



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
www.rva.gov/office-city-clerk

Meeting Minutes - Draft Public Safety Standing Committee

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

12:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – City Hall

Committee Members

The Honorable Reva Trammell – Chair
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert – Vice Chair
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Member (late arrival)

Others in Attendance

Haskell Brown, Interim City Attorney
Greg Lukanuski, Deputy City Attorney
Pamela Nichols, Senior Assistant City Clerk
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Steven Taylor, Council Policy Analyst
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chairwoman Reva Trammell called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m., and presided.

The committee held a moment of silence in memory of Police Chief Gerald Smith's father George Elwood Smith.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Announcement and Citizen Speaker Guidelines

Senior Assistant City Clerk Pamela Nichols provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency along with citizen speaker guidelines.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of Tuesday, February 22, 2022, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2022.112](#) February 22, 2022 Public Safety Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20220222 Public Safety Minutes - Draft](#)

Presentation(s)

Richmond Police Department's Internal Affairs Review Process

Captain Jason Hudson, Richmond Police Department (RPD) Internal Affairs Division, provided an overview of the RPD's internal review and human resource grievance processes. Captain Hudson reported on the types of complaints and methods by which complaints can be filed. He stated that all complaints were investigated by RPD's Internal Affairs Division, and the results of an investigation was based on available facts.

Member Ellen Robertson arrived and was seated at 12:23 p.m.

Captain Hudson reported on investigation time frames, categories of complaints, and the processing of complaints. He emphasized that internal affairs investigations were not influenced based on the rank of the individual being investigated.

Victoria Pearson, RPD senior deputy department director, explained the rights of an individual being investigated, and RPD's standard review of incidents involving the use of force. Ms. Pearson provided an overview of the types of review boards established by the department.

Captain Hudson reported on the duties of the Internal Affairs Division, which included working with the Office of the City Auditor on internal audits, and the preparation of annual reports relative to the internal affairs process and any bias-based policing practices.

Janet Jones, RPD Interim Human Resource Division Chief, provided an overview of the responsibilities of RPD's Disciplinary Review Office (DRO), examples of the types of complaints reviewed by DRO, and the steps involved in the disciplinary review process.

Captain Hudson advised the committee of the total number of investigations conducted by the Internal Affairs Division between the years of 2019 through 2021.

Member Ellen Robertson inquired about RPD's support for a Civilian Review Board (CRB).

Ms. Pearson explained that a CRB would create another level of transparency and accountability in matters involving the police department, and perhaps serve as a means to restore community trust, which are things supported by Police Chief Gerald Smith. Ms. Pearson reported that the police department currently has two hybrid boards, which consist of civilian voting members, who are responsible for reviewing infractions of the department's policies and practices. She indicated that RPD's internal review processes and policies were more robust than the neighboring counties' police departments.

Paper for Consideration

[ORD.](#)
[2022-091](#)

To amend ch. 2, art. V of the City Code by adding therein a new div. 20 (§§ 2-1202.1-2-1202.5) for the purpose of establishing a Civilian Review Board.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2022-091](#)

Maggie Anderson, Office of the Mayor Chief of Staff, provided an overview of the timeline of work, composition, and core responsibilities for the Civilian Review Board (CRB). Ms. Anderson reported that the independent advisory board will be responsible for reviewing the Richmond Police Department's (RPD) internal affairs cases, and will have the authority to hire an independent investigator and request subpoenas from the Richmond Circuit Court. She stated that the CRB will be supported by an employee from the Office of the Inspector General, and will be required to submit an annual report to Council and the mayor prior to the end of each calendar year.

Public Hearing

Teenora Thurston, Richmond Transparency and Accountability Project (RTAP) member and CRB Task Force member, urged the committee not to support ORD. 2022-091, but instead, support recommendations prepared by the Task Force.

Maisie Osteen, Legal Aid Justice Center attorney, RTAP member, stated that the proposed legislation does not reflect the will of the community or recommendations of the Task Force. Ms. Osteen asked the committee not to support ORD. 2022-091.

Portnoy Johnson, RTAP member, spoke in opposition to ORD. 2022-091 and stated that the CRB should have subpoena power, access to the police department's records, and be comprised of members of the community with no RPD staff.

Yohance Whitaker, RTAP member, spoke in opposition to ORD. 2022-091 and asked the committee to support the recommendations proposed by the Task Force. Mr. Whitaker outlined proposals regarding the CRB, and remarked that the proposed legislation did not capture the will of the community.

Dr. Eli Coston, CRB Task Force Co-Chair, urged the committee not to support proposals for a CRB outlined in ORD. 2022-091. Dr. Coston asked for the introduction of new legislation which reflects recommendations from the Task Force. Dr. Coston stated that the proposed legislation failed to address concerns of the community, and if adopted, would create greater tensions between the community and RPD.

Richard Bishop, 8th District Liaison and retired RPD Captain, expressed concern that current or previously employed law enforcement officers, as defined in the Code of Virginia, cannot serve as a member of the CRB. Mr. Bishop remarked that such exclusion was offensive and disrespectful to law enforcement.

William Pantele, RCOP Representative, spoke in opposition to ORD. 2022-091, and stated that citizens' complaints against RPD over the last ten years were low; he noted that the police department currently has boards, which consist of civilian members, to review matters concerning RPD.

Brendan Leavy, Richmond Coalition of Police (RCOP) President, remarked that members of the CRB should be trained in the police department's policies and practices. Mr. Leavy expressed support of a CRB to review RPD'S Internal Affairs Division.

Steve Taylor, Council Policy Analyst, provided the committee with a comparison of recommendations prepared by the CRB Task Force and those proposed by city administration.

Ms. Anderson reported there were differences and similarities in the Task Force's recommendations and those outlined in the proposed legislation. Ms. Anderson stated the CRB will have subpoena powers as outlined by state law, and will be independent of RPD. She further stated city administration does not support the CRB having the authority to hire or fire individuals, or to make disciplinary decisions. Ms. Anderson noted that the creation of a CRB was complicated and would require continuous work among all stakeholders.

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert noted the importance of ensuring recommendations from the community were included in the creation of the CRB.

Chairwoman Reva Trammell recalled numerous incidents where she described RPD officers going above and beyond the call of duty; she urged the collaboration of citizens and RPD through efforts similar to community policing.

Member Ellen Robertson asked Ms. Anderson to explain the next steps in moving forward in creating the CRB. Member Robertson asked Council staff to prepare an additional analysis of the Task Force's recommendations versus recommendations proposed by city administration.

Vice Chair Lambert stated she was willing to support ORD. 2022-091 with the caveat that Council will have the opportunity to amend the proposed legislation.

There were no further comments or discussions and Member Ellen Robertson moved to forward ORD. 2022-091 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

A copy of the material provided has been filed and can be accessed below.

[CD.2022.132](#) March 22, 2022 Public Safety - ORD. 2022-091

Attachments: [20220322 Public Safety - Ord. 2022-091](#)

[After Item - 20220322 Public Safety - CRB Review of Proposed Plans Side by Side](#)

Discussion Item(s)

There were no discussion items.

Board Vacancies

There were no board vacancies for review.

Staff Report

Steve Taylor, Council Policy Analyst, provided the committee with the March staff report.

A copy of the material provided has been filed and can be accessed below.

[CD.2022.126](#) Public Safety Staff Report

Attachments: [20220322 Public Safety Staff Report](#)

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert requested an update at the next Committee meeting regarding the city's Gun Buy Back program.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:11 p.m.