

Police Civilian Review Panel

March 20th, 2017, 7:00 p.m. Rooms 9/10, Fairfax County Government Center

The meeting began at 7:05 pm.

Panel Members present:

Hansel Aguilar

Kathleen Davis-Siudut

Steve Descano

Hollye Doane

Doug Kay

Randy Sayles

Jean Senseman

Adrian Steel

Rhonda VanLowe

Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova opened the meeting, calling it historic and described how excited all those involved are to begin the Civilian Review Panel process. She said the creation of the Panel and the Independent Police Auditor were two primary recommendations of the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission (“Ad Hoc Commission”). Chairman Bulova thanked Adrian Steel for agreeing to chair the Panel.

Braddock District Supervisor John Cook said the quality of all applicants for service on the Panel was very high, and those selected provide a breadth of experience. Supervisor Cook then described the actions of the Board of Supervisors to implement the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Commission, as well as, the impetus for creating the Ad Hoc Commission. He also described the structure of the Panel and the Auditor as prescribed by the Board of Supervisors and the reasons behind the Board’s decision to establish this structure. Supervisor Cook stated that the Panel will speak to the Board and the public through its reports.

Chairman Bulova then recognized Del. Vivian Watts and Del. Marcus Simon, as well as members of Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) present.

Chairman Bulova said that the FCPD has been engaged in the work of the Ad Hoc Commission, serving as members and in implementing the recommendations. She reminded the Panel that Fairfax County is the safest jurisdiction of its size due to our well-trained and highly educated police force and an engaged community that makes good choices.

Panel Chairman Steel introduced Judge William Webster and described their professional and personal connections that have developed over the years. Panel Chairman Steel, who grew up in Florissant, Mo., is a former clerk to Judge

Webster and followed him to the FBI. Later, he assisted Judge Webster in conducting a study of the Ft. Hood shootings.

As Judge Webster approached the podium, Panel Chairman Steel recognized: Mr. Richard Schott, the newly hired Independent Police Auditor; Major Gun Lee, the FCPD liaison to the Panel; and, Ad Hoc Commission members in attendance.

Judge William Webster spoke about how his experiences as a judge and as FBI director led him to have a strong belief that transparency is necessary in order to maintain public trust. He said civilian oversight of police is key to having a country where people are safe, feel safe, and have trust in law enforcement.

Ms. Gerarda Culipher, Deputy Clerk of the Fairfax County Circuit Court administered an Oath to each Panel member.

Chairman Bulova recognized FCPD Chief Ed Roessler and Deputy County Executive Dave Rohrer.

Panel Chairman Steel described the 3 primary tasks of the panel: review complaints concerning alleged FCPD misconduct; review and recommend revisions to FCPD policies, training, and practices; and, hold public forums to hear directly from the public.

Mr. Schott, the Independent Police Auditor, and Panel members introduced themselves.

Mr. Schott, recently retired after 27 years with the FBI, worked with local law enforcement officers on issues such as use of force and the review of citizen complaints.

Ms. VanLowe is a 35-year resident of Reston and a trained lawyer. She has devoted much of her time to community service work to serve those who have unique physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, or cognitive disabilities and this passion has influenced her to serve on the Panel.

Mr. Kay is a lifelong Fairfax County resident and lawyer who previously served as a judge advocate in the U.S. Navy and as an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney for Fairfax County. He served on the Ad Hoc Commission and enjoyed being a part of the process of increasing transparency.

Ms. Davis-Siudut has a background in working on matters pertaining to cultural diversity, victim advocacy, sex and human trafficking, and domestic violence. She has previously worked for the US Marine Corps and currently works with the Air Force as a sexual assault prevention and response subject matter expert. She hopes that her expertise on these issues and her commitment to social justice will be of benefit to the Panel.

Ms. Doane is a longtime Fairfax County resident and a retired Attorney. She has been an advocate for the disability community for over twenty years and believes that building positive relationships between law enforcement and people with disabilities is important. She is trained as a mediator and facilitator and currently serves as a lay pastoral minister in her church.

Mr. Sayles has over 35- years of experience in law enforcement and criminal investigations and previously served on the Ad Hoc Commission. He is “not overly optimistic but exceedingly confident” that the Panel will be successful because of the diversity of Panel members and the collaborative work that will be done between the Panel, the Police Department, and the Board.

Mr. Aguilar currently investigates allegations of police misconduct at the D.C. Office of Police Complaints. As a native of Honduras, a country with high crime and corrupt officials, he wants to ensure that we live in a trustful and safe community. He has served in a number of community roles and with the Fairfax County Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services.

Mr. Descano is a former Federal prosecutor, now in private practice. His community involvement includes service on the Criminal Justice Committee of the Fairfax County NAACP. He believes that trust between the community and police force is a necessity to preserve the safety in the community for today and the future.

Ms. Senseman is long time resident of Fairfax County and a mental health therapist who has spent many years working with clients of all socioeconomic backgrounds. She has worked in public and private practice providing treatment for individuals young and old who experience a wide variety of mental health disorders.

Panel Chairman Steel served on the Ad Hoc Commission and has continued to work with the Board of Supervisors to implement the Commission’s recommendations. He is senior counsel at Mayer Brown LLP where he has practiced law for over 35 years, and previously served as Special Assistant to FBI Director William H. Webster.

Panel Chairman Steel distributed a “Civilian Review Panel Tasks, and Responsibilities and Processes” attachment that he authored.

FCPD Chief Roessler pledged his support, as Chief, and that of the department and welcomed the opportunity to build upon accountability, transparency, and community trust. He referenced the training that will be offered to Panel members.

County Attorney Beth Teare outlined the requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA) specifically related to Open Records and Open Meetings. As a public body, the Panel will operate in accordance with the provisions of the VFOIA. Mrs. Teare introduced Ms. Julia Judkins who is the Panel’s legal counsel. The Panel requested additional information on remote participation, records retention, and county versus personal email accounts.

Clerk to the Board of Supervisors Cathy Chianese introduced herself to the Panel.

Panel Chairman Steel led a brief discussion of the Panel about a timeline for creating bylaws, training sessions, and meeting days. The preference of the Panel is to meet on Monday evenings, with training sessions to be held on Saturdays.

Chairman Bulova and Supervisor Cook made closing remarks expressing their appreciation to the Panel members for agreeing to serve, acknowledging the breadth and depth of expertise on the Panel, and feeling positive about the Panel and the work it will be doing.

Panel Chairman Steel announced that the next meeting of the panel is Monday, March 27, 2017, at 7p.m., with the room TBD. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.