

**POLICE ACCOUNTABILIT BOARD FOR BALTIMORE CITY
MAY MEETING MINUTES**

**May 6, 2024
6:00-8:00 PM
Via Zoom**

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Chair Joshua Harris

Roll Call:

Secretary Stephanie V. Lee called roll.

- Ambassador Peter Boddie
- Antoine Burton
- Avi Wolasky
- Dr. Doris Minor-Terrell
- Dr. Janetta Gilmore
- Harold Madison
- Jamal Turner, Vice Chair
- Jesmond Riggins, Esq.
- Joshua Harris, Chair
- Lisa Nguyen
- Mansur Abdul-Malik
- Maraizu Onyenaka
- Marc Broady, Esq.
- Megan Kenny
- Stephanie Lee, Secretary
- **Board Absent**
- Bryan Upshur

Welcome

Chair Joshua Harris acknowledges a few news articles regarding the Police Accountability Board. One article discussed the late cases being sent to the Administrative Charging Committee by the Public Integrity Bureau. Another article highlighted the challenges in establishing PABs around the state. Chair Harris is optimistic and will continue to push for the best mechanism for civilian oversight.

Chair Harris opens the floor for any birthdays, anniversaries, or special celebrations. Board member Harold Madison shares his community held a community education session regarding SB 386 and how laws are passed on April 20. There were 375 participants at the event and would have enjoyed a presence from the PAB but will collaborate in the future.

Vice Chair Jamal Turner wishes all mother's a happy Mother's Day.

Review and Approval of Agenda

Vice Chair Jamal Turner moved to approve the agenda; the motion is seconded by Board member Harold Madison. The motion passes.

Review and Approval of Minutes

Board member Doris Minor-Terrell moved to approve the April meeting minutes pending any corrections. The motion is seconded by Vice Chair Turner. The motion passes.

Staff Updates

Acting Director Caron Watkins delivers staff updates. Acting Director Watkins introduces herself and looks forward to being a partner to the PAB and ACC to further their mission. Acting Director Watkins shares the following updates:

- Office of Equity and Civil Rights has met with the Law Department and Baltimore Police Department Public Integrity Bureau (PIB) to rectify the issues regarding the late cases to the ACC. They will be meeting weekly.
- Acting Director Watkins reminds board members to submit their annual financial disclosure statements as they are past due.
- Acting Director Watkins asks board members who are interested in attending the 2024 National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) annual conference in Tucson, Arizona to express their interest by Friday May 10.
 - Chair Harris asks board members who are interested in attending the 2024 NACOLE conference to identify themselves. Board members Janetta Gilmore, Jesmond Riggins, Jamal Turner, Stephanie Lee, Antoine Burton, and Mansur Abdul-Malik are interested in attending the conference. The Office of Equity and Civil Rights and the PAB will collaborate to ensure PAB representation at the NACOLE conference.

Questions and Discussion on Staff Updates

Board member Megan Kenny asks Acting Director Watkins if there is an update regarding the hiring of a data analyst for the PAB. Acting Director Watkins notes there is a data analyst on staff that has worked with the PAB data before and is a resource for the PAB. They have also met with the Mayor’s Office of Performance and Innovation (OPI) to discuss ways to better integrate data. Acting Director Watkins suggests an offline conversation with Board member Kenny to discuss her needs and desires for a data position.

Chair Harris acknowledges the diversity, equity, and inclusion training hosted by OECR on Saturday April 27. It was an opportunity for the PAB to understand how DEI impacts their work with a restorative justice comparative. Board members who were not able to attend will receive information shared during the training.

Chair Harris shares there is a civilian trial board application live online to solicit applications from members of the public¹.

Quarterly Meeting with Heads of Law Enforcement

Baltimore City Sheriff’s Office: Sheriff Sam Cogen

Sheriff Sam Cogen believes the accountability process is working. Sheriff Cogen has found determinations from the ACC to be reasonable and in line with the Sheriff’s Office. The Sheriff’s Office worked with Governor Moore on a rental rights bill² to lower the eviction rate in the city. One of the cases sent to the ACC was a use of force that occurred during an eviction. They identified some problematic issues that are being corrected through civilian oversight. Sheriff Cogen appreciates the opportunity to share decisions regarding police misconduct with the community through civilian oversight, particularly regarding use of force. He likes what he is seeing so far in the new accountability process.

