

**Citizen Review Committee  
Community Forum  
Sunday, March 14, 2010  
Hoffman Hall  
Portland State University**

*The following is a summary of remarks given at a community forum on policy accountability issues sponsored by the Citizen Review Committee, Resolutions NW and the Veterans Students Association of Portland State University on March 14, 2010. While the forum was public and many speakers identified themselves as part of their remarks, this summary does not include speakers' names because they did not necessarily know their remarks would be published on the web.*

CRC Chair Michael Bigham called the forum to order at 2:05 pm. He gave welcoming remarks and thanked the attendees for coming to the forum. Michael provided the opportunity for the members of the Citizen Review Committee to introduce themselves and then turned facilitation of the meeting over to representatives of Resolutions Northwest: Teri Pierson and Cassaundra Adams-Murphy. They also thanked the audience for attending, laid out the ground rules for the forum and explained the process for providing comments. They underscored that if members of the audience wished to respond to a speaker's remarks to avoid any verbal response but instead to wave a hand or hands in the air to support a comment or to give a "thumbs down" sign to indicate disagreement with a comment. The public comments then got underway.

Speaker 1: former steward for International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (naval shipyard). He urged CRC and the public to listen to the 9-1-1 tape on the Aaron Campbell shooting. "Anyone who listens to it will be affected." He said there was an important message to deliver from the public to the police union: "we are not your enemy."

Speaker 2: defense attorney who lives in Portland (Irvington neighborhood). He said that the process to hear complaints is too slow (positive response from the audience). He noted that a jury trial often happens within 120 days from an incident. He also noted that police officers often don't live in the community so they are not viewed as part of the community. (more positive response from the audience).

Speaker 3: resident of NE Portland (Piedmont neighborhood). He'd like to see more forums. He said that his dealings with police have been respectful but also noted that "I'm white, middle-class and middle-age." He then turned to Aaron Campbell incident and asked why this incident was allowed to escalate. He said that no commanding officers were asked to testify at the grand jury. He asked why it was so hard to take Aaron Campbell into custody when he was often within 10 feet of various officers at various times during the incident.

Speaker 4: representing Portland Copwatch. He raised the case of James Chasse Jr and urged greater scrutiny of that case. He noted that only 2 or 3 officers are being held accountable for Mr. Chasse's death. He also raised the question of who is in command at an incident involving multiple agencies (in this case, the Portland Police Bureau and Multnomah County Sheriff). This is an issue that needs to be

addressed in policy. He also urged that the Portland City Council act as a police commission. (positive crowd reaction). He also raised the issue about the transparency of the actions of the medical examiner.

Speaker 5: member of Freedom Socialist Party. He said that he thought Portland has become more dangerous for the poor and working class along with the dangers of “driving while black.” He said that Portland needed an elected civilian review board (positive crowd reaction). He said the community’s job was to change the Portland Police Bureau so that it served the community.

Speaker 6: He raised the issues of the extent of James Chasse’s injuries, listing them as 15 broken ribs in 22 different places. He said that the excuse offered was the Officer Humphries “fell” on Mr. Chasse and he expressed doubt about that. He also noted the need for more independent oversight on police issues. He underscored the need for drug, alcohol and steroid testing for Portland Police Bureau members (positive crowd reaction). He raised the issue of Portland Patrol, Inc. and said that their work has no accountability at all (positive crowd reaction).

Speaker 7: He also raised the drug testing question. He asked why an officer involved in a shooting was not automatically taken off the street until the proceedings in the case are completely over. He also said that information on stops based on race should be made public.

Speaker 8: She talked about the recent incident with 2 Hillsboro police officers who were honored for their actions in dealing with an explosive situation. They were able to de-escalate the situation and make sure it ended safely for all. She said that the difference between that and an incident happening in Portland was that the Portland incident “would have been deadly.” She noted that after the James Chasse incident, there were promises of special training in dealing with mentally ill individuals but expressed doubt as to whether or to what extent this actually happened. She observed that complaints against police are down and thought that it was because no one has faith in the system. She said that police ought to treat everyone equally no matter what. She noted the recent statement by an African-American newspaper that said “don’t call the police if you need help.” She said this indicates that we are in a crisis (positive crowd response). She asked whether Portland had the political courage to change and urged officials to stop telling the community that the “police did nothing wrong” in these high-profile incidents.

