

CHARLOTTESVILLE POLICE CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Date: January 8, 2026

Scheduled Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: CitySpace - 100 5th Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902

Board Members Attending: Dr. Jeffrey Fracher (Chair), Dr. Kyle Dobson (Vice Chair), Andrew Frye, George Dillard Jr., Ruairi Vaughan, Albe LaFave.

Board Members Not Attending: N/A

Guests: Lieutenant Jake Via, Charlottesville Police Department Internal Affairs

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chair Dr. Jeffrey Fracher. Mr. Walker conducted roll call.

Agenda Approval:

- A motion was made by Mr. Vaughan to approve the current meeting agenda for January 8, 2026. Motion seconded by Mr. Frye and approved unanimously by members present.

Minutes Approval:

- A motion was made by Mr. Frye to approve the meeting minutes from the December 11, 2025 meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. LaFave and approved unanimously by members present.

Announcements:

- Dr. Fracher welcomed Lieutenant Jake Via from the Charlottesville Police Department Internal Affairs Division to the meeting.
- Dr. Fracher expressed appreciation to the City Attorney's Office for completing the vetting process for outside counsel candidates. Three candidates have been approved, and Dr. Fracher and Mr. Walker will meet with them in the coming weeks to bring a recommendation back to the Board. Outside counsel would represent the Board in matters where the Board's position may be in opposition to the City.
- Mr. Walker provided an update on new Board member appointments: City Council has three eligible applicants to interview later in January for the two remaining vacant positions. New members are expected to join the Board for the February meeting, bringing the Board to its full complement of eight members.
- Mr. Walker noted that the next CommStat meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 27th at 9:15 a.m. at CitySpace. Mr. Frye expressed interest in attending.
- Mr. Walker announced that the March PCOB meeting will be held in the Parks and Recreation conference room downstairs due to budget meetings in CitySpace.

- Mr. Walker mentioned that he will attend two of the three city budget forum sessions scheduled for the following week. These forums provide an opportunity for community engagement and conversations about the PCOB budget.
- Dr. Fracher noted that he received an email from Mr. Steven King, the new Assistant to the City Manager. Mr. Walker clarified that Mr. King's role includes liaison to boards and commissions. Dr. Fracher indicated he would meet with Mr. King, who also plans to attend a future Board meeting.
- Mr. Walker reminded Board members about the new parking garage license plate reader system and offered to help with validation procedures.

Public Comment (First Opportunity):

- No public comments were received during the first public comment period.

Internal Affairs Guest Speaker:

- Lieutenant Jake Via introduced himself, noting he has served in charge of Internal Affairs (IA) for two years, now starting his third year. He is supported by Sergeant Russell Handy (who joined November 1st, 2025) and reports to Captain Tony Newberry, who oversees the Professional Standards Division including IA, hiring, training, and recruiting.
- Dr. Dobson asked about the philosophy of rotating officers through the IA role. Lt. Via explained that Chief Kochis prefers to move supervisors through different roles every few years to bring different perspectives and leadership styles. However, the IA position requires careful selection of officers who can handle the challenge of investigating fellow officers.
- Dr. Dobson noted the organizational structure where training and IA are housed together under Professional Standards, allowing training failures identified through investigations to be directly addressed through coordinated training responses.
- Mr. Vaughan asked about data tracking for complaints (location, time of day, demographics). Lt. Via confirmed that IA collects this data but does not analyze trends; the focus is on individual incidents. Mr. Walker noted that the PCOB 2024 Annual Report included case numbers, timelines, allegations, and outcomes, but demographic and geographic analysis could be added in the future as a partnership between the Board and IA.
- Lt. Via explained the three pathways for complaints: (1) through the PCOB office, (2) directly to IA via the CPD website, email, phone, letter, or in-person, and (3) internal investigations originating from within the Department, which must be directed by the Chief.
- Dr. Fracher noted the importance of officer-to-officer accountability, where officers can report concerns about fellow officers, representing a sizable portion of IA's work.
- Lt. Via described the disciplinary matrix, which categorizes violations from Category A (coaching/counseling at the shift supervisor level) through Category F (termination). Categories B and above may come to IA for deeper investigation. The matrix and IA policies are available on the CPD website.

- Mr. Dillard asked about accommodating complainants who may have difficulty writing. Lt. Via confirmed that complaints can be taken any way a person can communicate, including in-person conversations that he would document.
- Dr. Dobson raised concerns about community members being reluctant to file complaints with police or even city employees. Lt. Via noted that third-party complaints are accepted, and Mr. Walker confirmed that many complaints come through the City Manager's Office to the PCOB Office, providing an alternative to direct police contact.
- Lt. Via shared his evolving perspective on the PCOB, noting initial officer concerns about civilian oversight but recognizing the benefit of working collaboratively. He emphasized that having the Board review cases helps demonstrate to the community that IA operates fairly and impartially.
- Mr. LaFave asked about handling complaints from individuals with mental illness who may be experiencing delusions. Lt. Via explained that complaints are not automatically discarded due to mental illness; instead, he takes the complaint, documents it, and investigates whether evidence supports the claim. If the person needs services, they can be referred to the ANCHOR team.
- Lt. Via discussed the ANCHOR team, a mental health co-response program pairing officers with Region Ten, fire, and EMS personnel to respond to mental health crises. The program started with one officer and has grown to two, with plans to expand to 24/7 coverage.
- Lt. Via mentioned that new officers receive a presentation from IA during post-academy training to explain the complaint and investigation process. Mr. Walker has been invited to present to new officers about the PCOB's role.

