

Police Civilian Review Panel

February 2, 2023

Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center

3159 Row Street Falls Church, VA 22044

Meeting Summary

Panel Members Present:

Cheri Belkowitz
Todd Cranford, Vice-Chair
Michael Lau
Celeste Peterson
Dirck Hargraves, Chair
William Ware
Janell Wolfe

Others Present:

Kenneth Bynum, Counsel
Madison Gibbs, Counsel
Sanjida Lisa, PCRP
Steven Richardson, PCRP
Rachelle Ramirez, OIPA
Richard Schott, OIPA
2nd Lt. Tim Forrest, Internal Affairs Bureau
Lt. Todd Sweeney, Internal Affairs Bureau
2nd Lt. Matthew Lane, Internal Affairs Bureau
Community members

The Panel's business meeting was called to order at 7:11 p.m. Mr. Hargraves, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the Panel's February 2, 2023, meeting. Mr. Hargraves invited Imam Naeem Baig of the Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center to share some remarks. Imam Baig introduced himself to the Panel and the community members present and shared some historical background of the community center, and he offered a small prayer. Mr. Hargraves shared some insight about the challenges the community faced with the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) prior to the creation of the Office of the Police Civilian Review Panel (PCR), and subsequent events. Mr. Hargraves mentioned John Beltrain, a retired DC homicide detective, the founder of the Citizen's Coalition for Police Accountability, who wanted to have more transparency into how FCPD conducted internal investigations. Mr. Hargraves then discussed the 2013 incident involving John Geer and the subsequent creation of the Police Civilian Review Panel by former Fairfax County Chairman Bulova. Mr. Hargraves gave further background on PCR and the Office of the Independent Auditor(OIPA) and its bifurcated process.

Mr. Hargraves took attendance at approximately 7:24 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Mr. Cranford moved approval of the meeting agenda. Ms. Belkowitz seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Approval of December 1, 2022, Draft Training Summary: Mr. Cranford moved approval of the Panel's December 1, 2022, training summary. Ms. Belkowitz seconded the motion. Mr. Hargraves moved to

remove the words “consumer protection commission” in the last paragraph on page four. All voted to accept the draft summary as amended and it passed unanimously.

Approval of January 5, 2023, Draft Meeting Summary: Mr. Cranford moved approval of the January 5, 2023 draft meeting summary. Mr. Ware seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Review of the Recommendations Matrix: Mr. Hargraves provided background context for PCRCP case CRP-22-06 for the community as everyone reviewed hardcopies of the Recommendations Matrix. Mr. Ware asked what the process was for updating and sharing the recommendations matrix with FCPD and the community. Ms. Ramirez explained that the recommendations matrix gets approved by the Panel members and then sent to FCPD for action or amendment and comment. Mr. Hargraves suggested that the Panel take time to review the matrix and circle back. Mr. Cranford asked why FCPD only gets a copy once a year and Ms. Ramirez clarified that when the PCRCP reports are published and sent to the Board of Supervisors, that FCPD is also carbon copied on the emails so they are aware of the recommendations made prior to seeing the matrix. Mr. Richardson asked whether staff could add the matrix to the website. Ms. Belkowitz suggested that the Panel add PCRCP’s website URL to the Panel meeting agenda moving forward.

Mr. Richardson again asked Panel members if they would like to have the matrix published on the website. Mr. Hargraves said no. Mr. Cranford said he would like the matrix to be published online. Ms. Belkowitz said she was unsure. Ms. Peterson said yes, the matrix should be published on the website for the community to be able to review.

Ms. Wolfe confirmed that FCPD had already seen the new recommendations on the matrix from the most recent report. Mr. Richardson stated that there haven’t been any time limitations placed on FCPD for their response and update. Mr. Hargraves added that there is a quarterly meeting with FCPD and the Panel where they discuss the matrix and the annual report that gets presented to the Board of Supervisors (BOS).

Ms. Peterson said she wasn’t sure why there was so much hesitation around sharing the matrix and asking FCPD to stick to a timeline, such as two months. Mr. Ware confirmed with the counsel that the matrix is not a part of the by-laws and thought that it was imperative to share the matrix and get feedback from FCPD more than once a year.

There was further discussion on developing a timeline for FCPD to respond to the recommendations on the matrix and if they do not respond by the date, then the Panel would revisit. Mr. Lau mentioned that there should be a consideration of a quality response over a speedy response and would ask FCPD to provide their own timeline on how long it would take for them to provide an update. Ms. Belkowitz countered that FCPD could then request an extension on the deadline and that would be on a case by case basis. Mr. Bynum mentioned that the Panel does not currently have the authority to enforce a deadline for the matrix by FCPD. Ms. Belkowitz stated that the Panel could amend the by-laws to include a deadline regarding the matrix for FCPD response.

