

## **FOREWARD**

This is the initial report developed by the Community Relations Commission on the first year operations of the Civilian Review Board of Baltimore City. The report covers the period of October 1, 1999 through September 30, 2000.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Civilian Review Board of Baltimore City was created by the General Assembly of the Maryland State Legislative, effective October 1, 1999. The Civilian Review Board of Baltimore City (CRB) is an independent body established to provide a permanent, statutory agency in Baltimore City through which complaints lodged by members of the public alleging abusive language, harassment, and the use of excessive force by personnel of the Baltimore Police Department may be processed and investigated.\*<sup>1</sup>

The Civilian Review Board is composed of nine civilian voting members, one each from the nine police districts in the city selected by the Mayor, subject to the advice and consent of the City Council. The CRB also includes three non-voting members, one each representing the Fraternal Order of Police, the Vanguard Justice Society, and the Police Commissioner of the Baltimore City Police Department. The CRB is staffed by the Baltimore Community Relations Commission and the City Solicitor's Office.

The Civilian Review Board of Baltimore City may review Departmental policies of the Baltimore Police Department. The Police Commissioner has the final decision making responsibility for the appropriate disciplinary action in each case, but the Commissioner may not take final action until the Commissioner has reviewed the recommendation of the CRB.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

The enabling legislation establishing the CRB became effective October 1, 1999. Seven of the nine civilian members were sworn in on December 7, 1999. The seven represented the following districts: Central, Northwestern, Eastern, Northeastern, Southeastern, Southwest, and the Southern. On April 5<sup>th</sup> the final two members, representing the Western and Northern Districts were sworn in.

Initial funding for the Board in the sum of \$150,000 was dedicated, effective July 1, 2000. Two investigators were hired and began working on July 3, 2000.

From January 2000 through March, the CRB met twice a month, focusing on the start-up tasks associated with the newly created Board. From April on, the Board has met monthly.

\*<sup>1</sup> - Effective October 1, 2000, the amended law includes the following law enforcement units; Baltimore City School Police, Housing Authority Police of Baltimore City, the Sheriff's Department

#### Start-up Tasks:

- Development of Rules and Procedures (see appendix)
- Completion of training for civilian members (see appendix)
- Development of Public Information Plan (see appendix)
- Development of comprehensive complaint form

### III. OPERATIONS

For the year (October 1, 1999 through September 30, 2000), 89 complaints were filed which were jurisdictional for the Civilian Review Board of Baltimore City. There were 54 complaints of use of excessive force, 22 abusive language, and 13 multiple complaints.<sup>2</sup> Based on the CRB's review, those 89 complaints contained at least 67 allegations of use of excessive force, and 35 allegations of abusive language.<sup>3</sup>

The CRB reviewed the initial complaint forms of all 89 complaints filed. In an effort to focus on the most egregious complaints, the Board determined that it would not investigate further the singular complaints of abusive language, but would instruct its independent investigators to do an initial inquiry into all the complaints alleging use of excessive force. The Board did opt, however, to send a policy recommendation letter to Commissioner Norris on the use of abusive language. (see appendix)

At the time of this report the CRB investigators have reviewed and prepared summaries on ten of the complaints filed alleging the use of excessive force. The CRB has requested that full independent investigations be done on two of them. The process of reviewing the summaries prepared by its investigators on all the use of excessive force complaints continues by the Board, and the Board will determine on a case by case basis whether it instructs its investigators to initiate a full investigation of a complaint.

For the year, the CRB has reviewed three completed investigations forwarded to the Board by the Internal Affairs Division of the Baltimore Police Department.<sup>4</sup> The CRB rendered findings of NOT SUSTAINED on all three complaints. The complaints contained three allegations of abusive language, and three allegations of use of excessive force. The Internal Affairs Division rendered five not sustained findings and one unfounded. The unfounded finding was on a use of excessive force allegation. The CRB rendered six findings of not sustained.