Speaker 9: He raised the issue of the murder of Ricky Johnson. He said that there should be a greater presence of African-Americans on the police force. He thought it was a shame that federal officials needed to come in, like in the Aaron Campbell case. He thought we should be able to take care of the situation ourselves rather than having someone else come in. He stated that he didn’t think the community had healed from Kendra James’ murder and that there was still lots of wounds. He asked rhetorically how many had been killed by police over the years.

Speaker 10: She urged equity and compassion and said she felt grief and sadness for the families who were dealing with the loss of their loved ones. She called herself “a 73 year old grandmother” and said she was a retired social worker. She said that any interaction she had had with police had been marked by compassion, respect, professionalism and restraint but also noted that she is older and white. She has high expectations for police but fears for citizens of color and for people with mental illness or even other seniors who may not be able to react quickly to instructions from the police.

Speaker 11: She is a member of the First Unitarian Church and also a part of an organization called “Real Wealth of Portland.” She said we have a hierarchical system in which some have power and some don’t. She was a teacher for 30 years and urged the community to use this time as a teaching and learning moment. She said that police need to be held accountable for their behavior. She said that the “CRC is representing me and my children.”

Speaker 12: She said she lives in Portland and that when she sees a police car, she doesn’t feel safer; she feels afraid. She said this is not a black issue or a white issue but that it was a community issue (positive crowd response). She also noted that because of legal settlements over police actions, it is also starting to become a sizable financial issue as well.

Speaker 13: She is representing a group called “I’m Everyday People.” This issue is about people. Where does this conversation go from here? That is very important. What happens when Officer Friendly isn’t so friendly anymore? She has a 10 year old son and he says he is afraid of police. She noted that this meeting should have been held in NE Portland and urged action rather than more meetings.

Speaker 14: He lives in SW Portland. He is an Iraq veteran. He said he was familiar with “chaos and violence and said that military personnel could often diffuse more difficult situations more easily than Portland police seem to do. He questioned why the need for shooting a young girl with a bean bag shot gun and called it “ridiculous and disgusting.”

Speaker 15: She said she is resentful of inaction by the city. She wants to have trust in the police but right now, community members don’t have it.

Speaker 16: He asked why someone is shot to be killed? Why can’t we aim to wound? He noted that he was hit by a car once and received 3 broken ribs. He contrasted that to the 15 broken ribs received by James Chasse. He said that police are supposed to keep the peace but wondered what kind of peace?

Speaker 17: He was a citizen representative in the development of Senate Bill 111, which changed the terms of the use of deadly force. He is also a former Multnomah County Corrections deputy. He said working in the jails taught you to deescalate situations. He also noted that there was also an organization called the “Brotherhood of the Strong,” made up of officers who did abuse their authority. But this was not representative. He called for psychological tests on an ongoing basis for police officers, not just at the time of hiring, because he said the job changes you (positive crowd reaction). He said he has seen a lot of violence but never the kind of violence as in the Chasse incident.

Speaker 18: from the PSU Student Veterans Association. He said he had the utmost respect for men and women in uniform. He noted that the 41<sup>st</sup> National Guard unit was about to return. He said that we need to increase police training to deal with various situations that may arise from veterans returning from combat situations. He said that he thought that in addition to time on the gun range and patrol car training that police also needed to spend more time in the classroom learning about confronting the psychological aspects of the situations they were seeing.

Speaker 19: He came to Portland from Idaho and was a troubled youth. He said that we can do better and that he was running for city council because he thought we could do better. He raised three points: 1) we needed to restore trust and accountability in the police; these issues are microcosms of other issues; 2) we need more diversity on the police force; and 3) we need to elect leaders who can create the change the community seeks.