Mr. Cranford moved to publish the matrix to the website with the recommendations that the Panel had previously agreed to and to include a deadline for a response by FCPD, determined on a case by case basis. Mr. Ware seconded the motion. Ms. Belkowitz clarified the motion Mr. Cranford made and stated that she did not agree to setting the deadline on a case by case basis as it would lead to a lack of

consistency. Ms. Belkowitz suggested that there could be a set 30 days or 60 days provided to FCPD for a response. Mr. Cranford stated that there were certain recommendations that could potentially only take five days and there would be nothing stopping FCPD from taking the full 30 days to provide the response in those scenarios. Ms. Belkowitz reminded the Panel that every Panel meeting would then involve some form of discussion on setting a deadline for each new recommendation.

Mr. Ware, Ms. Wolfe, Mr. Cranford, Mr. Hargraves and Ms. Peterson voted yes to the motion. Ms. Belkowitz voted no to the motion. There were no abstentions. The motion carried with a majority voting yes. Ms. Wolfe suggested that the Panel discuss timelines for the seven new recommendations for FCPD.

Mr. Hargraves opened a question and answer portion for the community members present to ask their questions of the Panel for approximately fifteen minutes.

Mr. Hargraves concluded the question and answer portion and moved to discuss the possible deadlines for the new recommendations with the Panel. There was a motion to give FCPD 30 days to respond to the Panel on the first recommendation and provide an update on how long it would take them to provide the Panel resolution to the recommendation. Ms. Peterson countered that the Panel could give FCPD 30 days for all seven of the new recommendations on the matrix to allow them time to either resolve the recommendations or provide updates on how much additional time they would need to resolve them.

Ms. Belkowitz motioned to amend that the Panel would give FCPD 30 calendar days to respond to the seven new recommendations on the matrix. Mr. Cranford seconded and it carried unanimously.

2023 Panel Leadership Elections: Mr. Hargraves asked for nominations for Vice Chair of the Panel. Ms. Peterson moved to nominate Cheri Belkowitz for Vice Chair of the Panel in 2023. There were no other nominations. All voted to approve and it carried unanimously. The new Chair and Vice Chair for the Panel in 2023 are Mr. Todd Cranford and Ms. Cheri Belkowitz respectively.

Executive Director's Report: Mr. Richardson congratulated the appointment of the new Vice Chair for 2023, Ms. Cheri Belkowitz. Mr. Richardson also introduced the newly appointed Panel member, Mr. Michael Lau, and a soon-to-be appointed Panel member, Ms. Fazia Deen.

Mr. Richardson discussed the success of the January 26, 2023 PCRIP-Interfaith breakfast event and those that attended for their presence. Mr. Richardson went on to discuss the various kinds of conversations and topics of discussion the attendees had at the breakfast event.

Mr. Richardson reminded the Panel of the upcoming training on February 18, 2023 and amended that Ms. Marcia Thompson would be providing her training on a different date. The upcoming training on February 18, 2023 would be a discussion on the Panel By-Laws and Action Items, and would be led by former Chair of the Panel, Mr. Adrian Steel, Mr. Richard Schott, and Ms. Rachelle Ramirez.

Mr. Richardson went over the locations of the upcoming Panel meetings in March, April, May, and June 2023.

Ms. Wolfe suggested that Counsel be present at the February 18, 2023 training to provide further information and feedback on the discussion on Panel By-Laws.

PCPR Matters: Mr. Hargraves presented that he attended an event for Sigma Pi Phi, which is the oldest black fraternity, and asked Mr. Kenneth Bynum to provide more information. Mr. Bynum mentioned that the group discusses current events, most recently about the killing of Tyre Nichols in Memphis, TN. Mr. Bynum brought up how policing differs between different counties in Virginia and he wanted to set up a meeting to have a preempt a conversation between the different oversight departments and the police chiefs around Virginia to discuss more current events.

Mr. Cranford had nothing further to add.

Ms. Belkowitz asked if there was a certificate for former Panel members. Mr. Richardson stated that PCRCP would be creating certifies of appreciation for former members of PCRCP. The Panel decided that the office would create certificates for all former Panel members.

Mr. Schott had nothing further to add. Ms. Peterson had nothing further to add. Ms. Ramirez had nothing further to add.

Ms. Wolfe added that she had a very constructive conversation with the people at her table at the January 26th Interfaith Breakfast and expressed surprise at people not knowing about the existence of the PCRCP in Fairfax County, and urged that the Panel continue to share and put the word out there.

Mr. Ware had nothing further to add. Counsel had nothing further to add. Ms. Lisa had nothing further to add. Mr. Richardson mentioned that with the success of the January 26th breakfast, the Panel would look for more opportunities to engage the community and continue to spread awareness of the Panel. FCPD had nothing further to add.

Adjournment: Mr. Hargraves announced the meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.