



INGLEWOOD, CALIFORNIA
Website: www.cityofinglewood.org

**Citizen Police Oversight Commission
Meeting
September 10, 2008
City Council Chambers, Ninth Floor, City Hall
Minutes**

Members Present:

Chairperson Adrienne Sears
Commissioner David P. Stewart
Commissioner Cleveland Brown
Commissioner Joy Brown-Price
Commissioner Wayne Spencer
Commissioner Judy A. Bowles
Commissioner Gilbert Mathieu
Commissioner Rita Hall

Members Absent:

Vice Chairperson Donald Nicholson
Commissioner Herman Boykin

Staff Present:

Mr. Michael Falkow, Acting Assistant City Administrator
Ms. Kathy Ares, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Sears at 6:40 p.m. A quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Spencer.

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Commissioner Hall.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Morris Griffith commented on the officer involved shooting that occurred on Market Street, August 31, 2008. He also asked why the victim was transported to UCLA Hospital and not Centinela Hospital. Mr. Griffith expressed the need for a Town Hall Meeting.

Mr. Leroy Fisher expressed his concerns regarding the recent officer involved shootings. He also expressed his support for Chief Seabrooks.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner Mathieu, seconded by Commissioner Hall and carried that the minutes of the August 13, 2008 meeting be approved.

COMMISSION ADVISOR REPORTS

There were no commission advisor reports.

ACTION ITEMS

Revise process for investigation of citizen complaints.

Recommendation: Appoint an Ad Hoc Committee not to exceed five commission members to propose edits to Ordinance No. 04-16 which specifies the duties and powers of the Citizen Police Oversight Commission.

It was moved by Commissioner Mathieu, seconded by Commissioner Brown-Price and carried that the Commission does hereby appoint an Ad Hoc Committee not to exceed five commission members to propose edits to Ordinance No. 04-16 which specifies the duties and powers of the Citizen Police Oversight Commission.

Discuss the process by which the Commission can obtain independent outside counsel and/or an Executive Director to assist the Commission on investigations of officer-involved shootings and excessive force cases.

Recommendation: Request independent outside counsel and/or an Executive Director.

It was moved by Commissioner Mathieu, seconded by Commissioner Hall that the Commission does hereby request an independent outside counsel and/or an Executive Director. The following discussions took place:

Commissioner Brown-Price asked if this item was suggesting how the commission would pay for outside legal counsel or if the commission was seeking outside legal counsel.

Chairperson Sears commented that this item suggests that the Commission obtain outside legal counsel because the city's attorney does not provide legal consultation for the Commission. Chairperson Sears further commented that there has been five officer involved shootings and other critical incidents, and she is of the opinion that the Commission needs an independent outside legal counsel specifically dedicated to the Commission.

Commissioner Brown-Price asked if this item achieves this purpose.

Chairperson Sears deferred the question to Mr. Falkow.

Mr. Falkow stated that this item would provide a way for the Commissioners to request the expending of funds. He further stated that in order for the Commission to discuss and potentially make a motion involving the expenditure of funds, the Commission would have to direct staff to prepare and submit a staff report to the Mayor and City Council at the next appropriate meeting. The Commission would specify an amount with the stipulation that the amount not exceed a specific dollar amount for the purpose to hire an outside independent counsel. If the Mayor and City Council approves the expending of funds, the Commission would have authority to hire an outside independent counsel.

Commissioner Mathieu commented that the money in the current budget may not be enough to hire an independent legal counsel. Commissioner Mathieu made a motion to request that the Mayor and City Council hire an independent counsel and that the Mayor and City Council provide the appropriate funding.

Chairperson Sears commented that it has been made clear to her ~~that by the~~ *a City Council Official that Council* will probably not take any actions with regards to the Commission until the Office of Independent Review has concluded its investigation.

Commissioner Mathieu suggested that a request be made to the City Council to have an outside independent counsel and consider having appropriate funds available.

Chairperson Sears stated that it is her understanding that there is approximately \$38,000 in the Commission's FY 2007/2008 budget.

Mr. Falkow stated that the City is at the culmination of the FY 2007/2008 budget.

Chairperson Sears asked if the monies for FY 2007/2008 budget carry over to FY 2008/2009 budget.

Mr. Falkow stated that the monies do not carry over.