Regarding the 366-day lifespan for cases, Sheriff Cogen is slightly concerned about the deadlines without any provisions for an exception. He doesn’t want to allow a case to go through the criminal court process which can take a long time and prevent the ACC from conducting their process because of the 366-day rule. If he must wait to send the case to the ACC due to a concurrent criminal case, the case may expire without adjudication from the ACC. This issue is being discussed on the state level. Sheriff Cogen is interested in

¹ [Civilian Trial Board Application | Office of Equity and Civil Rights \(baltimorecity.gov\)](https://www.baltimorecity.gov/office-of-equity-and-civil-rights/civilian-trial-board-application)

² <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/legislation/details/HB0693?ys=2024RS>

the PAB's position on this issue. His concern is that heads of law enforcement usually wait for the criminal trial to play out before proceeding to the ACC, but then the case might expire. However, he is monitoring this issue.

Chair Harris agrees with Sheriff Cogen, there should be an exception to the 366-day rule for cases. Although this issue isn't a recommendation in their annual report, the PAB will discuss this issue through the Policy and Advice Committee. Chair Harris notes the overall civilian oversight structure and the duality of the Civilian Review Board (CRB) having investigatory powers concurrently with police departments. This is critical as they are not waiting for the PIB to turn over their investigation and allow the civilian oversight process to move along in a timely fashion.

Chair Harris asks Sheriff Cogen for an update regarding their policies. Sheriff Cogen notes they are still working on updating their policies with Lexipol, a contracted company with legal advisors and best practice policies. They are also looking to work with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) who set international standards. They are still in the editing phase with the policies, and none have been passed to deputies as established policies. Each policy is undergoing an internal review to determine relevancy and best practice for the Sheriff's Department in Baltimore City. They are also creating policies for situations that may arise such as missing persons. The offer for the PAB to review the Sheriff's Department's policies is still available when they are ready. Sheriff Cogen would appreciate the PAB's thoughts on policies especially those regarding interactions with members of the public such as vehicle pursuits. Working with this body allows Sheriff Cogen to get an idea of what the community wants to help inform his decision-making regarding the policies.

Chair Harris notes there have been discussions for the PAB to host town hall meetings with the Sheriff's Department to educate the public about the role of the Sheriff's Department.

Chair Harris notes there have been discussions about procuring body worn cameras for the Sheriff's Department. There have been budgetary constraints and Chair Harris offers the PAB as a partner in any grant applications the Sheriff's Department submits. Chair Harris states body worn cameras offer a layer of protection and transparency for both law enforcement officials and the public. Chair Harris asks Sheriff Cogen for an update regarding body worn cameras for the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Cogen states they have found a body worn camera vendor. It is not Axon; it is the same one the Philadelphia Police Department and Prince George's County utilizes³. The Sheriff's Department prefers this vendor because of their Open IPA function, and it fits into their records management system. There are some things going on with Axon and their use of artificial intelligence and report writing that Sheriff Cogen feels uncomfortable with. They have completed two rounds of testing with this vendor and selected this vendor after exploring 2 other vendors. The Sheriff's Department estimates it should cost \$144,000 to implement the hardware for the program. They would need 3 individuals on staff to work on redactions and review the footage. If they have footage, they need to review them to ensure individuals are acting appropriately internally, not only when responding to requests. Members of the public can expect this funding request to go to the Board of Estimates soon. From what Sheriff Cogen has seen and heard, the IT department is excited, and deputies seem to use it well. It seems easy to make redactions when needed.

