



Board Meeting Report – January 9, 2025

Prepared for: Police Accountability Board Members

Date: January 9, 2025

From: Dr. Lesli Myers-Small, Executive Director, Police Accountability Board

Overview

This monthly report provides updates on the activities, accomplishments, and ongoing efforts of the Police Accountability Board (PAB) since the last Board meeting on December 5, 2024. Transparency and accountability remain central to the PAB's mission, and this report ensures our Board members and the public remain informed about our progress.

1. Public Affairs and Community Engagement

Over the past month, the PAB has remained active in engaging with the community:

- **Survey Responses:** We collected 100 responses to our community survey, which continues to guide outreach strategies and gauge public needs.
- **Outreach Events:**
 - A total of 18 outreach events were held, including presentations to Refugees Helping Refugees and attendance at the Joint Coalition Holiday Party.
 - Six recurring engagements at key locations such as Cameron Ministries and the Father Tracy Center provided consistent community presence.
- **New Partnerships:** Partnerships were developed with organizations like the African American Health Coalition, NY Immigration Coalition, and SAVE Rochester.
- **Stakeholder Mapping:** A database of over 200 community organizations, businesses, and places of worship was finalized to enhance strategic outreach planning.

These efforts have resulted in meaningful connections with 337 individuals, with a focus on youth, small businesses, and immigrant and refugee communities.

2. Case Management and Investigations

Our Case Management Division has been actively addressing complaints:

- **Complaints Received:**
 - 14 complaints were received in December.
 - 12 were opened for investigation, and 2 were administratively closed.
- **Case Review:** The Board reviewed and moved to close four cases during the reporting period.

Additionally, intake forms in English and Spanish have been made available on our website, with further translations underway to ensure accessibility for all residents.

3. Policy and Oversight

General Order 680 Updates

In a significant milestone, Chief David Smith adopted several PAB-recommended changes to the Rochester Police Department's General Order 680, which governs the response to protests and mass demonstrations. Key updates include:

- Defining civil disorder and unlawful assembly for clarity.
- Requiring proportional responses and clear guidelines on the use of chemical agents.
- Strengthening protocols for dispersal orders and mutual aid coordination.

These changes align with national best practices and represent progress toward greater accountability and transparency in law enforcement.

Cost of Misconduct Proposal for Change

This proposal, approved at the December Board meeting, addresses the financial and systemic impacts of police misconduct. It has been submitted to the Chief of Police for review.

Revisions to the Disciplinary Matrix

Today, the Board will vote on proposed revisions to the PAB Disciplinary Matrix. The City Charter requires the PAB to create a matrix, with input from the Rochester Police Department (RPD) and the Locust Club, as a basis for the Board's disciplinary recommendations. The matrix is updated annually as needed. Chief Smith confirmed receipt of the proposed revisions, though no feedback was received from the RPD or the Locust Club.

The following revisions are being presented for the Board's consideration:

- Removal of the "aggregating charges" section to prevent over penalizing incidents with multiple allegations of misconduct. Recommendations will now be based on the highest single instance of misconduct in an investigation.
- Updates to the penalty chart.
- Added definitions for "incident" and "misconduct."
- Clarifications regarding the Board's role in ratifying investigatory reports.
- Procedures for instances where an RPD rule has not been assigned a level by the Matrix Appendix.
- Enhanced detail in investigative procedures.

Thank you to the Board members who provided feedback on these amendments, which has been incorporated into the proposed revisions.

4. Training and Professional Development

The PAB continues to prioritize education and training for staff and leadership:

- **NACOLE Training:** Staff participated in a session on discipline matrices, emphasizing fairness, consistency, and transparency in addressing officer misconduct.
- **Citizen’s Police Academy:** Staff completed sessions on tactical operations, narcotics investigations, and body-worn cameras, enhancing their understanding of law enforcement practices. We were proud to have six staff and one board member complete the training and graduate.

5. Strategic Initiatives

- **Language Access Plan:** The 2024-2025 plan ensures compliance with statewide translation requirements and includes strategies for creating ASL video resources.
- **Strategic Plan Development:** December 2024 marked the beginning of our collaboration with Breakthrough Leadership Consulting Group, setting the foundation for impactful outcomes in 2025.

6. Personnel Updates

Several important staffing updates include:

- **Communications Manager:** Brianna Milon joined the team on January 7, 2025.
- **Digital Forensic Analyst:** We have a candidate who is working to finalize pre-hire requirements and will begin working within the next month.
- **Director of Investigations:** Interviews with five candidates are scheduled this month with the hope to identify a successful candidate.

These new hires will strengthen our capacity to deliver on the PAB’s mission.

7. Upcoming Event: Community Forum

Planning is underway for a community forum inspired by Mr. Robert Ricks, father of Robert Brooks. The event will:

- Amplify the voices of those impacted by law enforcement misconduct.
- Reaffirm the PAB’s commitment to justice and accountability.

Conclusion

Over the past month, the PAB has made significant strides in community engagement, case management, and policy development, all while laying the groundwork for future initiatives. These efforts reflect our unwavering dedication to transparency, justice, and community trust.

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration as we work together to achieve our shared goals.