

MINUTES – Duluth Citizen Review Board Meeting of March 22nd, 2022

Board members in attendance: Sara Vaccarella (Chair), John Beyer (Board Member), Blair Powless (Board Secretary), Dani Dunphy (Vice Chair), Eric Franklin (Board Member)

Board members absent: Kevin Wu (Board Member), Ken Kimber (Board Member)

Ken Kimber has been appointed to a judge position and so has resigned from the DCRB in order to avoid any conflicts of interest.

City employees in attendance: Carl Crawford (Human Rights Officer), Laura Laaksonen (Human Rights Assistant), Mike Tusken (DPD Chief of Police), DPD Officer Adam Huot, Lt. Steve Ring (DPD Liaison to the CRB), Deputy Chief Mike Ceynowa, Sgt. Bryant Annala

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Public Comments – via WebEx and submitted in writing

No public comment

IV. Approval of Minutes

Board Member Beyer makes a motion to approve minutes from the following meetings: November 23rd, December 14th, January 25th, February 22nd. Secretary Powless seconds the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

V. Police Liaison Report

- Introduction of Lt. Steve Ring, new DPD liaison to the board
- Are there a higher number of complaints related to use of force?
 - Yes. Several of those are related to one individual. The disposition on those will state pending, but that individual is no longer employed with the DPD.
 - Secretary Powless asked if more details about this would be shared at a later date
 - Deputy Chief Ceynowa said that he would not be able to share more details with the board
 - Another that is pending is being investigated by an outside entity, and that takes longer to resolved because of the involvement of an outside entity.
 - Another that is pending was not outside of DPD use of force policy, but because other individuals outside of DP were involved DPD is having an outside entity review that case as well.

- There is another that was just resolved this evening which resulted in a written reprimand.
- Sometimes when there is a final disposition there is then a process of grievance and arbitration, which also extends the process.
- What is the normal timeline for use of force investigation and resolution?
 - There is no normal timeline. A lot of factors can impact the length of the process.
- It is good to hear that DPD is accessing outside entities to review use of force complaints.
- Deputy Chief Ceynowa is transitioning to a new position. How will that affect his attending DCRB meetings?
 - Steve Ring and Bryant Annala will be moving into the liaison position, along with Dave Drozdowski. Lt. Ceynowa will continue to attend DCRB meetings as those individuals adjust to their new positions.
- *Fair and Impartial Policing* training went well. Board Chair Dunphy and Secretary Powless were in attendance. Community was involved and good conversations were had both during the training and during the breaks.
 - Secretary Powless commented that:
 - The trainer was a very experienced former police chief and police officer, and it was good to hear the message of understanding implicit bias come from him
 - There was an equal balance of DPD admin and community members, and that made for healthy discussions
 - We need to create more opportunities for DPD and community to have more in-depth discussion of issues and ideas that were brought up in the training
 - Deputy Chief Ceynowa stated that DPD admin is interested in bringing in a moderator that could moderate such discussions in the future
 - Chair Vaccarella suggested that a new book entitled [*The Rage of Innocence*](#) would be a good resource for initiating and guiding some of those discussions
- DPD just reached an agreement with the Police Union, DPD administration and City administration that will allow DPD to accept “lateral hires.” This will allow DPD to consider a new officer’s time spent with another department and to give that new officer the same level of seniority, perks, etc. with DPD that they would have had had they stayed with their previous department. This is a strategy for attracting top-quality candidates from outside of our region and state, and for increasing diversity in the DPD.
- [ABLE Training](#): DPD is in the process of bringing this training to DPD. The training is designed to create a police culture in which officers routinely intervene as necessary to: prevent misconduct, avoid police mistakes, and promote officer health and wellness.
 - A draft of a letter of support from the CRB for the DPD engaging the ABLE training will be brought to the April meeting

VI. Executive Report

No executive report. Still meeting as executive committee (Chair Vaccarella, Vice-Chair Dunphy, Secretary Powless) to discuss board operations and initiatives.

VII. Committee Reports

a. Taskforce on Complaint Audit Process

- Board Member Wu and Secretary Powless will lead this initiative. Regular reports on progress will be made to the board. The board will approve all decision regarding the audit.
- Is there a timeline for starting the audit? DPD wants time to refresh officers and staff regarding complaint process and expectations.
 - No current start date. DPD will be given advance notice of when to prepare for audit.
- Concern was expressed about how clear or explicit a citizen-actors request for a complaint should be
 - Complaints should be made that are explicit requests to file a complaint, but complaints should also be made that are citizen-actor descriptions of an incident that should prompt the officer to suggest to the citizen-actor that they file a complaint.
- Current thoughts on audit goals are to: (01) test to see that complaints are reaching the appropriate DPD employee (Lt. Ring), and (02) that officers and other DPD employees understand and can relay to citizen-actors the complaint process (i.e., what a citizen should expect when making a complaint, who will contact them, how and when they will be contacted, etc.).

