



City of New Haven Civilian Review Board

Minutes for

March Monthly Meeting of the Board

March 25, 2024

6:00 PM

In-Person Attendance:

**200 Orange Street
3rd floor meeting room
New Haven, CT 06510**

Virtual Attendance:

[Recording](#)

1. Meeting called to order at 6:07pm.

Present: Carter, Comins, Fawcett, Kimbro, Pescatore, Rivera-Berrios, Alder Redente,

Absent: Jenkins (excused), McClure, Richardson

Guests: Asst Chief Bhagtana, LT Agosta, Administrator Alyson Heimer, Atty Merkin,

Members of the Public: Alder Sal Punzo, Eric Gonzalez, Mary O'Leary (press), GNH NAACP President Dori Dumas, Tomeka Robinson, Stacey Field, Adam Pittman, Jake Siesel, Matt, Cameron, Karrol Ann-Brown, Don McCauley, Anonymous, Reese McLeod, Perri Albert, A Laib, Elisha, Abe Vail, Sarah Ficca, Lisa Milone, Sarah Derbala, Chernice McNeil, Bridgett Russell, Karen Peart, Aaron Goode, Patricia Jenkins-Simmons, Rashanda McCollum, Mendel, Dennis Serifillipi, Ms. Acosta.

2. Approval of Minutes (Tabled until April)
 - a. Monthly meeting December 18, 2023
 - b. Monthly meeting January 22, 2024
 - c. Monthly meeting February 26, 2024
 - d. Special Meeting March 12, 2024
3. Old Business
 - a. Subcommittee on the Annual Report
Final Draft submitted to the Board for review. The PD needs time to review it. It will be on the agenda for April.
 - b. Subcommittee on the Investigator
Met with the proposed investigator and she put together a draft proposal for the Executive committee members. The sub-committee will review it.



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4. Chair's Report

- a. Discussion of complaints and reports and vote on new cases to review
- b. IA will not be presenting this month.
No members felt subcommittees needed to be completed.

5. Administrator's Report

- a. Brochure draft was shared with the Board and some changes were made by members of the Annual Report Subcommittee and by Atty Merkin. Did the Board want to create a formal subcommittee for that document?

Once the brochure is completed it will be sent out with the letter from the PD about how the complaint process works.

Member Comins, and others: A Spanish language version should be created.

6. CRB Attorney's Report

PD has agreed to provide copies of complaints that are not redacted. The contact information will be provided so we can communicate with them about the process.

7. Assistant Chief's Presentation

New haven police department website and the CRB website both have a link to the complaint form.

Many complaints are filed in a few common areas: rudeness, issues with reports which we classify as neglect of duty. Once a complaint is filed it is assigned to an investigator. That investigator reaches out to the complainant to gather information. If an investigation takes longer than 90 days a request for an extension must be requested. Complaints can be filed online, using a kiosk at the police station, over the phone, or by mail.

The CRB receives complaints as they come in. The closed cases are sent to the CRB which can review the files, body camera footage, and other evidence related to the investigation and determine if the board has any concerns with the investigation and determination.

8. General Public Comment (Questions in chat and public comment) - 6:40

Alder Sal Punzo: When there is an investigation complainants have mentioned to us as alders that they are never contacted. What methods are used to contact them?

Asst Chief: we try via the contact information provided by the complainant.



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Alder Sal Punzo: what pathway does the case take when the CRB has an issue with the outcomes?

Asst Chief: IA makes recommendations for the Chief on penalties or course corrections following incidents both for officers and for future training. The CRB can make further suggestions about such action. If the CRB disagrees with the decision of the chief, they can formally request a change in action or recommend additional procedural changes or officer remediation or termination. In either case, the Chief makes the ultimate decision.

Dori Dumas: I was involved in the original drafting of the CRB bill and I'd like to know what the scope of authority is at present. We want to empower the board. There are best practices that we put into the police accountability bill and we hope it reflects the city.

Chair: we sat with the chair and made some serious changes with getting complaints in a timely fashion. We also need people who want to be on the CRB to stand up and talk to their CMTs to be formally appointed.

Dennis Serifillipi: We need an external operational audit review of what Best Practices are.

Lt Agosta: We have to go through state accreditation and we are audited by the state to show proof that we operate properly under the general orders.

Asst Chief: once there are written directives the state is the body that checks if the PD is operating as intended. We do that every three years. There are 300 metrics for compliance and presently we are out of four. The NHPD POTC Accreditation Police Officers Training Council.

Don McAuley: was part of the accountability board. For Closed cases, can cases be reopened? What are the guidelines for current CRB authority? Is this a recommendation board or a penalization board with teeth? And what marketing is happening now to fill vacancies?

Atty Merkin: Ordinance as written is a limited basis for which we could reopen cases.

Chair Rivera-Berrios: The CRB primarily makes recommendations. We market through the CMT, on the website, and signage for larger events.



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Dennis Serifillipi: Begging to get a meeting in Westville with the PD and my alder is blocking that, but we need a community meeting in Westville.

Eric Gonzalez: How old does someone have to be to be on the board? How do we get special service districts involved?

Chair Rivera-Berrios: 18 years old is the minimum age for the Board. The CMTs can choose to involve district groups.

Sarah Ficca: if a stipend for boards and commissions would be helpful to get people to serve?

Chair Rivera-Berrios: we were told there would be some kind of stipend. After that Mayor left we were told that payment is not permitted. Board members spend many hours at the PD reviewing files, it is more than a part time job for me as Chair.

Alder Redente: because the board members are Mayoral political appointees, they cannot receive a stipend.

Public comment closed at 7:24pm.

9. No discussion of complaints and reports and vote on new cases to review.

10. Old Business:

a. Member Comins: were we able to get anywhere with the members of the public who wanted to reopen her case (Desirae Brown).

Chair: we have followed up and we will be reviewing all case files.

Kimbro: When I came in, the onboarding could be improved. We should get an onboarding packet. We also should all sign a confidentiality form.

b. Chair Rivera Berrios: reminder for Training: we have new training being scheduled for the Spring. Ride-alongs should also happen.

Asst Chief Bhagtana will take ownership of that. Please sign up for a ride-along directly.

c. Member Comins: I'm still concerned that closed case reports carry full names for complainants.

The documents are subject to FOIA.

Kimbro: members of the public have the option to file anonymously.

Pescatore: we could decide to only refer to things by case number.

Kimbro: this is about transparency for the community.



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11. Motion to adjourn by Chair Rivera-Berrios at 7:33pm. Member Redente seconded.
Meeting adjourned at 7:33pm.

Per Order: Hon. Anne Marie Rivera-Berrios, Chair; Attest: Hon. Michael Smart, City/Town Clerk.
Agenda Prepared by Administrator Alyson C. Heimer.