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City of Alexandria, Virginia

Draft Community Policing Review Board Ordinance

City Council Legislative Meeting
September 8, 2020



Council Direction in Resolution 2950



- Resolution established a Community Police Review Board in Alexandria
- Directed the City Manager and City Attorney to return to Council at the first Legislative Meeting of September with a proposed ordinance to establish a community police review board in Alexandria

City Staff Response



- Draft Ordinance to establish a Community Policing Review Board and hire an Independent Policing Auditor
- Envisioned to be the beginning of an iterative process -- only the first step in the evolution of this ordinance

Key Features to Effective Oversight of Law Enforcement



- Independence
- Adequate funding
- Access to critical information
- Rapport with key officials
- Ample authority
- Transparency
- Community/stakeholder support and outreach
- Ability to review police policies, training and other systematic issues

Key Takeaways



- “If you’ve seen one Community Police Review Board you’ve seen one Community Police Review Board.”
- Needs to be unique to the community it intends to serve
 - must have the scope and authority necessary to be responsive to the needs, concerns, perceptions and problems in that community
 - must be built on the engagement of local stakeholders and robust community input

How Can Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Help Alexandria?



Protects Civil Rights

Civilian oversight is a developing area of civil rights protection. Oversight practitioners are at the forefront of investigating, reviewing, and auditing individual cases or patterns of potential civil rights violations in areas such as racial profiling, biased policing, the use of deadly force, illegal searches, excessive force, and unlawful arrests.



Supports Effective Policing

Mutual trust and respect between police and communities are critical to effective law enforcement. Civilian oversight increases public trust in police by assuring the public that investigations have been done fairly, thoroughly, and objectively. This improved trust leads to greater public cooperation with law enforcement, and in turn, improves public safety.



How Can Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Help Alexandria?



Ensures

Greater Accountability

One of the primary goals of civilian oversight is to advance fair and professional law enforcement that is responsive to community needs. This is accomplished, in large part, by promoting constitutional policing. Oversight focuses on assessing officer and departmental compliance with local policies as well as state and federal law, and



institutionalizing and preserving important reforms. It also aids in evaluating the integrity and effectiveness of internal police accountability systems.

Helps Manage Risk

Civilian oversight is critical to managing a municipality's exposure to risk from lawsuits claiming unlawful actions by individual officers or departmental failures to supervise or train officers. Oversight accomplishes this by ensuring that individual officers who engage in misconduct are effectively investigated and disciplined; by evaluating and proposing



improvements to police management and supervision and training; and by reporting publicly on a department's progress in implementing such improvements.

How Can Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Help Alexandria?



Builds Bridges

Effective policing must be responsive to community standards, values, and needs. Civilian oversight builds bridges between communities and the police forces that serve them by: communicating and cooperating with community and civic leaders before and after major incidents; by assuring the public that investigations of police misconduct have been completed fairly, thoroughly, and objectively; and by conducting independent investigations and reviews to ensure constitutional policing practices. Civilian oversight further acts as a bridge by conveying the concerns and needs of the community to the police, and reporting to the community how the police are performing, which allows the public to trust the police department and its officers and to view them as honest, reliable, and trustworthy. Civilian oversight practitioners are generally not currently-serving police officers, but trained and educated lawyers, investigators, researchers, analysts, and volunteers in your community.

Increases Confidence in Police

Civilian oversight works to increase public trust and confidence in the police. By conducting independent reviews and audits of police policies and practices, and by ensuring that investigations of police misconduct or uses of force are handled fairly and objectively, oversight helps a community to trust that issues are resolved in a way that maximizes the public interest. This trust translates to higher confidence in a police force, and greater cooperation in a department's efforts to prevent and solve crimes.

POLICE

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Draft Ordinance: Community Policing Review Board and Independent Policing Auditor



- Establish a Community Policing Review Board – hybrid review/auditing focus at its outset
- Hiring of an Independent Policing Auditor
- Demonstrates a long-term, comprehensive commitment to transparent police oversight, equitable policing, and accountability
- Community oversight bodies are intended to be iterative -- model lends itself to a natural evolution of the Board as it accomplishes its initial purpose and the Auditor does their work

Draft Ordinance: Community Policing Review Board and Independent Policing Auditor



- Work to examine systemic patterns in complaints, incidents, conduct, policies, procedures and outcomes in policing in our community
- Board and Auditor will work together to conduct broad evaluations, offer recommendations for improving police policies, practices, procedures and training
- Improve trust between police and the community by ensuring public confidence in our police department through accountability and transparency

Next Steps



- Use the draft ordinance as the basis for community discussion and engagement
- Establish a community outreach process to review and collect input on the draft ordinance
- Use collected input to inform an updated draft ordinance for Council consideration
- Bring a proposed ordinance forward for first reading at the November 10 City Council legislative meeting, and public hearing and adoption at the November 14 Council Public Hearing