

University of Rochester  
Public Safety Review Board  
Minutes of Meeting  
October 10, 2017

**Present:** Francis Price  
Rick Crummins  
Holly Crawford  
Kathy Parrinello  
Tony Kinslow  
MJ Curry  
Eldred Chimowitz  
Elizabeth Palermo  
Jordan Smith

**Absent:** Christopher Acquina

**Guest:** Mark Fischer

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1. Updates from Public Safety Director Fischer

a. Psychiatry Incident

Mr. Fischer showed a video of an incident in psychiatry involving a patient with a weapon, which was successfully handled with no injury, to illustrate how officers are trained to de-escalate situations without using weapons. Managing potential patient violence in psychiatric units is especially difficult. Officers on psych units are not armed and carry only pepper gel and handcuffs. Staff sometimes complain of not feeling safe, while the NYS Office of Mental Health has been critical of facilities for using too much force with patients. Navigating these competing interests is challenging and decisions must often be made in a matter of seconds.

Mr. Fischer also described a recent increase in physical violence in the hospital but believes it is cyclical. It was discussed that the de-institutionalizing of the mentally ill and the substance abuse epidemic may be contributing to the increased violence. Hospitals are seeing increased numbers of severely mentally ill patients.

b. Recent Arrest

Mr. Fischer updated the board on a recent arrest of persons believed to be responsible for recent robberies near campus. This was the result of a joint bicycle patrol effort between DPS and the RPD and was described as a joint effort with a positive outcome.

### c. Armed Responses

There have been two armed responses by officers since the August 28 meeting. In one, armed officers responded when a skateboarder on Meliora Plaza had swung his skateboard at the head of the officer who had responded to a complaint about the skateboarding activity.

In a second incident, in Whipple Park, there was a call of a burglary in progress by a female who was alone and was hearing someone come into her window. The closest available officer was one of the armed auto patrols and he responded.

A board member asked whether RPD had been called for the Whipple Park incident and Mr. Fischer said he would check. He pointed out that, in general, when RPD is called about reports similar to this one, response times are often long and this is the advantage of having armed officers at the University. In response to a question whether Whipple Park is within the armed patrol zone previously described to the faculty senate, Ms. Crawford promised that the map would be updated and presented again to the Senate. The possibility of an annual Public Safety report to the Senate on this and other issues was also discussed.

### d. Brooks/Genesee patrols

Ms. Smith relayed a belief by students that there is not a public safety presence at Brooks Crossing. Mr. Fischer pointed out that, while officers do not sit in a parked vehicle at that location, they do park it there for the sake of visibility and conduct regular patrols of the area. Mr. Fischer agreed to make himself available to speak with any group, students or otherwise, to clarify the issue.

### e. Personnel issues

Of 41 sworn officers, one is out due to a torn meniscus and another will be leaving for a 13-month deployment. DPS has 20 reservists subject to call-up. The law requires that jobs be held for five years for reservists called to active duty. This is an issue of potential concern that needs to be closely monitored.

### f. Training

A diversity in-service training is scheduled, as is an executive retreat on November 3<sup>rd</sup> which will deal with diversity, recruitment and succession planning. Also Red Team/NYS Homeland Security assessments are ongoing, which evaluate DPS's ability to respond to possible terrorist threats.

## 2. Minutes of Meetings and Communication

There was a discussion of whether information about meetings could be communicated (e.g. to students, or faculty senate) before minutes are approved and posted. It was agreed that this

could be decided at meetings on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Fischer reiterated that he is willing to attend meetings and give briefings about public safety issues when asked.

Mr. Fischer also explained that there is a form on the DPS website that can be used to report complaints of bias, mistreatment, or other concerns.

After discussion, the minutes of the meetings of May 16 and August 28 were unanimously approved with minor adjustments.

### 3. Minutes of Meetings and Communication

Jordan Smith was introduced as the new President of the Student Association, replacing Vito Martino as the student representative on the board for the 2017-2018 year.

Due to an increase in her responsibilities with the Faculty Senate, Dr. MJ Curry will step down as the River Campus faculty representative on the Board. She introduced Dr. Eldred Chimowitz as her replacement.