Commissioner Brown-Price suggested that the description for the action item reads as follows:

“Discuss the process by which the Commission can obtain independent outside counsel and/or an Executive Director to assist the Commission **in its** investigations of officer-involved shootings and excessive force cases.”

Mr. Falkow advised the Commission that there will be a budget briefing Wednesday, September 17th in the Community Room at City Hall from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

Mr. Falkow requested a recess so he could look at the draft budget to find out the dollar amount in the Commission's FY 2008/2009 budget.

The Citizen Police Oversight Commission recessed at 7:03 p.m. and reconvened at 7:07 p.m.

Mr. Falkow advised the Commission that the FY 2008/2009 proposed budget for the Commission is \$40,000.

Commissioner Mathieu stated that the amount in the budget is insufficient to hire an independent legal counsel. Commissioner Mathieu requested that the Commission send a request for a budget amendment to request monies be provided for an independent legal counsel.

Chairperson Sears asked staff if it is possible to send the request since it's not on the agenda.

Mr. Falkow commented that the item is not on the Commission's agenda and cannot be acted upon. He further commented that once the FY 2008/2009 budget is adopted the Commission could request a budget transfer.

Commissioner Mathieu made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Brown-Price, and carried, that the Commission request from the City Council funds to provide outside independent legal counsel in an amount not to exceed \$35,000 allocating funds from the Commission's proposed FY 08/09 annual budget.

Chairperson Sears stated that the rationale would be based on the five shootings and other critical incidents that have taken place in the City. The Commission has not had access to an independent legal counsel. She further stated that there have been requests for media statements and that the Commission needs to know what they are able and unable to say legally. The Commission wants to provide the community with as much information as possible; however, it needs to be done in a way that will not jeopardize the Commission and the investigations.

CLOSED SESSION

The Citizen Police Oversight Commission recessed for closed session at 7:37 p.m. and reconvened at 9:22 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION REPORT OUT

Mr. Falkow reported that the Commission has requested that Chief Seabrooks attend the next scheduled Citizen Police Oversight Commission Meeting to provide an update on the Wicks shooting and the officer involved shooting that took place August 31, 2008.

STAFF REMARKS

There were no staff remarks.

COMMISSION MEMBERS REMARKS

Commissioner Brown commented that the meeting was good.

Commissioner Brown-Price commented that she was pleased with the business that took place at tonight's meeting and that the meeting was productive.

Commissioner Hall commented that she is of the opinion that too much time is wasted and that the Commission should have been further along in closed session in handling cases. Commissioner Hall requested that in the future members be at the meeting in a timely manner. Commissioner Hall further commented that the meeting would run smoothly if the members did not talk all at once.

Commissioner Stewart commented that he agrees with Commissioner Hall's comments.

Commissioner Bowels commented that the meeting was good and the Commission was able to complete its business and agrees with Commissioner Hall's comments.

Commissioner Mathieu commented on the conduct of the meeting and suggested that members of the public be ~~restricted~~ *prohibited from speaking* while meeting is in session. Commissioner Mathieu requested that discussions be limited to ten minutes and that numbers be placed on closed session items that are to be reviewed by the Commission. He also requested that identification cards be provided to the Commission.

Commissioner Mathieu further commented that he believes the reason why individuals are transported to UCLA hospital and not Centinela hospital is because Centinela hospital ~~is closed~~ ~~and~~ has new owners.

Commissioner Spencer commented that he concurs with Commissioner Hall's comments and agrees with Commissioner Mathieu that the Commissioners need identification cards. He encouraged Commissioners to participate in the police department's ride-along. He suggested that on-going training and a certification program be provided to the Commission.

Chairperson Sears thanked the public for their support and comments. Chairperson Sears recommended that a portion of the Commission's budget be used for NACOLE training. Chairperson Sears acknowledge Vice Chairperson Nicholson's absence and commented that he indicated to her, Councilman Morales, Chief Seabrooks, and the Los Angeles Times that he was taking a leave of absence from the Commission to spend time with his family and focus on his profession. Chairperson Sears stated that she wishes Vice Chairperson Nicholson well and awaits his return.

Chairperson Sears further commented that she is happy that the Commission will be getting legal counsel. Chairperson Sears requested that a step by step fact sheet that denotes the process by which investigations are conducted be provided by the Chief of Police.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

(Corrections and additions are italicized; deletions are strikeouts)