

University of Rochester
Public Safety Review Board
Minutes of Meeting
January 22, 2018

Present: Francis Price (via telephone)
Rick Crummins
Holly Crawford
Tony Kinslow
Elizabeth Palermo
Jordan Smith

Absent: Christopher Acquina
Kathy Parrinello
Eldred Chimowitz

Guest: Mark Fischer

1. Administrative Items

- a. The Board approved the meeting minutes for October 10, 2017, noting that they will be updated to reflect that Jordan Smith has replaced Vito Martino and Eldred Chimowitz has replaced MJ Curry on the Board.
- b. Mr. Price discussed the change in University President his desire to continue to take back thoughts and ideas from this Board to the BOT.

2. Legislative Update

Mr. Fischer advised that legislation advanced by the University has been signed by governor. Previous language limiting UR peace officer power in Strong Memorial Hospital has been eliminated, so that full URPO powers can now be exercised across all University properties. URPO jurisdiction now also extends to abutting public streets and walkways. URPOs will be first responders to certain 911 calls involving these areas, per its MOU with Rochester Police Department.

3. Local Law Enforcement Partners/Prisoner Transport

Mr. Fischer advised that a meeting is scheduled with the new Monroe County Sheriff, Todd Baxter, to discuss prisoner transports, among other matters. Currently persons arrested by URPOs must await RPD for transport to Monroe County jail for detention pending arraignment. This requires URPOs to guard arrestee sometimes for hours due to RPD workload. URPOs are authorized by statute to transport arrestees upon RPD request, but previous Sheriff was resistant for various reasons. Sheriff Baxter is more amenable. URPO transports will free up RPD resources as well, so the city is supportive.

4. Area College and University meeting with DCJS Commissioner

Mr. Fischer described a recent meeting with the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) also attended by security/law enforcement personnel from other NYS

colleges and universities. More work is needed to ensure that peace officers are treated by state police as law enforcement, vs. private security. There are still issues affecting URPO access to information, such as outstanding arrest warrants. Delays lead to inefficient use of resources. DCJS seemed receptive to changes and Mr. Fischer looks forward to improvements in this area.

5. Unholstering Events

Mr. Fischer updated the board on some recent unholsterings by URPOs. First incident (11/30, 4:34 a.m.) involved a larceny in progress at the Valentine bike rack. The suspect was observed with an unknown object (turned out to be bolt cutters); he then ran into bushes adjacent to the lot. A UR sergeant observed the suspect in the bushes but could not see his hands and so unholstered his weapon. The suspect surrendered. The second incident (12/2) involved a call about a man with a gun in the Subway bathroom in Brooks Landing. RPD and URPOs responded and URPO unholstered at outside perimeter before making contact with the suspect. The situation resolved peacefully and weapon was ultimately believed to be a BB gun. Neither incident was within the armed response zone at the University but in each case resulted from a report of a crime in progress possibly involving a weapon.

A recent audit of the firearms storage room at 612 Wilson Blvd showed full compliance with policies and procedures.

6. Internal Diversity, Values and Inclusion Efforts

Challenges in recruitment and climate remain, but progress is being made, according to Mr. Fischer. Officers Joe Reed and Cindy Coates have been added to Senior Staff and officer Emily Massaro has been promoted to sergeant. There remains some perception that African American officers face higher hurdles to promotion. John Cullen, Director of Diversity and Inclusion at the CTSI in the medical center did a presentation on inherent bias, which was well-received.

7. Discussion of bias related complaint in Strong Memorial Hospital

Mr. Fischer discussed a bias report involving an incident at Strong Memorial Hospital. A dispatcher watching video (looking for an eloped patient) observed a black male leaving the cafeteria with candy bars that he did not pay for at the cashier. Upon investigation, officers learned that the person observed was a cafeteria employee who had used vouchers to purchase the items. Employee had at first complained that he was stopped because of his race, but in further conversation said he simply was upset to have been stopped after he had paid with vouchers. Mr. Fischer commended the field officers for their appropriate handling of the matter but has counseled the dispatchers against dispatching officers for this kind of activity based on video review and in the absence of a complaint.

8. Recruitment Process Changes / Department Survey

Mr. Fischer distributed a November 2017 email to his officers describing information relating to this topic. The email is attached to these minutes.

9. Training and Professional development

Officer Keri Stein has been certified to train DPS officers in mental health first aid. Re-qualifying armed officers is in process.

The department is looking to hire 10 additional officers. Recently advertised positions brought 160 applications. Sixty were interviewed, of which 30 were underrepresented minorities. Officers Street and Sawyers are participating in outreach, going to job fairs. Ms. Crawford requested a report back at the next meeting regarding composition of the finalist pool, offers made and accepted, etc. After question by Ms. Smith, Mr. Fischer advised that recruiting women remains a challenge because they are so highly sought-after among law enforcement agencies in the area, so there is much competition.

10. Future Meetings and Website issue

Next scheduled meeting is March 21.

Ms. Palermo pointed out difficulty of finding PSRB website on UR President's page. Mr. Crummins agreed to request that a link be added for easier navigation.