VIII. Other Business

b. Racial Bias Audit update

- Chief Tusken met with the Racial Bias Audit Team (RBAT) and expressed his concern that the Scope of Service of the Request for Proposals (RFP) not be too prescriptive. He wanted to be sure that applicants understood that their expertise was being sought in possibly adjusting the Scope of Service.
- Chief Tusken and the RBAT agreed that the RFP should clearly state that the Scope of Service “includes but is not limited to” what is currently outlined in the scope of service.
- RFP is in the process of being released by the city
- CRB will be notified when the RFP goes public

c. Follow-up discussion from last month: Building trust between police and community

- DPD Officer Adam Huot joined the discussion
- Chair Vaccarella stated that the intention of the following discussion is to focus on where Officer Huot is going in his career rather than where he has been. Questions are to be asked by board members only and are to focus on moving forward, repairing

harm, having healing discussions, and creating a bridge between the police department and the community.

- **Officer Adam Huot comments:**

- When the incident that led to his termination occurred he was under a lot of professional and personal stress that had accumulated over ten years of police work
- He experienced a lot of shame and depression as a result of his being terminated from the DPD, and realizing the mistakes that he made
- At the time he didn't know how to take care of himself professionally and personally and he didn't know what resources were out there for him to learn to practice wellness and to be well so that he could do well
- He stated that in his experience police officers often get tunnel vision as a result of seeing the same things over and over again. He said that he has learned about why many people who are in crisis do the things that they do, often because of their life experiences.
- He hopes that with his education and experiences he can help to mold a different approach to policing within the Duluth Police Department.
- He has been working on his personal wellness and on building trust with the community by:
 - Getting Master of Social Work degree and coming to understand the impact that he and other officers have on the community, and some of the negative impacts his behavior has had on the community
 - Getting an LGSW (Licensed Graduate Social Worker) degree
 - Holding that degree entails that he is held accountable by the Minnesota Board of Social Work
 - Volunteering with Northwoods Children's Services
 - He is a peer-support counselor in the DPD
 - He is a member of the DPD Health and Wellness Committee
- He said it is important to acknowledge that police officers are not perfect and they do make mistakes sometimes. He said it is important for police officers to admit their mistakes and have some humility around that, and that there is a greater impact than we (police officers) know that we have on our community.

- **Board members comments:**

- Appreciation and gratitude for Officer Huot's willingness to meet with the DCRB. He did not have to meet with us, he chose to accept our invitation.
- Appreciation for the focus on personal wellness and changing culture within policing
- Encouragement for Officer Huot to continue his counseling education and to use that to support wellness and mental health in the DPD community
- Appreciation for Officer Huot's stating that he is 'not perfect.' Acknowledging that is humanizing and is the common ground that we all share as members of our community.

- Respect for Officer Huot's taking responsibility for his mistakes and for his efforts to make amends and heal both himself and his community
 - Suggestion of Officer Huot meeting with other community groups and sharing his story. He is obviously very sincere in his efforts and is an excellent example of someone doing everything in their power to atone for their mistakes.
 - Meeting with other community groups, while risky as far as how some people might respond to Officer Huot, would likely be very positive and good for both Officer Huot and the DPD.
 - This is where systemic change can start to happen. Others making efforts like those Officer Huot is making within the police department can grow the department, and help it to have better relationships with the community.
- **Other DPD members comments:**
 - Officer Huot is consistent in his work with other officers, supporting self-care and wellness. He is a servant to his community, but also to his peers and partners. He is rising to the challenge of repairing relationships.
 - Chief Tusken stated that h is glad that Officer Huot chose to have this conversation with the board so that the board could see why Chief Tusken felt comfortable putting Officer Huot back on patrol duty. Hs is proud of Adam's decision to share his story and of the work that Adam has done.

IX. Community Correspondence and Announcements

- Ken Kimber has been appointed to a judge position and so has resigned from the DCRB in order to avoid any conflicts of interest.
- There is now one opening on the board

X. Additional Public Comments via Webex

- Appreciates the thoughtful discussion with Officer Huot
- Public relations/marketing around Officer Huot was not done well. This type of detrimental public relations should be rectified.
 - Chief Tusken acknowledges that some mistakes have been made and that they have hired a public relations person to assist them

XI. Board Member Questions and Comments

- This discussion with Officer Huot is an excellent example of how the DCRB can be used to bridge the gap between community and police.

XII. Adjournment