

# City of Columbia, Missouri

*701 E. Broadway  
Columbia, Missouri*



## Meeting Minutes - Final

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

6:00 PM

Regular

Council Chambers

Columbia City Hall

701 E. Broadway

**Citizens Police Review Board**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Doug Hunt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

There were introductions.

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Xavier Scruggs made a motion to approve the agenda. Steven Jeffrey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

July 10, 2024 Draft Minutes

**Attachments:** [July 10, 2024 Draft Minutes](#)

Jamie Thornsberry made a motion to approve the draft open meeting minutes of the July 10, 2024 regular meeting. Denise Balazic seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

July 10, 2024 Draft Closed Meeting Minutes

Stephanie Coleman made a motion to approve the draft closed meeting minutes of the July 10, 2024 closed session. Steph Yoakum seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**V. SPECIAL ITEM**

Report On Status Of Technology Exploration - Assistant Chief Paul Dickinson

Assistant Chief Dickinson said there were no updates. Matt Unrein gave an update and said that the city manager included the cost for the technology update in the proposed budget. Matt Unrein said the budget hearings are ongoing.

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

SB 754 and Board's Recommendation On Its Impact

**Attachments:** [Board's Report to Council](#)  
[Law Department's Memo](#)  
[Draft Ordinance](#)

The Board discussed SB 754, the City Council discussion related to its report, and the City Counselor's report.

Xavier Scruggs asked how St. Louis was responding to SB 754. Stephanie Coleman liked the idea of two separate boards and asked if that was possible. Steven Jeffrey asked if the members of this Board would be on the second board. Doug Hunt said that he met with a representative of the police officers association and a representative of NACOLE thought that a two board solution is possible. Doug Hunt said

that the law department does not feel that two boards are possible. Doug Hunt said that city staff is trying to keep the current board functioning while investigating the impact of 754.

Doug Hunt read his proposed motion for purposes of discussion.

Rose Wibbenmeyer told the board that the policy board, if one existed, could not access closed records.

Jamie Thornsberry said that she wanted the best proposal for the City Council to consider. Harry Castilow suggested adding "if allowed by SB 754." Jamie Thornsberry suggested that similar language be added below.

Doug Hunt continued to read the language of his proposed motion. Doug Hunt then discussed the rationale that he wants to include with the correspondence to the City Council. Denise Balazic asked about the City's position on the two board solution. Xavier Scruggs asked about adding a paragraph about what other municipalities in Missouri have done to present a model that might be useful. Stephanie Coleman asked if the Board was trying to gain power.

Doug Hunt made a motion to send a report to the City Council with the recommendations in his proposed motion. Steph Yoakum seconded the motion. Harry Castilow moved to table the motion to tomorrow's meeting. Denise Balazic seconded the motion to table the agenda. After further discussion, Harry Castilow withdrew the motion to table the agenda.

Doug Hunt opened up public comment on the proposed motion. Chriss Jones commented. Chriss Jones said that David Tyson Smith previously said that Columbia did not have to change anything. Susan Renee Carter spoke on behalf of Race Matters Friends. She said that David Tyson Smith was at their forum on August 4, 2024. Susan Renee Carter said that it is important that you hear people's stories. Susan Renee Carter said David Tyson Smith had Reece Ellis talk to the legislators about the impact of the bill. Susan Renee Carter said that David Tyson Smith said that the Board should be able to continue doing what it has been doing. David Tyson Smith suggested that the City should challenge the conflicting laws. Susan Renee Carter said that the Board has been doing exactly what it has been intended to do and that citizens need protection.

Doug Hunt said there is nothing from any proposal that would keep people from the public from speaking. Doug Hunt said that Reece Ellis has reviewed the proposal. Stephanie Coleman said that they want the public to be able to come to give comments.

Doug Hunt said that to the third item add if allowed by SB 754, and Xavier Scrugg's amendment to investigate what other cities and states have done to keep oversight under one board. Jamie Thornsberry suggested that the City Council reach out to David Tyson Smith to explore what the bill means.

Rose Wibbenmeyer suggested that they include public comments with their motion in their report to Council. The Board reached consensus to do so.

Xavier Scruggs said that it is his sincerest hope that Columbia was not part of this new legislation and that he would love for the Board to still be intact. Jamie Thornsberry said that could be in the cover letter as well. Doug Hunt suggested that the board, "unless it is learned that it is possible to preserve the present CPRB structure and duties intact," to the beginning of the report and before the words "replace the CPRB with two boards". All voted in favor of the motion. No one opposed the motion. No one abstained. The motion passed.

With the amendments, the motion, approved by the Board, read as follows:

"Unless it is learned that it is possible to preserve the present CPRB structure and duties intact, Columbia's Citizens Police Review Board recommends that the City Council take the following three actions in response to SB751, recently signed into Missouri law:

1. If allowed by SB 754, replace the CPRB with two civilian oversight boards: the first concerned with police department policy, the second with the conduct of individual police officers.

2. To avoid conflict with SB754, make it clear that the Policy Board will never recommend disciplinary actions against individual officers. Its duties will be

- To host public meetings and educational programs on matters of CPD policies and practices,
- To review and make recommendations to the police chief and city manager on police department policies, procedures, and training,
- To educate itself on the practical effects of policies, procedures, and training by conducting annual reviews of police department records regarding citizens' complaints and their resolution if allowed by SB 754,
- To prepare and submit to the city council annual reports that analyze those complaints and the way they were resolved, including demographic data, but excluding information that personally identifies particular officers or citizens,
- To prepare and submit to the city council summaries of other public input it receives, and to suggest ways that the CPD can best address this this input.

