

City of Albany

CITIZENS' POLICE REVIEW BOARD

Quarterly Report May 1, 2001

Submitted by
The Government Law Center of Albany Law School
on behalf of the
City of Albany Citizens' Police Review Board



Quarterly Report of the City of Albany
Citizens' Police Review Board

May 1, 2001

Submitted to:
The Mayor of the City of Albany
The Common Council of the City of Albany
The Police Chief of the City of Albany

BACKGROUND

Legislation creating the City of Albany Citizens' Police Review Board (the "Board") was signed into law in July 2000, taking effect on October 27, 2000. The law adds a new part 33 to Chapter 42 (Departments and Commissions) of the Code of the City of Albany. Section 42-340 of that law requires that the Government Law Center of Albany Law School submit quarterly reports containing "statistics and summaries of citizen complaints, including a comparison of the [Board's] findings with the final determinations of the [Police] Department" on behalf of the Board. This is the second quarterly report so submitted.

INTRODUCTION

On October 27, 2000, nine residents of the City of Albany were sworn in as members of the first Citizens' Police Review Board for the City of Albany. Five residents were appointed by the Common Council, and four residents were appointed by the Mayor. The following members constitute the Board:

Dr. Manuel Alguero
Rev. Kenneth Cox
Dr. Morris Eson
Marilyn Hammond
Judith Mazza
Herman Thomas
Eleanor Thompson
Paul Weafer, Esq.
Michael Whiteman, Esq.

The Government Law Center of Albany Law School was retained by the City of Albany to provide a number of services to the Board, the City and the Community with respect to the new Board. Many of these are discussed, as appropriate, below.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

At its first organizational meeting, the Board elected temporary officers and organized committees, pending the development and adoption of its by-laws. The following officers, elected at that meeting, continued their service during the second quarter as the Board concluded its work on the by-laws:

Interim Chair	Kenneth Cox
Interim Vice -Chair	Herman Thomas
Interim Secretary	Michael Whiteman

The following Committees were also established, with each Board member serving on at least one committee:

By-Laws	Marilyn Hammond Paul Weaver Michael Whiteman
Operating Procedures	Marilyn Hammond Judith Mazza Paul Weaver Michael Whiteman
Complaint Form	Manuel Alguero Morris Eson Eleanor Thompson Paul Weaver
Outreach	Kenneth Cox Judith Mazza Herman Thomas

During the second quarter, three of the committees met a number of times (the Operating Procedures Committee was formed at the end of the second quarter and scheduled a meeting for early in the third quarter). In general, the following has been accomplished:

- The by-laws committee completed a final draft document after public comment which was adopted by the Board and forwarded to the City of Albany Common Council for approval;
- The complaint form committee made significant revisions to the existing form, working with the Police Department to accomplish this. A revised form and cover letter is expected to be approved by the Board early in the third quarter. The form will be available both in English and in Spanish;
- The outreach committee met with the Editorial Board of the Albany Times Union to update the Editorial Board on the progress of the CPRB and upcoming public comment periods. The committee also participated in an interview with the Gazette newspaper, and prepared for the taping of a forthcoming interview for local cable television.
- The Board met as a whole three times for the conduct of business during the second quarter. Two meetings were held at the Albany Public Library on Washington Avenue, and one meeting was held in the Community Room at 200 Henry Johnson Blvd. Meetings were held on February 14, 2001, March 14, 2001 and April 2, 2001. There was a public comment period at each meeting, and the March 14th meeting largely consisted of time for public comment on the proposed by-laws and the revised complaint form.

- The Board has now set the first Monday of every month (except July and August) at 7:00pm as the official meeting time for the Board. Meetings will be held at the Albany Public Library when space is available, and the Community Room at Henry Johnson Blvd will be the alternate meeting location.

TRAINING

The law creating the Board requires, among other things, that Board members graduate from the Police Department's Citizens' Police Academy within six months of the start of the member's term (sec. 42-339). During the second quarter, Board members attended two 4-hour classes as part of this training (February 1st and February 22nd). In addition to the time in the classroom, Board members have participated in required ride-alongs with members of the Police Department.

STATISTICS

After creation of the Board and appointment of its members, Board members received an opinion of the City of Albany Corporation Counsel's office that the Board could not receive, hear or process complaints until after the Board's By-laws and Rules of Procedure had been adopted by the Board and approved, pursuant to the legislation, by the City of Albany Common Council. As of this time, because of the opinion provided by the Corporation Counsel's office and the development of the Board's internal processes and organizational documents, the Board does not have any official information to report in relation to "statistics and summaries of citizen complaints, including a comparison of the [Board's] findings with the final determinations of the [Police] Department."

GOVERNMENT LAW CENTER

During the second quarter, the Government Law Center engaged in the following activities as directed by the local law and pursuant to its contractual obligations with the City of Albany:

- ▶ Arranged logistics for and coordinated [public] notice for Board meetings.
- ▶ Attended Board meetings, committee meetings and training programs.
- ▶ Assisted the Board with work on the by-laws, the complaint form and public education.
- ▶ Developed a community outreach list for notice of the Board meetings .
- ▶ At the Board's request, developed a community outreach component for making complaint forms available and for providing assistance to citizens with completion of the complaint form.
- ▶ Subcontracted with the School of Criminal Justice at the University at Albany for surveying community satisfaction as required by the CPRB law.
- ▶ Submitted to the Mayor and the Common Council for approval a list of proposed mediators.
- ▶ Submitted to the Mayor and the Common Council for approval a list of proposed investigators.
- ▶ Submitted to the Common Council for approval a proposed ongoing training curriculum for the Board.

- ▶ Continued the development of the mediation program.
- ▶ Researched various civilian review board issues.
- ▶ Made a presentation on the Law School's role with the CPRB to the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce Capital Leadership Class.
- ▶ Provided various administrative functions including: assisting with preparing minutes of meetings; facilitating media inquiries between reporters and Board members; assembling materials for meetings; and answering inquiries from the community about the CPRB.

CONCLUSION

The Board had an active second quarter continuing to organize, completing training and education, holding public meetings, and submitting its by-laws to the Common Council for approval.

Respectfully submitted
Government Law Center of Albany Law School
Approved by and submitted on behalf of the
City of Albany Citizens' Police Review Board

Dated: May 1, 2001