

CITY OF COLUMBIA

CITIZENS POLICE REVIEW BOARD 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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2025 CITIZENS POLICE REVIEW BOARD MEMBERS

(as of December 31, 2025)

Denise Balazic

(appointed October 2023 with term ending November 1, 2026)

Lynn Burgan

(appointed

(appointed August 2025 with term ending November 1, 2027)

Harry Castilow

(appointed March 2024 with term ended November 1, 2025; reappointed November 2025 with term ending November 1, 2028)

Stephanie Coleman

(appointed October 2022 with current term November 1, 2026)

Douglas Hunt

(appointed March 2023 with term ending November 1, 2024; elected Chair February 14, 2024; Reappointed December 16, 2024, with term ending November 1, 2027)

Steven Jeffrey

(appointed February 2022 with current term ending November 1, 2026; elected Vice Chair February 14, 2024)

Edward Robinson

(appointed December 2024, with term ending November 1, 2027)

Steph Yoakum

(appointed by the Human Rights Commission on April 2, 2024 for the remainder of a term which ended November 1, 2024; reappointed December, 2024; reappointed October 2025, with term ending November 1, 2026)

Charles Zug

(appointed October 2025 with term ending November 1, 2028)

Members who resigned, or who had their service end during the year 2025:

Maurey Bland, Jr.

(appointed December 2024)

Mykene Powell

(appointed August 2025)

Xavier Scruggs

(appointed October 2022)

HISTORY OF THE FORMATION OF THE CITIZENS POLICE REVIEW BOARD

In 2007, a coalition of citizens and groups proposed the idea of creating a civilian review board to the City Council. The City Council appointed a fourteen-member committee to study whether or not a review board was needed and to consider how such a board would be structured. The committee reviewed all complaints that existed before the professional standards unit was established. In addition, they studied and considered different models used by different cities, and hosted public events to gather input from the citizens. After extensive study and public input, the committee unanimously agreed to recommend that the City of Columbia establish a citizens police review board.

In July of 2009, the City Council of the City of Columbia, by adopting Ordinance No. 020331, created a nine-member Citizens Police Review Board. The ordinance outlined the duties of the Citizens Police Review Board as follows:

The Citizens Police Review Board shall have the following duties:

- (1) Review appeals from the police chief's decisions on alleged police misconduct as provided for in this article.
- (2) Host public meetings and educational programs for Columbia residents and police officers.
- (3) Review and make recommendations to the police chief and city manager on police policies, procedures and training.
- (4) Prepare and submit to the City Council annual reports that analyze citizen and police complaints including demographic data on complainants, complaint disposition, investigative findings and disciplinary actions. The reports should also describe the Board's community outreach and educational programs. The reports should also set forth any recommendations made on police policies, procedures and training. The reports shall be submitted no later than March 1 for the previous calendar year.

The City Council initially appointed the first eight members of the Citizens Police Review Board in November of 2009. Also, in November of 2009, the Human Rights Commission appointed its first member to the Board. The Board met for the first time on November 18, 2009.

In 2014, the City Council, at the request of the Citizens Police Review Board, amended Section 21-49, to add additional duties. Pursuant to these amendments to the ordinance, the Board was also to conduct a jurisdictional review from the decision by the police chief that a person's allegations do not fall within the requirements set forth in the article related to complaints. The Board was also to conduct audits or reviews of the records of the police department for compliance with the requirements of the ordinances.

In 2021, Governor Parson signed into law Senate Bill 26, which contains a police officer bill of rights in Section 590.502 RSMo. Section 590.502 RSMo has necessitated changes to Chapters 19 and 21 of the City's Code. In order to comply with the new state law, the City Council amended the code to reduce the time periods for filing appeals, removed community service aides from the jurisdiction of the Board, and provided for the confidentiality of records related to complaints and for the closure of meetings to hear appeals which are subject to Section 590.502 RSMo.

On August 15, 2022, the City Council voted to temporarily suspend the regular monthly meetings of the Board so that the Board had an opportunity to focus on its primary purpose - the review of appeals. The Board resumed regular monthly meetings on March 8, 2023.

In 2024, Governor Parsons signed into law a bill which further restricted the authority of civilian oversight entities. Section 590.653 RSMO now states that a civilian review board "shall have the power solely limited to receiving, investigating, making findings and recommending disciplinary action upon complaints by members of the public against members of the police department that allege misconduct involving excessive use of force, abuse of authority, discourtesy, or the use of offensive language..." The new law also stated that "[o]nly the powers specifically granted herein are authorized and any and all authority granted to future or existing boards, divisions or entities outside the scope of the powers listed herein are expressly preempted and void as a matter of law." As a result of this new state law, the City Council passed Ordinance Number 025750 to revise Chapter 21, Article III to align the Board's authority with the restrictions in Section 590.653 RSMo.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This annual report includes information on the Citizens Police Review Board's work from January 2025 through the end of December 2025.