3. Make it clear that the Conduct Board's duties will be consistent with SB754. Those duties, which will require it to meet primarily in closed session, will be

- To receive, and to investigate the merit of, appeals from citizens who are dissatisfied with the police chief's preliminary findings on complaints involving excessive use of force, abuse of authority, discourtesy, or use of offensive language,
- To submit its findings on these appeals, including any recommendations on disciplinary action, to the chief of police and (if SB754 allows) to the city manager, and to do so in a timely way so that all investigations can be completed within the time limits imposed by state law.

\* \* \*

We want to be clear about what we are trying to accomplish here. We don't think the City's response to SB754 needs to become a source of contention between advocates of civilian oversight and advocates of police officers' rights. By separating policy-level oversight from conduct-level oversight, we can simultaneously assure officers that they will be protected from unfair or ill-informed disciplinary treatment by civilian overseers and assure citizens that they will have meaningful input in shaping the CPD's policies and practices.

Relieved of the present CPRB's duty of hearing appeals, the Policy Board could and should be more ambitious than the CPRB has been in its educational and outreach efforts. It might, for instance, host and design carefully moderated and balanced discussions of policy-level issues that frequently strain relations between the department and the public, such as searches and seizures, uses of force, and responses to mental health crises.

\* \* \*

The above recommendations are based on an assumption that having two oversight boards with cleanly separated missions would present no conflict with SB754.

We have discussed this two-board solution informally with lawyers, including one national consultant on police policies and one representative of a police officers' union. Neither objected to the two-board solution, and so we were surprised to hear the head of Columbia's Law Department oppose the two-board solution at the August 5, 2024, meeting of the City Council.

We suspect that her opposition was based on a misunderstanding of the CPRB's intention in advocating such a solution. This is not, as her comments implied, an attempt to circumvent SB754, but an attempt to comply with it. It is an attempt to comply with it in a way that preserves the opportunity for citizens appointed by elected representatives to orchestrate meaningful public discussions of crucial police policies.

\* \* \*

Should the Council decide that the two-board solution described above is not

feasible, we would urge it to consider a second alternative. Eliminate the Discipline Board entirely, so that Columbia will have no “entity appointed by the local governing body, with the authority to investigate allegations of misconduct by local law enforcement officers towards members of the public.” This would make it logically impossible for Columbia’s system of civilian oversight to be in conflict with SB751.

At that point the Council would be free to appoint a Policy Board that can act robustly and publicly. The present members of the CPRB feel that having citizens concentrate their attention on policy matters is more productive than having it pass judgments on the behavior of individual officers. Citizen input on the effectiveness of the entire system is far more crucial than citizen input on the conduct of some particular officer. “

#### Productive Outreach Efforts

The Board discussed outreach efforts. Denise Balazic brought up the national night out in the first Tuesday in August and suggested that they make a plan for next year’s national night out. Denise Balazic suggested that they try and put a calendar together. Steph Yoakum said the Human Rights Commission does tabling events, and thought the Board would do them but they do not.

#### Audits Of 2023 Complaints-Status Updates

The Board discussed their approach to the audit of 2023 complaints. Doug Hunt reported the Board has been doing audits and they will be looking at them in closed session. Doug Hunt stated that the Board chose the most frequent areas or most problematic areas to audit.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

#### Future Meeting Schedule

The Board discussed their future meeting schedule. Denise Balazic liked to continue with monthly meetings. The Board reached consensus to continue to have monthly scheduled meetings, which could be canceled if there were no training or cases.

#### Televising Meetings

The Board discussed whether their regular meetings should be broadcast. The Board reached consensus to take no action and to continue to have their regular meetings broadcast.

#### Item's For Next Month's Agenda

*The Board discussed the following items for next month’s agenda. Additional items may be added later.*

Special Item:

Old Business:

New Business: *Review of new ordinance/proposed ordinance*

Items for Next Month's Agenda

*Reports:*

Human Rights Commission

Positive Connections, Training, Outreach and Ride Alongs

## VIII. REPORTS

Human Rights Commission

Steph Yoakum said the Human Rights Commission has not met yet this month.

Positive Connections, Training And Ride Alongs

Stephanie Coleman reported a ride along on July 25, 2024 from 8p.m. to midnight.

## IX. GENERAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC, MEMBERS AND STAFF

Doug Hunt announced the time limits for individuals and groups. Members of the public commented.

Chriss Jones commented on behalf of Hold CoMo Accountable. Chriss Jones read from an article regarding a police shooting of a mentally ill person that happened last August. Chriss Jones gave the article to staff and asked that staff scan the article and send it to the Board.

Meg Ladd commented on the police department's handling of David Strumpf's murder. She talked about the numerous attempts to contact the prosecutor and detectives about a car for over four months only to find out April 18th, that the car was released to 170 towing. She expressed frustration that minimal contents were collected from the vehicle and that the vehicle was released to the tow company one day after the funeral. She complained about the lack of communications with any of them about the vehicle being transferred to 170 towing.

Xavier Scruggs asked about the procedure for revision to the ordinances.

## X. MOTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION

Motion to go into closed session to discuss records which are protected from disclosure by law, Sections 610.021(14) and 590.502 RSMo.

**Doug Hunt made a motion to go into closed session to discuss records which are protected from disclosure by law, Sections 610.021(14) and 590.502 RSMO.**

**Steven Jeffrey seconded the motion. Denise Balazic, Harry Castilow, Stephanie Coleman, Douglas Hunt, Stephen Jeffrey, Xavier Lee Scruggs, Jamie Thornsberry, and Steph Yoakum voted in favor of the motion.**

**No one voted against the motion.**

**No one abstained.**

**The motion passed and the Board adjourned open session to go into closed session at 7:33 p.m.**

The board met in conference room 2A for closed session.

**XI. NEXT MEETING DATE**

Special Meeting: August 15, 2024

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: September 11, 2024

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned from closed session at 9:07 p.m.