



**OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY
OPAT Commission Community Meeting**

Minutes

Tuesday, February 15, 2021 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting held remotely via Zoom due to COVID-19 Pandemic

OPAT Commission Members Present: Executive Director Stephanie Everett, Chair; IAOP Chair Judge Leslie Harris (ret.); CRB Chair Peter Alvarez.

Call to order at 2:00 p.m

Executive Director, Stephanie Everett, opened the virtual meeting by welcoming attendees.

The Mayor's Office of Language and Communication Access facilitated language services for this meeting. The verbal language interpretation services were provided in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Vietnamese and Cabo Verdean Creole. American Sign Language services were also provided.

All attendees were informed by Board Administrative Assistant, Benjamin Tillman that during the meeting: automatic closed captioning could be turned on through Zoom; all members of the public would have their cameras turned off; and during the Public Comment period they would be prompted to unmute themselves.

Director Everett introduced the current OPAT staff members: Karen Alcantara, Executive Assistant; Benjamin Tillman, Board Administrative Assistant; John Steies, Deputy Director; Reynolds Graves, Chief of Staff; Michel Toney, Investigator; Tastery Reed, Jr., Investigator; and Andrew Cherry, Administrative Intake Specialist. Director Everett noted that there are multiple open positions on OPAT Staff. Applications can be submitted through the City of Boston website.

Director Everett introduced Honorable Judge Leslie Harris (ret.), newly sworn in IAOP Chair and OPAT Commission member. Director Everett introduced Peter Alvarez, newly sworn in CRB Chair and OPAT Commission member. Judge Harris and Chair Alvarez expressed that they were looking forward to starting OPAT's work.

Director Everett shared updates on the improvements to the OPAT website. The website now includes the current complaint form, a dashboard that shows the complaints received in the past calendar month, and FAQs.

Director Everett provided an update on the two BPD complaints received by OPAT in January 2022. The status of both complaints is Pending.

Director Everett also noted that BPD posted an update on the actions they have taken since September 2021 to adopt Police Reform Task Force recommendations. OPAT Staff provided the link to this update in the meeting chat.

Proposed Regulations Discussion

Director Everett explained that there was a mandate in the Ordinance creating OPAT to complete a department manual and to have regulations to guide the operation of the department. Director Everett explained the composition of the OPAT Commission and its power to approve both the manual and regulations. Director Everett reviewed the definitions from the proposed regulations. The other two Commissioners did not have objections or comments on this.

Director Everett explained the quorum requirements from the proposed regulations. There was a brief discussion between the Commissioners on the CRB quorum requirement. Director Everett explained that 6 CRB members are required to meet quorum so that a CRB meeting can be held. If the CRB votes on a matter during their meeting, yes votes from 2/3 of the full CRB are required to approve the matter.

Director Everett introduced the board meeting calendar and explained that it was structured so that at least one OPAT board meets each month. CRB meetings would be held every 3rd Tuesday in February, May, August, and November. IAOP meetings would be held every 3rd Thursday in January, April, July, and October. OPAT Commission meetings would be held in March, June, September, and December. Director Everett explained that the OPAT Commission meeting dates are not set out in these proposed regulations because the Commission may need to meet more frequently.

Director Everett introduced the proposed regulations on incomplete complaints. She explained the methods of submitting complaints and what is considered an incomplete complaint, as defined by the proposed regulations; these guidelines were developed after consultation with BPD in how they define and address incomplete complaints.

Judge Harris asked if there would be hard copies of the OPAT complaint form available to the community. Director Everett responded that there would be hard copies available at the OPAT office once open to the community and that OPAT is currently looking into other community locations, like libraries and community centers, where forms could be available.

Director Everett explained the steps that intake staff will take to address each incomplete complaint. These steps include bringing incomplete complaints before the CRB so that the board can review the information available. If the CRB determines that there is not enough information, the file will be considered closed. However, OPAT Staff will maintain file records and can reopen the file if the complainant returns and asks OPAT Staff to reopen it.

Judge Harris expressed concern about the incomplete complaint timeframes set out in the proposed regulations and how this would impact homeless individuals and those with limited access to mail services. Both Judge Harris and Chair Alvarez raised the idea of dropboxes maintained in public areas. Director Everett expressed concern that these dropboxes would be unmaintained and could be easily tampered with. Both Judge Harris and Chair Alvarez raised the issue of the 90-day window given for complaints to reach complete status during the intake process. Judge Harris stated that 90 days would, theoretically, be enough to find probable cause to move forward with complaint investigations. Chair Alvarez expressed that the 90-day window should be a goal rather than a mandate. All three OPAT Commissioners agreed that flexibility was essential and that the OPAT Commission would evaluate if the 90-day window was effective in practice. The OPAT Commissioners decided to take the issue of incomplete complaints up in greater detail at the next OPAT Commission meeting.

Director Everett provided a brief update on some of the regulations that the Massachusetts POST Commission has proposed in connection with the OPAT regulations about case investigation timelines.

Public Comment

Director Everett opened the meeting up for the public comment period.

Director Everett answered questions about the complaint form and the complaint process.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:40pm