Board member Peter Bodde commends Sheriff Cogen department on their willingness to have better interactions with different elements of law enforcement in Baltimore City. Board member Bodde has seen it in his neighborhood and how the Sheriff's Department stepped in. With issues that have been in the press recently, Board member Bodde asks Sheriff Cogen how he believes interactions with other law

³ Asking Sheriff's Dept for the name

enforcement agencies in the City are. When discussing accountability, it includes effectiveness of the police force and the Sheriff's Department is certainly trying to do that. Board member Bodde wants to know how that is going and what the reaction has been. Without getting too political, Sheriff Cogen believes his interactions with the Baltimore Police Department has been outstanding. He and Commissioner Richard Worley speak often. The deputies and police officers interact well, and they assist each other whenever possible. Sheriff Cogen is concerned his deputies that reside in Baltimore City are being paid less than other law enforcement agencies. This impacts Sheriff Cogen's ability to recruit and retain deputies which affects their functions. The public can expect to hear Sheriff Cogen to advocate for increased pay for deputies and control of the Sheriff's budget to recruit and retain high quality law enforcement. Sheriff Cogen notes we are at an inflection point in law enforcement in the county where standards for law enforcement is rising. There is a need for law enforcement officials who are educated, can read, and write reports properly, have a good moral compass and treat members of the public in a way they would want their family members to be treated. It is difficult to find these individuals when the Sheriff's Department doesn't get the same consideration as other agencies. It does impact police accountability as Sheriff Cogen will not hire an individual just to fill a seat, but fewer deputies make it harder for them to be in the community. This is a point of frustration for Sheriff Cogen.

Chair Harris asks Sheriff Cogen to explain the Sheriff's Department's budgeting process. Sheriff Cogen explains all sheriff's offices in Maryland are funded by the county or city. However, they are independently elected officials separate from the executive branch. As such, the mayor nor the City Council have authority over the Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department is regulated by the Maryland General Assembly and employees within the Sheriff's Department are considered state employees in the state pension and personnel system. The issue is funding comes from the executive branch and they should not exercise the power of the purse over the Sheriff's Department's decision making. Sheriff Cogen believes it can be challenging getting the executive branch to understand the independence of the Sheriff's Department as independently elected officials. Although funding comes from the executive branch, Sheriff Cogen believes he should be reporting and accountable to the public and voters to justify his expenditures. For example, if he wanted to put more deputies in a warrant unit than an eviction unit because he felt like they are prioritizing evictions too much, it should be his decision as the elected official, not the mayor or city council as a city agency. The Sheriff's Department is funded by the city, just as the State's Attorney's Office and Baltimore City Public School is funded by the city. Chair Harris understands and appreciates Sheriff Cogen's explanation.

Secretary Lee asks Sheriff Cogen for an update on funding for social worker positions in the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Cogen reports the HB 1034⁴ which will allow the Sheriff's Department to hire 3 social workers, codifies two assistant sheriff positions and removes the cap on the number of positions they can hire.

Vice Chair Turner asks Sheriff Cogen if the Sheriff's Department is collaborating with other city funded organizations/offices such as Healing Cities to ensure the public is benefitting from their resources. Sheriff Cogen reports the head social worker is creating a program together to address this issue. The head social worker spends most of their time connecting with city agencies, private and quasi entities. They have a robust list of service providers. When conducting an eviction, deputies are trained ask if the individual has a housing plan or needs assistance. If an individual indicates they need assistance, the social worker comes in to connect them to resources in the city, such as Healing Cities. Sheriff Cogen reports this doesn't just happen at the time of the eviction. Advocates often contact the Sheriff's Department for referrals and to

⁴ [Legislation - HB1034 \(maryland.gov\)](https://legislation.maryland.gov/legislation.aspx?BillID=1034)

coordinate resources prior to an eviction. If they can prevent an individual from being home when an eviction is being served or connect them with the social worker to develop a housing plan, it can diffuse the situation for the resident and deputy. They have experienced real tragedies when serving an eviction and are committed to reducing these incidents by connecting individuals to resources. Sheriff Cogen is sending the social worker to Cook County, Illinois to speak with the Cook County Sheriff's Office who has a robust eviction program. There, once an eviction is filed, the sheriff's office responds immediately to connect the individual to resources. Sheriff Cogen believes the Cook County Sheriff's Office and he both understand evictions impact the most vulnerable residents and they have a real chance to provide resources prior to the eviction being served.