<sup>2</sup>*(There is no independent comparative data available for this same period for the prior year.)*

<sup>3</sup>Until an actual investigation is done (by either IAD or the CRB) with follow-up complainant interviews, all the allegations may not be determined. <sup>4</sup> CRB members presently have two completed investigations from IAD, but the Board has not met to take action on them yet.

#### **IV. INVESTIGATIONS**

For the year, 89 complaints have been filed. The Internal Affairs Division has completed investigations on three of these complaints. The Civilian Review Board sent a policy recommendation letter to Commissioner Norris on the consistent failure of the Department to complete its investigations within the 90 days prescribed by statute (see appendix).

For the year 89 complaints have been filed, the CRB has reviewed and accepted three completed cases forwarded by IAD. The CRB has determined that it will not seek to do an independent investigation into the 22 complaints filed alleging abusive language. The CRB has completed internal reviews on ten use of excessive force complaints and has chosen to pursue full investigations on only two.

There are presently 56 complaints which are either under review or in full investigation by the Civilian Review Board investigators. Fifty-four are under review to determine if the CRB should fully investigate, and two are being fully investigated.

The two CRB investigators have on average, a caseload of 28.

#### **V. Statistical Data**

For the entire year (October 1, 1999 through September 30, 2000) complaints were filed using the existing complaint forms which yielded little, if any, pertinent demographic information. A newly revised complaint form was made available October 1, 2000 (see appendix). Unlike its predecessor, the revised form will make it possible to track the following information: where the complaint was filed, the race, age, and sex of the complainant, race, sex, rank of the accused, the district the accused works out of, and specifically the type of infraction which is being alleged, i.e., excessive force, abusive language, discourtesy.

## **CONCLUSION**

The inaugural operating year of the Civilian Review Board was challenging, yet productive. Systems were developed to allow the Board to move toward focusing on its oversight responsibilities as it relates to allegations of the use of excessive force, abusive language and harassment. As the Board enters into year two of its existence, its most pressing concerns appear to be the slowness in which the Internal Affairs Division of the Baltimore Police Department completes investigations, and in developing sound enough rules and procedures to enable the Board to take on review responsibilities for three additional law enforcement units.

As the result of the unavailability of firm immediate past year figures, the Board has to use its initial year figures as a benchmark. Therefore, it is unknown whether the aforementioned numbers are high or low, but it is expected that the overall work of the Board will increase because of the additional law enforcement units added effective October 1, 2000.

The Board also appears braced to step up its public information outreach campaign because the support systems are now in place.

**October 1, 1999**  
**Through**  
**December 31, 1999**

**CITY OF BALTIMORE**

MARTIN O'MALLEY, Mayor

(410) 361-9067



**CIVILIAN REVIEW BOARD**

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July 9, 2001

**TO: ALL BOARD MEMBERS**  
**FROM: SECRETARY, CIVILIAN REVIEW BOARD OF BALTIMORE CITY**  
**RE: THREE-MONTH STATISTICAL REPORT**

In the three-month period from October 1, 1999 through December 31, 1999 the Civilian Review Board reviewed 0 completed complaint investigations.<sup>1</sup> During this same period, 23 complaints were actually filed (consisting of 12 allegations of Excessive Force, and 13 allegations of abusive language) against members of the Baltimore City Police Department.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Civilian Review Board of Baltimore City was created by state statute effective October 1, 1999. Appointments to the Board were not made until November, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Complaints filed against members of the BPD are not reviewed by the Civilian Review Board until at least 90 days after the filing because the statute requires that I.A.D. conduct an investigation within 90 days after the filing. The statute also requires that the Civilian Review Board review the completed investigation within 30 days after IAD has submitted its investigative report to the Board.



**CIVILIAN REVIEW BOARD STATISTICAL SUMMARY  
FOR COMPLAINTS REVIEWED  
PERIOD OF OCTOBER 1, 1999 – DECEMBER 30, 1999**

[illegible]