



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

DAWN M. JONES, CITY CLERK

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

MARCH 22, 2023, 6:00 P.M.

Committee Members Present:

Troy Warner, Eli Wax, Lori Hamann, Canneth Lee.

Others Present:

Dawn Jones, Victoria Trujillo*, Bob Palmer, Karen L. White, Sharon L. McBride, Scott Ruszkowski*, Sonia Perez*, Suzie Krill*, Melanie Herendeen, Rachel Tomas Morgan*, Aaron Knepper*, Linda Wolfson*, Myra Reid*, ABC57*, Joshua Morgan, Trina Robinson, Pastor Odell Hughes, Isaac Hunt.

Agenda:

Council Feedback of Community Review Board Director Forum and Input into Final Determination

Members marked with an asterisk (*) are present digitally

Please note the attached link for the meeting recording:

<https://docs.southbendin.gov/WebLink/browse.aspx?dbid=0&mediaid=364884>

Committee Chair Troy Warner called to order the Community Relations Committee meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Council Feedback of Community Review Board Director Forum and Input into Final Determination

Committee Chair Tory Warner commenced the meeting by informing attendees that the community is approaching the end of the process for the establishment of the Community Review Board (CRB). The Ordinance requires the council to submit a resolution to the mayor with no more than three names. A resolution was filed on March 22, 2023, with blank name spaces because that date was the last date for filing. He gave a summary of the process plan for the Bill and stated that the Bill will be heard in the council committees on March 24, 2023.

Attorney Bob Palmer explained that the earlier scheduled executive session had to be cancelled because there was no quorum. Also, since there were only four council members in attendance, the meeting did not constitute a meeting under the Open Door Law.

Committee Vice-Chair Hamann stated that the candidates that stood out for her were Stephanie Ball because of her level of preparation, understanding of the Ordinance, and her well-informed responses; and Charles King because she perceives that he can manage the role and supervise the Board. She pointed out Matthew Topeli's responses which she found

Pastor Odell Hughes, president of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, stated his concern about transparency. He wondered if the CRB will create transparency because investigations of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance showed that it is difficult to get information about charges and incidents involving citizens and the police department. The transparency problem permeates all existing Boards. He asked if the Board would have access to information within a reasonable time so that the public can be in the know.

Council President McBride responded that the question is loaded because there are many things which cannot be divulged during a police investigation. The CRB director bridges the gap of trust between the police department and the community when the investigation is concluded. The transparency hub has some information, but the CRB will have more data and more interaction with the public to enable them to understand the data and the process. Pastor Hughes asked if the information will be kept on police officers, and President McBride replied that the council is trying to develop the information, hence the establishment of the CRB. The council is intentional about working to get the information that citizens require.

Committee member Lee spoke about Group Violence Intervention (GVI) which was established about eleven (11) years ago. GVI's effectiveness was doubted when it first (1st) started, but through the years, it has been able to act as a liaison and is now a good collaboration effort between the community and law enforcement. It has also helped to build trust. He encouraged everyone to continue to work and build because things will change.

Committee Chair Warner clarified to Joshua Morgan that city legal and the administration were involved in the drafting of the Ordinance. Also, there were extensive discussions. However, if current evaluations show that the drafters were wrong, the Ordinance will certainly be re-examined. Regarding the release of the identity of the juvenile victim, Committee Chair Warner stated that no council member was involved.

Committee member Wax stated that regarding Garrity, Miranda, and police officers' rights, the Ordinance does not supersede state law in any way. The rights of officers will always be respected in the operations of the CRB.

Isaac Hunt, project manager for GVI, stated that an initiative like the CRB was instituted in Detroit and it is probably the best thing because it gives transparency to the community and protection for police officers. He pointed out that the CRB was developed using best practices from the entire country and stressed that the Board is long overdue. He encouraged everyone to give the Board a chance, since it can be scrapped if found ineffective.

Committee Vice-Chair Hamann pointed out that primary complaints received by Boards like the CRB are regarding experiences had in interactions with individual police officers, not regarding major crime investigations. Thus, the Board's work may not involve major investigations.

Trina Robinson stated that, as president of NAACP, the bulk of complaints received are about cases that have gone through the internal affairs process. She pointed out that the purpose of the present meeting was to determine the director of the CRB and not to discuss the Ordinance.



Committee Chair Warner informed that there will be a substitute to amend the resolution filed with blank name spaces and the names will be added before the committee meeting scheduled for March 28, 2023.

With no further business, Committee Chair Warner adjourned the Community Relations meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Warner', written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Troy Warner, Committee Chair

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