

**Police Accountability Board - Regular Board Meeting****Date:** January 9, 2025**Time:** 6:00 PM**Location:** 245 E. Main Street, Rochester, NY**Livestreamed on:** YouTube  
(youtube.com/rochesterpab) & X (Twitter)**Police Accountability Board Meeting Minutes****Date:** January 9, 2025**Start Time:** 6:09 PM**End Time:** 8:29 PM**Attendees**

- **Board Members:** Lawrence Knox (Chair), Rabbi Drorah Setel (Vice Chair), Daniel Cadet, Rev. Keith Patterson, Arlene Brown, William Clark
- **Absent/Excused:** Yvonne Wilson, Lwam Tecleab
- **Staff:** Dr. Lesli Myers-Small (Executive Director), Benjamin Wittwer (Deputy Executive Director), Brianna Milon (Communications Manager), Victoria Harmon (Secretary to the PAB)
- **ASL Interpreters:** Madisen Baldwin, James Brown

**Meeting Agenda and Minutes****1. Welcome & Introductions (6:09 PM)**

- Chair Knox called the meeting to order and requested introductions. Board members and the Executive Director introduced themselves.
- Acknowledged the passing of former President Jimmy Carter, highlighting his leadership and legacy, particularly his focus on community engagement and volunteering.
- Announced that board member Mary Wambach would be resigning from the PAB due to personal health reasons. A letter from Mary was read aloud. Board members and staff shared their appreciation for Mary's contributions, particularly in advocating for the deaf community.

**2. Approval of Prior Minutes (6:10 PM)**

- **December 5 Minutes:** Motion to approve by A. Brown, seconded by K. Patterson. Motion carried unanimously.

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- **Strategic Plan Presentation:**
- Presenter: Deb Hammer (CEO of Breakthrough Leadership Consulting)
- Overview strategic plan process:
  - Breakthrough Leadership Consulting has been chosen as the consultant for the Strategic Plan project due to their experience with civilian oversight entities and their local presence in Rochester.
  - The strategic planning process is designed to evaluate the current state of the PAB, engage stakeholders, and create a forward-looking plan for the next 3-5 years.
  - The process includes identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, setting clear goals, and creating an actionable plan with assigned responsibilities.
  - The final strategic plan will be completed by June 2025, with development of measurable outcomes to track progress and success.
- **Language Access Plan Presentation:**
- Presenter: Dr. Heather Feinman (Language Access Coordinator)
- Key Points:
  - Ensures compliance with state requirements by providing translated materials and services in multiple languages, including those for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.
  - Certify that non-English-speaking community members have equal access to PAB resources and support.

**4. Staff Reports (6:42 PM)****Public Affairs and Community Engagement:**

- Brianna Milon introduced as the new Communications Manager.
- PAB Survey results:
  - 100 survey responses have been collected, with almost 75% of respondents residing in Rochester.
  - Gender distribution: 61.2% female, 35.7% male, and a small percentage identifying as non-binary.
  - Age distribution is fairly balanced, and 20% of respondents identify as disabled.

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- Racial/ethnic distribution: 61% White, 30% Black/African American, 5% Hispanic/Latino, and 7% Asian/Pacific Islander.
- 93% of respondents speak English as their first language.
- 37% of respondents are very familiar with PAB, while 26% are sort of familiar.
- Community interest in attending future PAB events: 44% said yes, and 41% said maybe, contingent on more information.
- 70 % of respondents who have attended PAB events found our presentations to be effective.
- On holding RPD officers accountable: 66% said the city does not do enough, and 18% said they do.
- 54% of respondents have experienced or know someone who has experienced alleged police misconduct.
- 39% are not familiar with the complaint process and 30% are very familiar with it.
- 50% would file a complaint if they experienced police misconduct, 19% are concerned about retaliation from RPD, and 12% are unsure how to file a complaint.
- 66% believe PAB would be more effective if it had the power to discipline RPD officers directly.
- 75% of respondents support the release of investigative reports by PAB.
- The survey target is 500 responses, and efforts are underway to engage more community members, including those in the Spanish-speaking community.
- **Community Outreach:**
  - **Outreach Events and New Partnerships:** Ongoing engagement with various community organizations, including Cameron Ministries, Father Tracy Center, and new partnerships with the African American Health Coalition, New York Immigration Coalition, and Save Rochester.
  - **Stakeholder Mapping:** A database of over 200 community organizations have been established to improve strategic outreach planning.
  - **Upcoming event:** A community forum is being planned, and discussions are underway with Mr. Robert Ricks, father of Robert Brooks, to amplify the voices of those impacted by law enforcement misconduct. The PAB will facilitate this event, emphasizing justice and accountability.