Speaker 20: She's lived in Portland since 1982. She has kids ages 4-19 years old. She was a Desert Storm wife and is an Oregon Action activist. She's here to support and push personal accountability of police. She doesn't want gangs but she also doesn't want police violence. She noted that it seems that it's often said that police actions were in line with policy. She said that if policy is the excuse, we should change the policy.

Speaker 21: He is a member of the Pacific Green Party and a Teamster. He is running for Congress in District 1. As a truck driver, the first concern is public safety. He undergoes extensive drug testing, both randomly and after any kind of incident that's out of the ordinary, even a blown tire. He said there should be the same standard applied to the police force. He said there should be real community policing (positive crowd reaction) and that we need to figure out how to connect police more with the community.

This concluded the public comments at the forum. Each CRC members was given the opportunity to offer brief reflections on what was said. Michael Bigham noted that the CRC will take the public comments and identify policy issues that the CRC could address and would keep the public informed. He thanked the facilitators again as well as the PSU Student Veterans Association and adjourned the community forum at 3:25 pm.

In addition to the public testimony taken at the forum, attendees could fill out comment cards and submit those as part of the community input. Below is the comments added through the comment cards:

“I don't want these cops living in my neighborhood. Stop allowing the police to police themselves.”

“As many have already commented on, training policy change is needed (train more as peace keepers, to use less lethal force). Mental health of officers is important. Think about keeping our military on the war zone year after year, with only a small vacation. Their mental/emotional health would suffer greatly the longer their tour of duty is. I suggest duty rotation to take officers off the streets for periods of time to ensure preservation of their mental health – for them, their families, for the community. I also reiterate the need of our officers to come from our city and community policing needs to be brought back.”

“When I see a police car – I do not feel safer. I feel afraid. Not b/c I am doing anything illegal but b/c I am not a police officer. From what I have gathered, there is 0 (zero) accountability. It seems that the Portland Police can do no wrong. They can beanbag, tazer (sic), tackle citizens for passive resistance. Age, sex, mental capacity – all erroneous. A change in procedure is fiscaly (sic) responsible. These lawsuits that stem from unwarranted police brutality is egregious – hospitals, lawyers, etc. can really add up and the taxpayers foot the bill.”

“I have dealt with the (illegible) and am willing to do anything to help better the situation.”

“Hold more of these forums and find meeting spaces in different parts of the city. Give more notice to the public. IPR staff should attend these events.”

“Create better awareness of such meeting. Very few faces (5 or less) under the age of 25, which is the group that is affected the most by police action.”

“There needs to be a citizen’s group that has actual regulatory authority over the PPB. The city council doesn’t have the backbone to oversee the police.”

“Improve marketing of meetings. Skanner and Observer, tv, etc.”

“I was disappointed that no police command showed up to feel their city’s pulse. PPI and other publicly funded “private police” need oversight (sic) as well.”

“I am very pleased that the CRC went through with this forum. There are few things that I can say that haven’t been said by those who spoke. I hope that there will be measurable changes to PPB as a result. When people in the system say they have heard the same complaints again and again, there is evidence of gross inaction.”

“Accountability of supervising officials, up to and including the Chief. Need to modify rules, laws and procedures so that “shoot 1<sup>st</sup> and ask questions later” is no longer the norm. We need “compassionate response” from officers in emotional/suicidal cases.”

“After the Rodney King beatings in LA, the LAPD ended up getting rid of the 5% most violent officers. The complaints on police greatly decreased. I’d recommend the Portland Police Department be forced to do something similar.”

“People are afraid to call police. If you live with a person who has mental illness and the person is in crisis, you would be foolish to call for assistance from the PPD (sic). It used to be that if you asked for a CIT office you MIGHT get one of the “good” officers. Now that they have all been “trained” but have the ignorant attitudes that lead to violence, it is unsafe to rely on their assistance. Today’s comments should have been recorded (committee members weren’t looking at us).”

“We need to engage more people on the following consideration: How do we reconcile use of force expectations between police and community? Also this consideration needs to include other police agencies because we are interested in comparing and contrasting best practices among police use of force policies and practices. I suggest a PSU-sponsored forum as a dialogue environment as a dialogue environment.”