Chair Harris asks Sheriff Cogen to report on the number of crisis intervention trained deputies. Sheriff Cogen has been through the crisis intervention training provided by Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission when it was called BEST training. They worked with National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and participated in training in de-escalation and other topics. The ten deputies in the Baltimore Police Department training academy will receive crisis intervention training. Sheriff Cogen will share the exact numbers⁵ and believes in the training. Sheriff Cogen believes all his deputies possess de-escalation skills developed through their everyday interactions in the courtroom and serving evictions. If the deputies were overly aggressive and didn't have de-escalation skills, there would be an emergency every day. The deputies learn to diffuse very tense situations because they begin their tenure in courtrooms under tense circumstances where they are mandated to keep order. They cannot accomplish that goal by dominating individuals, they must treat and speak to individuals properly and respectfully. Sheriff Cogen believes deputies will benefit from crisis intervention training; however, they perform under tense situations well.

Chair Harris notes he wants to understand where there are opportunities for improvement. From participating in the quarterly consent decree hearings where Commissioner Worley reported BPD officers are not interested in training unless incentivized. In Chair Harris' view, if you want to be a good officer, that is the incentive. If officers are to receive a car or pay increase to receive a training that will make them a better police officer, Chair Harris does not know if they will utilize the training which is his concern. Additionally, studies show the difference between passion and incentive and how people are individuals motivated. Chair Harris believes officers that want to be good officers would want all the best tools.

Baltimore City Environmental Police: Chief Antoine Smith

Chief Antoine Smith notes his department is using Lexipol and is rolling out their body worn cameras soon. Chair Harris notes the Baltimore City Environmental Police is to appear before the PAB next month and thanks Chief Smith for his continuous participation.

New Business

Outreach and Engagement

Chair Harris has been working with the Police Accountability Division (PAD) to establish a community outreach strategy. PAD would like to use the PAB as a resource knowing board members are connected to their communities as they send out meeting notifications and engage the community in the PAB's work. In the future, the PAB will be attending community association meetings to ensure the civilian oversight process works, how and where to file complaints, and distribute materials. The PAB wants to engage as many residents as possible as the goal is to maximize their reach. Chair Harris requests board members to

⁵ Ask the Sheriff's Office for the number of CIT deputies.

share meeting details with their community networks and should share any community-based organizations with PAD staff to build a community list.

Community Engagement and Outreach Coordinator Jumel Howard agrees with Chair Harris. PAD has a need, opportunity and niche mindset for outreach and community engagement. They are identifying new opportunities with residents in the community in various ways such as a PAB social media account and education reels. Mr. Howard will be coordinating with Secretary Lee and Vice Chair Turner to share resources to support PAB's outreach efforts. Mr. Howard will coordinate new materials specific to the PAB to educate the public about their work and accessible complaint forms. OECR just received a new shipment of materials with PAB meeting information to distribute throughout the city.

Mr. Howard announces OECR is taking requests for proposals for Civil Rights Week. The PAB is encouraged to submit a request for an event to host during Civil Rights Week, which is the 60th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act.

Chair Harris notes he spent half of his career as an organizer doing community engagement and if the PAB wants effective community engagement, they must meet certain conditions. They must be relational, interactive, collaborative, developmental, and learn. Their goals should be centered around increasing community capabilities, increasing their connections, transferring their cognition or belief system, and boosting and changing community confidence. As the PAB has gained some understanding of their role, Chair Harris believes the next phase of their work includes centering and including the community as it is the community the PAB is accountable to.

Mr. Howard will create a DropBox where PAB members can share information they want shared on social media. Mr. Howard shares hybrid meeting technology has arrived, so the PAB is not limited in locations for their quarterly hybrid meetings.

Vice Chair Turner notes when there are protests in the community, participants should be aware of their rights and where they can report incidents of misconduct. Vice Chair Turner asks if there is a mechanism in place to coordinate with OECR to distribute materials during these instances. Additionally, Vice Chair Turner wants to ensure the PAB is monitoring the police response to campus protests at Johns Hopkins University.