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- **Complaints Received:**
  - 14 complaints were received in December.
  - 12 were opened for investigation, and 2 were administratively closed.
- The Board reviewed and moved to close four cases during the reporting period.
- Intake forms in English and Spanish have been made available on our website, with further translations underway to ensure accessibility for all residents.

**Policy and Oversight:**

- **General Order 680 Updates:** Chief David Smith of the Rochester Police Department adopted PAB's recommended changes to General Order 680 (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.
- **Cost of Misconduct Proposal for Change:** Approved at the December Board meeting, and we are awaiting a feedback from the Chief of Police.

**Investigations:**

- **Disciplinary Matrix Revisions:** The Deputy Director provided the proposed revisions to the PAB Disciplinary Matrix to the board to vote on. The key revisions to the Disciplinary Matrix include:
  - 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.

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- The board recommended changing the term "investigator" to "board" in the section of the Disciplinary Matrix that states “the matrix allows the investigator to consider alternative outcomes, which are aimed at restoring the relationship between law enforcement and the community as well as providing opportunities for law enforcement officers to learn and grow from their mistakes.” This change clarifies that the board is also responsible for recommending and deciding on alternative outcomes, rather than leaving this responsibility solely to the investigators.
- A vote to adopt Disciplinary Matrix occurred after the executive session.

**Motion and Vote (8:28 PM)**

Motion moved by L. Knox to accept the revised Disciplinary Matrix with the recommended change. The motion was seconded by W. Clark and carried unanimously.

- Offers have been accepted for digital forensic analyst and staff attorney positions and the candidates are expected to begin next month.
- The Deputy Director provided an update on the ongoing court case involving the City of Rochester and the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU), over the publication of police discipline records. He noted the outcome of this could set a precedent for the entire state and affect how the PAB handles misconduct reporting.

**Training and Professional Development:**

- The Deputy Director has successfully completed the City’s 11-week Lead On leadership program and is now officially Lead On certified. He intends to implement a succession plan to ensure effective role coverage at the PAB.
- Six staff and one board member completed the Citizen’s Police Academy, and the PAB will begin presenting at future sessions, marking a step forward in engagement with the public.

**5. Chair’s Report (7:17 PM)**

- The Chair acknowledged the importance of accountability within law enforcement, specifically highlighting the case of Robert Briggs.
- Highlighted the PAB's growth and progress since its inception, thanking the board, staff, and community for their support.

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- Acknowledged improved relationships with the city council, mayor, and RPD, but emphasized that more support is needed, especially regarding legal challenges and full charter implementation.

**6. Committee Reports (7:22 PM)**

- **Training Committee:** Upcoming training/meeting with Policy and Oversight on January 27<sup>th</sup> division to discuss policy recommendations and priorities for the year.

**7. Old Business (7:23 PM) - None****8. New Business (7:23 PM)**

- The Executive Director presented the new community engagement booklet to the board, designed to consolidate various resources and pamphlets into one comprehensive document. This booklet aims to make information more accessible and engaging.

**9. Executive Session (7:24 PM)**

- Motion moved by L. Knox to enter executive session, seconded by D. Setel. Motion carried unanimously.
- No votes taken during the executive session.

**10. Adjournment (8:29 PM)****Next Meeting:** February 6, 2025, at 6:00 PM