

February 19, 2015

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners was held on the above date, commencing at 5:36 P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioners: Sarah W. Morgan, Chair
Michael M. O'Hear
Ann Wilson
Marisabel Cabrera
Steven M. DeVougas

ABSENT: Commissioner: Kathryn A. Hein (Excused)

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Rohlfing, Chief, Milwaukee Fire Department; and Edward Flynn, Chief, Milwaukee Police Department.

The Chair made the following statement: "The Board of Fire and Police Commissioners believes that it is in the interest of essentially everyone in our community, including Appellant Christopher Manney, Chief of Police Edward Flynn, members of the Milwaukee Police Department and members of the general public, that this matter be heard and decided as expeditiously as this can be accomplished in accordance with Commission rules and Wisconsin law. Necessary pretrial preparation is ongoing, and the matter is moving forward under the guidance of an attorney who is familiar with the process. Efforts are also underway to identify an appropriate venue and retain an independent hearing examiner to assist in conducting the proceedings. The Board of Fire and Police Commissioners stands ready to hear and decide this case as soon as remaining issues can be resolved. A 2-3 day hearing is anticipated, with dates between March 19 and March 27 under consideration. We will announce firm dates and a location to the parties, local media and members of the public as soon as this information can be determined."

The Chair presented for adoption minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 5, 2015. Commissioner O'Hear moved approval of the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner DeVougas. The motion carried unanimously.

1. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a) The Chair announced that the 2013 Use of Force report, presented by Professor Steven Brandl of UWM at the February 5, 2015 meeting, has been posted on the Commission's website. The Board wishes to give the public and Commissioners time to review it. People will be able to submit questions they would like answered about the report on the website, and Dr. Brandl will return at a future Commission meeting to address those written questions.

2. NEW BUSINESS:

a) The Chair introduced Chris Ahmuty, Executive Director of the ACLU of Wisconsin, who presented the results of a survey they did regarding citizen interaction with the police. He thanked the Board for inviting him to share this survey and opined that this shows the Board is willing to assert its oversight function and hear from multiple sources on all sides of the issues. He also credited the Board and Alderman Murphy for having the Board's Police Satisfaction Survey done before all the other surveys that were done after the incidents in Ferguson, Missouri and New York City. The Board's survey was a customer service improvement survey, whereas the ACLU survey questions were directed at certain issues. Since the ACLU has a very strong youth program, most of the 804 respondents were under 24 years of age, non-white, and live in six zip codes. The survey was used to give them an opportunity to think about the impact of civil liberties on their lives. Mr. Ahmuty clarified that this was not a scientific survey.

There are many kinds of contact police have with citizens in Milwaukee, including school presentations. The survey showed a high level of encounters between citizens and police. There were a total of 243,328 stops initiated by the police in 2013 from a population of 599,164, resulting in up to 41% of the population being stopped by police, although Mr. Ahmuty pointed out that this includes individuals who may have been stopped more than once, so this percentage is likely lower. In communities where police contact was the greatest, respondents had lower opinions of the police, were less likely to contact them if they saw a crime, and felt police were abusive of their authority. These survey results are also found in other surveys, including the Board's survey. The most negative responses are due to the number of stops the respondent had.

The whole point of community-oriented policing is for the community to partner with the police. The respondents told the ACLU that significant numbers of people would never voluntarily help the police in an investigation. The number of citizen complaints filed with the department and the Board have gone down, but this survey says that 2/3 of the respondents feel it does not help to file a complaint due to their perception of the integrity of the complaint process. There are a number of things that stood out to Mr. Ahmuty in the responses. For instance, the question "How many times have you witnessed someone being handcuffed during an arrest?" had most respondents saying they have seen people handcuffed more than 9 times. There are steps he would like to suggest to the Research Committee, and he would like to work with the committee. Stops undermine confidence in the police among people in the community who feel unfairly targeted by such tactics. The police must collect and regularly release racial and other demographic data on traffic and pedestrian stops, frisks, and searches throughout the city. The Research Committee and community need to evaluate how the high number of stops affects police community relations and community oriented policing efforts. This survey suggests areas that need work. He hopes the Board will get the whole committee involved in working toward a resolution.

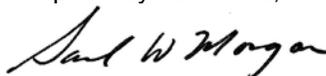
Commissioner O'Hear thanked Mr. Ahmuty for his presentation. Commissioner Wilson asked whether a broad range of ages had been surveyed. Mr. Ahmuty answered yes, but the majority of respondents were under 24 years old. Mr. Ahmuty pointed out that if you look at overall satisfaction, young people 13-18 are actually more satisfied with their police contacts. That indicates there is still a chance to work with them, and the department might want to concentrate their police community relations with this age group. More than the STOP program needs to be presented to them. Commissioner Wilson said she will contact Mr. Ahmuty later with more questions.

3. FIRE DEPARTMENT:

a) The Chair began to present a letter regarding a request to extend a probationary period when members of the public present began to speak, demanding that the Board set a hearing date for the Christopher Manney disciplinary appeal. The Chair stated that those in attendance could speak during public comment, but not during the business portion of the meeting. The individuals who were speaking over the Chair disregarded requests to save their comments for the public comment section of the meeting and disregarded warnings that their comments were out of order and may result in their being removed from the room. Commissioner DeVougas moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner O'Hear. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting concluded at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarah W. Morgan
Chair

SWM:REK:rk