting. The report can be as detailed as directed.

Rivera-Berrios: if we vote on this motion, we should add language that says they are not responsible for the money - that they will work with the coordinator on this.

Wingate: If we hire a coordinator, they will come to our meetings, they have to give reports. The information that they will be getting will come from the city, so the transparency of the budget is on the full board to look at those reports and we should rely on the coordinator to do that work.

Hamm: The treasurer is not writing checks, it's just a typical oversight position. On our condo board, for example, we have a treasurer.

Jenkins agrees with Wingate. Let's add a treasurer later on if needed. Table the motion.

Fawcett agrees with Jenkins - the board should look at financial data and this role might be a duplication. Keep the structure simple for now.

Vote: 2-?. (Vote count unavailable due to the nature of the recording not showing raised hands and no audio count stated for the No's)

Lucas: "the no's have it."



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3. Bylaws

Lucas: extensive meeting on the bylaws - added the following: recusal for conflicts of interest in discussing cases and serving on subcommittees, explanation for additional staffers, quorum definition, language on agenda items, added section on analyzing crime data, added the death section, racial profiling concerns, and added indemnification language. We would need to vote on that.

Pescatore: Section 3.3 term of membership question - two or three years? And 3.6 an officer who serves for 2 consecutive terms, will sit out for "blank" terms - what's the number?

Lucas: Terms are two years, and they rotate. The bylaws will reference the ordinance in that area, and you would sit out for 2 years once consecutive terms are completed.

Richardson: We all agreed that every police involved shooting will automatically be investigated by the full board - is that retroactive or starting now?

Lucas: It's prospective - starting now. The limitation is on anything over a year old.

Ross-Lee: If there's a present member of the board, and someone who served on the board brings a complaint, how do we remove the appearance of bias for people they served with?

Lucas: De Minimis conflicts are different from major conflicts. Its very likely that you may know someone who is the subject of or a complainant. Its up to Board members to self-recuse.

Motion to adopt the bylaws as amended by Pescatore. Jenkins seconded.
(Vote was a voice vote using hand raising on Zoom- which was not verbally recorded.)

Lucas stated that the motion passed.

4. Elections of the officers

A. Chair - Samuel Ross-Lee

Vote was held via zoom, and Lucas indicated Ross-Lee won, as the sole nominee.

B. Secretary - Richard Crouse

Vote was held via zoom, and Lucas indicated Crouse won, as the sole nominee.

C. Vice Chair - Nominees Anne Marie Rivera-Berrios, Jayuan Carter

Vote was held via zoom as a poll question. Lucas indicated Rivera-Berrios won in the anonymous poll.



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Rivera-Berrios: 7

Carter: 4

Abstentions: only 11 members voted.

5. New Business

Hamm: Aron Goode made some suggestions to maximize transparency and accountability.

1. Make a separate website from the city to host meeting minutes and agendas.
2. Post bylaws
3. Immediately post videos or audio recordings of meetings
4. Post conflict of interest forms of members
5. Live stream meetings on Youtube/Facebook
6. Send minutes and agendas to all CMT chairs and regularly report to CMTs

Hamm motioned to make all of these recommendations part of the procedures and practices of the CRB. Carter seconded.

Discussion: Crouse - a separate website may not be necessary. Might be more work than necessary.

Pescatore: these are all good ideas, but we may need to table these issues until we understand the job.

Carter: transparency is very important and accessibility is paramount.

Wingate: Transparency is important. Unsure about Facebook streaming meetings, but need to be cautious about technology use. Too many platforms is cumbersome and I worry about manipulation. The coordinator should be responsible for uploading.

Rivera-Berrios: Streaming on Youtube of the Board of Ed has become chaotic - it's hard to manage the comments and chat.

Crouse: The live streaming may be difficult if we have to enter a closed session.

Avshalom-Smith: Moved to table the item. Pescatore seconded.

Lucas: there is no discussion on a motion to table

Vote: 4-9

Ross-Lee: Does accessibility mean in the moment, or can it be future posting.

Hamm: live stream is in the moment.

Carter: Thanks to Aaron Goode for being involved and engaged.

Pescatore: I worry about adding more responsibilities for board members before we truly understand the work of the board, which is composed of volunteers.



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event public backlash against complainants and protect their privacy, avoid cyber bullying, etc.

Lucas: Complaints are public. You can go into executive session, but all other portions of the meeting are public.

Johnson: Complainant is notified that their document is public when they file?

Lucas: Yes, unless it's covered under state statute to not be public.

Jenkins: Everything is public, streaming is good for transparency.

Crouse: Should we consider tabling this to the next meeting?

Wingate: Great training moment, we should discuss this further at the next meeting.

Pescatore: perhaps we should have a subcommittee on this item.

Crouse: a subcommittee is a good idea, they can meet with Aaron Goode. They can also present to CMTs and ask for feedback.

Motioned to postpone discussion on these changes until the next meeting and create a small subcommittee to review the ideas, by Crouse. Seconded by Carter.

Lucas stated that the motion carried.

Lucas asked for volunteers: Wingate, Crouse, Peralta, Carter make up the subcommittee.

Crouse wanted to make sure that everyone who was supposed to complete training sessions had done so.

Hamm: Will Lt. Zannelli and Emma Jones be attending our next meeting?

Lucas: yes.

Avshalom-Smith: can we get an update on the shoot-no shoot training?

Johnson: Can we have them also present on how they handle situations with civilians with mental health?

Lucas: yes to both.

6. Adjournment

Lucas asked all members to confirm that they felt the business of the meeting was concluded.

Alder Winagte thanked the members of the board and made a motion to adjourn. Johnson Seconded. No opposition.

Meeting Adjourned at 1 hour and 38 minute mark after recording commenced, approximately 7:38pm.