Mr. Howard is always available to be in the community at the request of the PAB. The OECR is developing an incident response plan to activate both staff and board members to respond to situations. This will allow immediate response rather than using time to develop a response plan when an incident occurs. Vice Chair Turner is available to speak with Mr. Howard regarding these materials and reiterates the importance of the PAB monitoring the police response to campus protests at Johns Hopkins University.

Chair Harris agrees with Vice Chair Turner's statements about campus protests and suggests himself Chair Harris also suggests OECR staff to find student government emails to share PAB resources whether the campus police fall under PAB jurisdiction or not. Chair Harris is aware of organizations that provide legal training and provide legal monitoring when there are protests. Board member Kenny shares there haven't been much interaction from her understanding. Board member Kenny asks what authority allows BPD to play a role in campus protests at Johns Hopkins. Board member Kenny also notes the legal observers who wear lime green hats are from Maryland Legal Aid and suggests it might be helpful for the PAB to partner with them to include police accountability in their training. Baltimore Action Legal Team is a nonprofit is also a possible partner for anything that stems from a direct-action event.

From Chair Harris' understanding, Johns Hopkins Public Safety only has two employees and believes they are still in the process of hiring, as this information was shared about two months ago. Chair Harris notes they have campus security and imagines BPD is there to support and what a long-term relationship between Johns Hopkins and BPD might look like. They want to ensure they have a functional relationship and Chair Harris is not sure if that exists in a memorandum of understanding between Johns Hopkins and BPD. Acting Director Watkins shared the link in the chat for the memorandum of understanding between BPD and Johns Hopkins⁶.

Old Business

Annual Report

Chair Harris reminds the PAB they received a draft of the annual report. Board member Jesmond Riggins notes the PAB has a solid draft of the annual report to review and consider a vote soon. Board member Riggins encourages the PAB to review the executive summary, recommendations and conclusion which summarizes the report.

Chair Harris notes there was several items the PAB requested from OECR and hope to receive them to include in the report. The PAB requested budgeting and staffing allocations based on the supplementary appropriation and budgeting mechanisms that are associated with the PAB. These requests have been shared with the PAB including publicly available items such as the Mayor's proposed budget for the next fiscal year.

Board member Janetta Gilmore thanks Board member Riggins for the level of effort and work he put into creating the annual report. Chair Harris thanks the Policy and Advice Committee who has been working on this report since November and dealt with several challenges. When the PAB is comfortable, they will hold a vote to publish the report publicly. The report has been submitted to be designed so minor changes can be made. The report now falls in line with the outline the PAB submitted in November. If any board members have any recommendations for change, they should send them to Chair Harris. The vote to publish the report should not be a digital vote and should not be held until the next PAB meeting, so Chair Harris will be calling a special meeting specifically for a vote to move the annual report forward over the next week.

Board member Mansur Abdul-Malik asks if there is version of the report board members can leave comments. Chair Harris notes there is a version board members can provide comments on the PAB SharePoint page, if board members have access to their city emails. If not, board members can access the report on Google Document. Board member Riggins will expand access to all board members to provide comments.

Chair Harris notes the importance of quality data. Chair Harris recalls Board member Kenny reporting the data BPD provides for consent decree hearings is different than the data that is provided to the public. It is important that data aligns. Chair Harris notes many complaints are missing location details. One of the recommendations in the annual report address the necessity of complete an accurate data during intake of complaints and investigations and there is a team specifically designed to evaluate data and produce visualizations.

Chair Harris notes this will not be the only report produced by the PAB. They have additional recommendations and reports that will be released throughout the year as they may not want to wait a

⁶ [BPD-JHU-MOU-09.19.2022.pdf](#)

year before they make certain presentations. There are items they did not include in this annual report that they may want to include in a separate report.

Budget Discussion

Chair Harris notes there was a discussion about the budget that was supposed to happen two meetings ago and was tabled to this meeting. Acting Director Watkins reports information from the Mayor's administration is forthcoming.

