



CITY OF COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

Citizens Police Review Board

July 17, 2023

Mayor Buffalo and City Council
City of Columbia
701 East Broadway
Columbia, MO 65201

Dear Mayor Buffalo and Councilmembers:

On July 12, 2023, the Citizens Police Review Board discussed the notice provisions in the City Code. In order for the Board to review an appeal, the appeal must be timely filed. Section 21-51 states: “The clerk must receive the appeal within ten (10) days after the notice of the police chief’s written notice of the preliminary determination was given. The appeal must be either hand delivered to the office of the city clerk or sent to the city clerk by United States Mail or electronic mail. Section 21-45 defines notices as *“Notice shall be considered given when it is hand delivered or three (3) business days after it is mailed.”*

The police department’s current practice is to mail letters to the complainants. Because the U.S. postal service delivery times for first class mail is now up to five business days, the Board recommends that the three business days currently set forth in Section 21-45 be changed to five business days. The Board unanimously passed a motion to recommend that the City Council amend Article III, Section 21-45 to read: “Notice shall be considered given when it is hand delivered or five (5) business days after it is mailed.”

In addition, the Board unanimously passed a motion to recommend to the police chief that the police department adopt policies or procedures to ensure timely delivery of time-sensitive materials to persons in facilities where the institutional practices may delay delivery of time sensitive correspondence. We encouraged the police department to pursue best practices and implement necessary procedures to ensure timely delivery of notices to those persons who are in jails, prisons, hospitals or other such facilities. The Board also noted that complainants may desire to provide additional contact information for the service of notices. Persons may have difficulty receiving mail at one address or may need the assistance of a close friend or family member to receive notices. Receiving mail is also particularly difficult for unhoused persons. Therefore, the Board unanimously passed a motion to recommend that the police department allow complainants to request that responses be sent to more than one physical and/or electronic address.

We appreciate your consideration of these recommendations and hope that the police department follows through with the necessary process improvements.

Sincerely,

Reece Ellis
Chair