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**City of Worcester
Human Rights Commission**

Members:
Cara Berg Powers
Harry Danso
Kathleen Gervais
Robyn Kennedy
Shirley Konneh
Eduardo Rivera
Lillie Williams

Meeting Summary for March 2nd, 2015
Worcester City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber

Members Present: Cara Berg Powers, Robyn Kennedy, Shirley Konneh, Aaron Richman, and Edward G. Robinson

Members Absent: Harry Danso, Kathleen Gervais, Eduardo Rivera and Lillie Williams

Staff: Jayna Turchek

1. **Call to order:** A quorum was established and meeting called to order at 6:15pm beginning with introductions.
2. **Approval of January 5th and January 13th, 2015 Meeting Minutes:** Unanimously approved as written.
3. **New Business:**
 - a. **Conversation with Worcester Police Department Bureau of Professional Standards regarding quarterly reports of closed complaints**

Capt. Jerry O'Rourke, Lt. Rick Bates, and Sgt. John Cronin attended to discuss changes to the quarterly reports received by the Commission.

Capt. O'Rourke opened by expressing that the three officers have over 50 years of service in the department and they take all complaints seriously, regardless of whether there is a named complainant or anonymous, and all are entered into the system and investigated. Sgt. Cronin provided history of the origination of the reports starting under former Chief Gardella and former Director of Human Rights Shirley Wright with the intention of providing numbers of complaints closed each quarter.

The Bureau utilizes an Early Intervention System (EIS) computer system to log, track, trigger trends and produce reports of all complaints received. They have an affirmative duty to utilize the EIS system which was put into use in 2008 that aids in tracking of complaints and incidents. The current model was modeled after the model used by Los Angeles Police Department and LA County Sheriff's office.



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Some of the indicators which would trigger additional investigation are when there are three or more complaints against an officer within six months or five or more in twelve months. Frequency of officer involvements in domestic incidents, assault and battery against an officer, involvement in shootings and use of taser within the same time periods will also trigger a review.

The review process starts with a report by Capt. O'Rourke that is forwarded to the Chief and a meeting between the officer and his/her commander.

In-service training for the police department is held every year for 12-14 weeks (bi-annually) to address trends the Bureau sees with officers and where additional support and education are found to be useful.

The Commission wanted to know how the reports they receive could identify trends. For example, there appear to be no Asian complainants. The Bureau will not ask the complainant their age, race or gender unless it is case related and already part of the incident report. The complaint form is available in Vietnamese and other languages.

Suggestions for identifying trends:

- Can the system track trends in population affected or areas affected (ie locations for incidents that were the basis of complaints)?
- Track frequency and nature of complaints across officers, not just individual officers?
- Possible to include in quarterly report a summary of what complaint entailed?

→The system would require significant changes to track and report over geographic area.

Other suggestions:

- Can something be included that explains what triggered the complaint?
- Concerns about under reporting by youth (or no reporting at all) and suggestion to provide training to officers on techniques for de-escalation and trauma informed practices to policing.

→De-escalation training is part of the police academy. Lt Bates will look into trauma informed approaches for policing. Noted that state mandates 600 hours of training for academy and WPD provides 800 hours.

The most common complaint is police discourtesy and this was recently addressed in their last in- service training.

Definitions of dispositions, exonerated, unfounded etc., are listed on the Bureau's webpage along with the complaint form and instructions.

Public comment: Portland Oregon was cited as a place where constructive dialogue is happening at monthly roundtable meetings with police and community groups. The idea of an independent review board was suggested.

Additional comment: Lt. Bates shared that Sgt. Lopez is the affirmative action officer and he attends a lot of community meetings and brings back any issues that are identified to be addressed. The programs he oversees work on building stronger police-community relations. Lt. Bates is the LGBTQ liaison for the department and attends community meetings and brings back any concerns raised in the community. Lt. Bates shared that he organized a successful training for university campus police and an LGBTQ consortium of campus police has been created with an LGBTQ liaison on each campus. He also plans to attend the next meeting of the Central MA police chiefs to propose a similar consortium.

b. Discussion: LGBTQ/protected classes homeless shelter survey

The Commission considered creating or adapting Cambridge's LGBTQ homeless shelter survey to include questions about services to other protected classes. It was also mentioned that the first statewide count for homeless LGBTQ youth was done last year and this year's survey is underway. A suggestion was made to start by looking at domestic violence shelters, specifically addressing access for transgender and gay men. A question about whether to focus on individual shelters or family system was posed. Commissioners were asked to send their proposed edits to the survey to Director Turchek to be reviewed and discussed at another meeting.

4. Old Business

a. Follow up discussion on policing of prostitution

Commissioners agreed that a follow up meeting with the Advisory Committee on the Status of Women (ACSW) would be helpful and suggested inviting the co-chairs of the Worcester Alliance.

Questions raised:

- Is there a link between heroin as cause or contributor to trafficking or prostitution and is the drug taskforce and vice sharing information?
- What is the difference between Lynn and Worcester? Is Lynn arresting women to get them off the street and connected to services? What does Lynn do with men arrested? Opinion offered that arresting is not best means to target demand. What money is available for intervention?
- Is there a way to better track/understand trafficking of young girls v. older women?

b. Advertising for 2015 Fair Housing Poster Contest

Director Turchek will create a ¼ page flyer for distribution along the St. Patrick's Day parade route.

c. Commission marching in St. Patrick's Day parade: Sunday March 8th

Commissioner Berg Powers will make signs of different historical protest signs/messages.

5. Commissioners' Reports: Chairperson Robinson submitted his report in writing to be included with minutes. Commissioner Berg Powers attended MLK Day community event at Mosaic Cultural Complex and International Women's Day knit in. Commissioner Konneh attended the Charles E. Scott plaque dedication at city hall.

6. Location of next monthly meeting (April 6th, 2015): City Hall

7. Public Comment (mentioned above)

8. Adjournment at 8:15pm