Chair Harris notes the PAB is aware there was a letter sent to the Mayor with requests to improve the civilian oversight process which includes understanding the budget.

Youth Vacancy

Chair Harris notes there has been a vacancy for the youth board member for about 145 days. They have received a few applications for the youth board member and resumes were shared with the PAB prior to this meeting. Chair Harris proposes an executive session to discuss the resumes and decide which names they would like to move forward. Board member Kenny reminds board members to keep the age limit in mind as she recalls the former youth board member aged out. She does not believe it would not be strategic to allow a youth member who is 23 to join the PAB as they would not be able to fill out their term. Chair Harris notes the previous youth board member had time commitments that caused her to step down. As far as Chair Harris recalls from the ordinance, there is no provision for whether the youth must remain within the eligibility age during their term. It is important for the PAB to keep that in mind, but also consider how they are developing leaders. Chair Harris understands college can take individuals to different places, so they want to consider someone who is staying in Baltimore to do the work. They also need to understand the importance of investing in young people and identifying young leadership to pass off the tools and resources they've learned as there young people who are passionate about this work and want to be included in the process. Age may be factor, but Chair Harris doesn't believe it would put the PAB in a situation where they are in violation of the law, should the youth member turn 24 during their term.

Civil Rights Week

Chair Harris notes a link for the request for proposals for Civil Rights Week was posted in the chat. Chair Harris has been working on a convening of PABs around the state. Like NACOLE, Chair Harris believes there should be a similar network around the state. This could be a proposal for Civil Rights Week, but there should be a convening so there are open lines of communication between PABs. Chair Harris notes the PAB may think the issues they face are challenging because they are in a large city that has visibility around policing. Chair Harris has been in places in Western Maryland and Eastern Shore where he has been appalled by some of the things they experience when interacting with law enforcement that Chair Harris would characterize as being 40-50 years behind. There is a need for the PAB to be leader statewide and work to support PABs around the state through open lines of communication to assist them in navigating the process of building a civilian oversight infrastructure. This is one potential proposal but they're open to others. Chair Harris believes it is critical to build police accountability into Civil Rights Week. In 2015, there were many discussions about the violation of constitutional rights and unconstitutional and the PAB was created for transparency and accountability to address those violations. Chair Harris encourages the PAB to submit their ideas for proposals for Civil Rights Week.

Public Comments

Board member Bodde shares when he attended the diversity, equity, and inclusion training at the Patterson Park Branch Library, he noticed a security person from the Library Special Police. He also noticed a special market security personnel when visiting a public market. Board member Bodde is

wondering how many quasi police like institutions exist in the city, how they operate and if they have any oversight, as he is unclear on their legal standing and what authority they possess. Chair Harris agrees with Board member Bodde and believes those agencies should have a relationship with the PAB and other law enforcement agencies. Chair Harris suggests creating a subcommittee to investigate that issue. Ms. Aeiramique Glass provides some context to Board member Bodde's observation. Many of the security personnel are off duty or retired law enforcement. Ms. Glass believes this is a clear opportunity to create a relationship and oversight structure to be able to monitor them, as these agencies are everywhere in the city. Chair Harris recognizes the ways these agencies can create distrust between the residents and law enforcement. ACC member Ray Kelly echoes Ms. Glass' point and confirms there is no statewide regulation for security agencies. They apply training necessary for their business. Their only state requirement is similar to the requirements for civilians such as qualifications to possess a handgun. However, they have no oversight for security agencies. They run on the services they self-report such as armed security guards who would have to go through the state required handgun training.

Executive Session

Vice Chair Turner motions to enter executive session to discuss the youth board member candidates. The motion is seconded by Board member Kenny. The motion passes. The PAB enters executive session at 7:41 PM and returns at 8:02 PM. The PAB voted to send 2 youth applicants to the Mayor's Office of Government Relations.

Adjournment

Board member Kenny moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion is seconded by Vice Chair Turner. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Submitted,

Stephanie V. Lee

Secretary