Ordinance Model Discussion:

- Dr. Fracher presented the four oversight models identified by NACOLE (National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement) as the Board prepares to meet with City Council to discuss ordinance revisions.
- The Investigation Model involves independent, full investigative authority. Dr. Fracher noted this is technically in the current ordinance but is not workable due to lack of a full-time investigator, budget constraints, legal barriers including Garrity protections, and employment law issues.
- The Auditor/Monitor Model involves monitoring complaints and requesting policy changes. Mr. Walker is already performing some of this work.
- The Review Model involves reviewing completed investigations and processes rather than conducting independent investigations.
- The Hybrid Model blends characteristics of multiple models. Dr. Fracher proposed this as the target model, describing a workflow where cases come in, Mr. Walker reviews and flags concerns, the Board reviews flagged cases in closed session with relevant materials, and the Board issues recommendations to the Chief. Details about the Chief's response and potential disciplinary recommendations need to be clarified in the ordinance.
- Mr. Walker explained that discipline recommendations typically fall under the independent investigation model due to tight timelines that don't align with monthly Board meetings. A review model focuses on reviewing the entire process after discipline

has been given, allowing the Board to assess the investigation itself and correlated policies and procedures.

- Mr. Frye asked about restrictions compared to other Virginia localities. Mr. Walker confirmed that each municipality has its own local code, and he plans to connect with other Virginia oversight boards (Virginia Beach, Fairfax County, Alexandria, etc.) to share best practices.
- Mr. Walker noted the Board plans to conduct its first closed session case review in March, using an actual case that came through the PCOB Office, to practice the process before finalizing ordinance changes.
- A motion was made by Mr. Frye to move forward with some variation of the hybrid model. Motion seconded by Mr. Vaughan and approved unanimously.

Work Plan Discussion:

- Mr. Walker and Dr. Dobson presented the draft work plan designed to structure the Board's work and establish a clear cadence of activities. The plan focuses on four main steps: (1) seeking understanding from the community, (2) conducting analysis, (3) conducting oversight, and (4) reporting outcomes.
- Step 1 (Seeking Understanding) involves engaging with community members, organizations, and neighborhood associations to identify priorities and concerns. Dr. Dobson emphasized the goal of ensuring the Board is not working in a bubble and is responsive to community input.
- Step 2 (Conducting Analysis) involves reviewing department data, complaint patterns, and research to set priorities based on community input and available information.
- Step 3 (Conducting Oversight) could include reviewing IA case files, examining specific data sets, reviewing policies such as use of force or the disciplinary matrix, and conducting research to form Board opinions.
- Step 4 (Reporting Outcomes) involves reporting to different stakeholders including the community, Chief of Police, City Council, and City Manager, with each potentially requiring different types of communication.
- The work plan distinguishes between shared responsibilities of the Board and Office, with the Office handling day-to-day monitoring and auditing, and the Board focusing on community engagement and scheduled reviews.
- Dr. Fracher emphasized that community engagement is the top priority, noting that after six years on the Board, visibility in the community remains woefully inadequate. Many residents still don't know the PCOB exists or confuse it with the police.
- Mr. Walker described efforts to build a directory of community contacts including neighborhood associations, organizations, businesses, and community leaders, with a standardized process for outreach including scripts, surveys, and tracking of engagement.
- Dr. Fracher asked Board members to commit to two community outreach efforts per month, with Mr. Walker coordinating through the directory and providing resources.
- Mr. Dillard offered to facilitate a connection with the NAACP, noting plans to bring this topic to their next meeting in February.

- Dr. Fracher described his approach to community engagement from six years ago, knocking on doors in South 1st Street, West Haven, and Prospect and asking residents "What has been your experience with Charlottesville police?" He noted this open-ended question yielded significant feedback.
- A motion was made by Mr. Frye to approve the work plan. Motion seconded by Mr. Vaughan and approved unanimously.

Community Engagement Discussion:

- Mr. Walker reported on recent community engagement activities, including meeting with a new lawyer at the Legal Aid Justice Center and plans to attend the NAACP meeting in February at Mr. Dillard's invitation.
- Mr. Frye noted he has reviewed historical documents from the Board's formation but has not yet synthesized specific lessons.
- Dr. Fracher mentioned plans to meet with two long-time city residents who were part of the original movement to create the PCOB, to understand their perspective seven years later.
- Mr. LaFave suggested sending outreach to community leaders asking what they would like to see from the Board. Mr. Walker confirmed this is what the outreach process is designed to accomplish in a way that coordinates these connections and ensures collection of lessons learned and community understanding.
- Mr. Walker emphasized the importance of Board members using their city email accounts to access restricted documents like the community directory.
- Mr. Dillard suggested repeating a town hall event like the one previously held at the Jefferson School. Dr. Fracher agreed but noted the need to also reach beyond the citizens most frequently engaged to also engage residents who don't typically attend meetings.
- Mr. Walker announced that the Chief of Police has indicated he can attend the February meeting for dialogue with the Board.

Public Comment (Second Opportunity):

- No public comments were received during the second public comment period.

Adjournment:

- A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Vaughan and seconded by Mr. Frye to adjourn the meeting. The motion was passed unanimously by members present.
- Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:29 p.m.

Motion: Vaughan
 Second: Frye
 Approved Unanimously

Certified by James Walker, Acting PCOB Director

Date Adopted: 2/12/2026

Certified: James Walker