The Citizens Police Review Board's accomplishments include:

- (1) The Board reviewed appeals from the police chief's determinations on alleged police misconduct. During this reporting period, citizens requested that the Board review the police chief's determinations 6 different times.
- (2) The Board conducted reviews of 15 2024 complaints and provided recommendations to the police department and city manager.
- (3) The Board also reviewed police training, policies and procedures.
- (4) The Board is submitting to the City Council the following annual report outlining the Board's actions from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025.

SUMMARY OF APPEALS

During this 2025 reporting period, citizens requested civilian review on 6 occasions. The Board conducted a thorough and fair review of the records related to the appeals. The Board's actions on these matters are summarized below.

- One matter was for jurisdictional review only. The Board concurred with the police chief's determination.
- On one appeal, the Board disagreed with the police chief's preliminary determination and provided additional recommendations.
- On four appeals, the Board agreed with the police chief's preliminary determination and did not provide additional recommendations.

REVIEWS OF COMPLAINTS

Board requested to review first three sustained complaints of 2024.

ANALYSIS OF CITIZEN COMPLAINTS DATA

At the time this report was prepared, the Board had not received data from the City of Columbia Police Department regarding 2025 complaints. When the Police Department provides the data needed, the Board will provide a supplemental report to the City Council.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS

During several of its 2025 meetings, members of the Citizens Police Review Board expressed deep concern about the limitations to its duties and power imposed by the City Council on September 3, 2024.

At that meeting, Council amended Chapter 21 of the City Code in a way that

- narrowed the areas of police conduct the Board could examine in hearing appeals to four specified categories. (Eliminating, for instance, the Board's duty and power to hear appeals involving racially biased policing or inappropriate searches and seizures)
- made the public comment portion of meetings optional rather than mandatory
- removed the requirement that the Board and the Chief meet semi-annually to discuss matters of concern
- removed the Board's duty and authority to make recommendations to the Chief and the City Manager on police "policies, rules, hiring, training, and the complaint process."
- eliminated the Board's power to establish its own internal rules and procedures
- eliminated the Board's duty and power to host public meetings and educational programs

These changes were made on the advice of the City's legal department, whose opinion was that they were required by "changes to Section 590.653 RSMo."

Since these restrictions were imposed on the Board, it has struggled to provide a level of civilian oversight consistent with our purpose of “increasing police accountability to the community and community trust in the police.” During meetings, members have articulated their view that, for the most part, the Board’s role is “merely performative.” It creates the impression that our City has a robust system of civilian oversight when it has, in fact, an enfeebled one. In that respect, we worry that the Board may actually be doing more harm than good.

Now we have received information indicating that other cities in Missouri responded very differently to the changes to Section 590.653 RSMo.

At “A Missouri Roundtable on Community and Law Enforcement” on October 16, 2025, the Chairman of Ferguson’s Civilian Review Board and the Executive Director of Kansas City’s Office of Community Complaints were asked if the change in state law had resulted in similar restrictions being placed on their operations. Their answers were quite clear. These oversight bodies continue to make recommendations on policies, procedures and training. They continue to host public information sessions on law enforcement matters. They continue to make findings on complaints of police misconduct that lie outside the four categories specified in Section 590.653 RSMo.

It seems unlikely that the Ferguson and Kansas City oversight bodies continuing to have such broad powers is the result of bad legal advice or ignorance of state law, particularly since the Executive Director in Kansas City is himself a lawyer well-versed in such matters.

In light of the CPRB’s difficulties in providing robust oversight under the restrictions imposed on September 3, 2024, and in light of the fact that other Missouri cities have not perceived such restrictions as necessary, we urge Council to lift those restrictions.

Chapter 21 of the Code may have been imperfect before the restrictions were imposed. We would certainly be open to a robust discussion of improving the system, but the first step would be to undo the damage done on September 3, 2024.

ADDITIONAL BOARD AND MEMBER ACTIVITIES

During this review period, the Citizens Police Review Board completed the following additional activities.

January 23, 2025	Stephanie Coleman gave presentations to two classes.
January 29, 2025	Stephanie Coleman gave a presentation to a class.
March 18, 2025	Denise Balazic, Ed Robinson, Xavier Scruggs, and Steph Yoakum toured Boone County Joint Communications.
March 19, 2025	Maurey Bland, Harry Castilow, Stephanie Coleman, and Steven Jeffrey toured Boone County Joint Communications.
March 26, 2025	Doug Hunt toured Boone County Joint Communications.

October 2025

Steph Yaokum attended the NACOLE conference.

CONCLUSION

This report outlines the work of the Citizens Police Review Board in 2025. The Board performs its duties in accordance with the City of Columbia Code of Ordinances and state law. The Board looks forward to continuing to provide the City of Columbia and all constituencies with an independent, fair, impartial body for the review of complaints of actual or perceived misconduct by members of Columbia Police Department to ensure that all persons, citizens and officers, are treated with equality, respect and dignity leading ultimately to a safer, more inclusive community.