

Minutes of first meeting of the Saratoga Springs Civilian Review Board  
Thursday, March 23, 2023

Meeting began 6:15 PM

Mayor Ron Kim made some introductory remarks. He thanked the CRB members for volunteering to serve, and expressed his feelings that they are well qualified.

Kristen Dart, chair, called the meeting to order and called the roll. Present were Dianna Goodwin, Lesley Caitlin Jorgensen, and Steven Boxley.

Introductions: The Committee members introduced themselves. Steven Boxley stated that he is a resident of Saratoga Springs and served on the Police Reform Task Force. He felt a responsibility to participate and work toward a good relationship between the police and the public. Dianna Goodwin stated she has lived in Saratoga Springs for years. She is a retired attorney and has worked in a number of administrative and legislative jobs in the public interest. Caitlin Jorgensen stated that she teaches at Skidmore College and has children in Saratoga Springs schools. She stated she believes this board will be doing some very important work. We should remain empathetic if we are going to be able to deal with difficult problems. Kristen Dart stated that she returned to Saratoga Springs five years ago. She served on the Police Reform Task Force and the subcommittee that recommended the creation of a Civilian Review Board. She believes the CRB can help form a good relationship between the police and the public.

Kristen Dart discussed the establishment of rules for the board's proceedings. Anthony Izzo, City Attorney, stated that section 37-5 of the CRB's legislation gives it authority to create its own forms and procedural rules. He stated that the CRB has something in common with the city Board of Ethics in that both boards review the conduct of individuals. He stated that the Ethics Board has posted its bylaws online at the city website, and the CRB members may find some examples there as it develops its own bylaws. Kristen Dart recommended that the board should also review the posted bylaws of the city of Albany's Civilian Review Board.

Steven Boxley asked about the workflow, and whether everything sent to the board should go to the chair first. Kristen Dart reviewed the legislation, stating that the board needs to act within two weeks of the complaint sent to them. The board needs to send a letter at first to see if the original complaint has been resolved. If the complainant checks a certain box on the forms, the CRB's work begins. There are opportunities for mediation as well as other procedures the board can follow.

Steven Boxley stated he would prefer to act in a way that allows as much feedback as possible.

Dianna Goodwin asked about how mediation would work.

What the board is and what it is not – Kristen Dart explained that a lot of information will be shared with the board. We will make findings based on that information and will make recommendations to the Commissioner of Public Safety. There is a six month time limitation on the submittal of complaints to the board. We cannot review complaints about matters from many years ago. It will be 1-2 months before we can begin dealing with complaints. We will be as transparent as possible to keep the integrity of the process. We may have to go into executive session sometimes to protect people's privacy.

Kristen Dart discussed making public comments. Anthony Izzo discussed the issue of ex parte communications (communications to persons outside of the board's meetings) and how they should be avoided. He stated some boards use a staff person who is not a board member to communicate with the public outside of the meetings.

Kristen Dart suggested looking at the forms developed by similar boards in other cities.

Caitlin Jorgensen asked what the CRB's relationship is to the Police Reform Task Force. Kristen Dart stated that the Police Reform Task Force no longer exists since its work has ended.

Public Comment – James Montagnino, Commissioner of Public Safety, welcomed the CRB members and wished them good luck in their work. He stated his office is open to them if they have any questions. He stated he cannot meet with a quorum of the board but can meet with members individually. Another speaker [name unintelligible on recording] asked if the board would consider keeping its records in other languages besides English.

Meeting concluded 6:40 PM

These minutes respectfully submitted,  
Anthony J. Izzo 3/24/23