

CHARLOTTESVILLE POLICE CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Date: April 9, 2026

Scheduled Time: 6:30 p.m.

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

Board Members Attending: Dr. Jeffrey Fracher (Chair), Andrew Frye, Albe LaFave, Caron LeNoir-Kelly, Nathalie Reaves, Ruairi Vaughan, George Dillard Jr.

Board Members Not Attending: Dr. Kyle Dobson (Vice Chair)

Staff Present: James Walker, Acting Director.

Guests: Martin Conn, Nasiba Bek, and Lisa McMurdo (Moran Reeves Conn).

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chair Dr. Fracher. Mr. Walker conducted the roll call, with seven of eight Board members present. Dr. Fracher reviewed the ground rules for meeting participation, including respectful conduct, the three-minute time limit for public comment, and the process for submitting written questions to the Office in lieu of dialogue during public comment periods.

Agenda & Minutes Approval:

- A motion was made by Mr. Vaughan to approve the proposed meeting agenda for April 9, 2026. Motion seconded by Mr. LaFave and approved unanimously by members present.
- A motion was made by Mr. LaFave to approve the meeting minutes from the February 23, 2026 work session and the March 12, 2026 regular meeting. Motion seconded by Mrs. LeNoir-Kelly and approved unanimously by members present.

Announcements:

- Mr. Walker reminded the Board that the weekly Office update email includes the live, bookmarkable calendar link covering Board events and CPD community engagement opportunities (such as community walks). Mr. Walker noted that calendar invitations are also sent directly to Board members for events as they are added.
- Dr. Fracher announced that a Doodle poll would be distributed to schedule an additional work session. The session will have a looser agenda and is intended to provide an opportunity for Board members to become better acquainted and to brainstorm forward-looking items including outreach.
- Dr. Fracher announced that the first draft of the ordinance revisions had been distributed in the meeting packet. He explained that green text indicates new language, red strikethroughs indicate removed language, and unchanged sections are marked as

such. The draft will be reviewed by independent counsel, the City Attorney, the Chief of Police, the City Manager, and the Board before being presented to City Council.

- Dr. Fracher reminded all Board members who have not yet completed a ride-along to do so within the next six to eight weeks. Mr. Walker offered to help coordinate scheduling.

Introduction of Independent Counsel:

- Dr. Fracher introduced Martin Conn of Moran Reeves Conn (Richmond) as the Board's newly retained independent counsel, along with associates Nasiba Bek and Lisa McMurdo.
- Mr. Conn thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve, noting that his firm has been practicing since 1995 and shares the Board's mission. He described the firm's experience representing corporations, individuals, and governmental entities, and emphasized the team's role as support for the Board's work. Mr. Conn indicated his team would observe the meeting through the ordinance revision portion to get a feel for the Board's work.
- Dr. Fracher reviewed the selection process, noting that Mr. Walker and he had interviewed three attorneys forwarded by the City Attorney's Office, with unanimous agreement to retain Mr. Conn's team based on their enthusiasm and commitment to the Board's mission.
- Dr. Fracher instructed Board members to direct any questions or inquiries for independent counsel through the Office, given that engagement with independent counsel constitutes billable time that must be tracked and contained. Mr. Walker added that general legal questions can continue to go to the City Attorney's Office, which serves as the Board's primary legal representative, while independent counsel is engaged in matters where the City Attorney's Office would have a potential conflict of interest, such as the current ordinance revision.

Public Comment (First Period):

- No public comment was received, either in person or online.

Internal Affairs Case Review Process:

- Dr. Fracher noted that the Board had been unable to review the recent Internal Affairs case together in closed session due to current statutory limitations. Pending legislation on the Governor's desk may provide an exception permitting oversight boards to enter closed session. In the meantime, Board members reviewed the case file and body camera footage individually at the PCOB Office.
- Mr. Walker presented draft case review process materials, emphasizing the confidential nature of personal information reviewed and the consequences of any breach of confidentiality. He noted that the present discussion was focused on the review process itself, not the specifics of the case.
- Mr. Walker proposed the use of an individual scorecard, completed by each Board member prior to group discussion, to minimize peer influence on case review opinions. The same scorecard form would be used for each case, with categories and definitions developed and refined over time.

- Mr. Vaughan asked whether members would individually review case notes and footage outside of meetings, complete scorecards, and then discuss in closed session. Dr. Fracher confirmed that until statutory changes permit collective review, the individual review and scoring approach would be used, with collective discussion afterward.
- Mrs. LeNoir-Kelly asked whether the scorecard would be consistent across cases or developed case-by-case. Mr. Walker confirmed a consistent form would be used, with case-specific scoring.
- Discussion occurred regarding case selection. Given the volume of cases, Mr. Walker indicated he would use discretion, guided by Board input on prioritized categories, to select cases for review. Categories discussed included traffic stops, racial composition of incidents, and use-of-force cases. Dr. Fracher noted that current cooperation from the Chief provides the Office with full access to cases, interviews, and body camera footage, but that volunteer Board capacity necessitates prioritization.
- Mrs. LeNoir-Kelly asked whether there is a mechanism to align Board case-review focus with community-identified priorities. Dr. Fracher and Mr. Walker tied this back to ongoing community outreach efforts; the Board will be soliciting community input on areas of concern (e.g., traffic stops, bias-based policing) and using that input to shape priorities.
- Mr. Walker referenced a draft case review manual included in the digital meeting packet and noted he would continue refining it. He also indicated that a case review template is in development to ensure consistent, legally compliant, and meaningful outcomes.
- Mr. Dillard offered feedback on the case reviewed individually by Board members, observing that the officers involved had carried themselves in a respectable manner relative to other interactions he had observed. Mr. Walker noted the unique value of Mr. Dillard's law enforcement perspective in case review discussions and reminded the Board that the Law Enforcement Representative seat is a non-voting role specifically designed to provide that perspective.
- Mr. Walker announced that Lieutenant Via, who has served as the Internal Affairs liaison to the Board, is rotating out of the position this month. A new lieutenant will be stepping into the role. Dr. Fracher noted that the Board has an established positive relationship with the incoming lieutenant.
- Mr. Walker emphasized the importance of a collaborative relationship with the Police Department to maintain the access the Board needs, while noting that collaboration does not equate to bias toward the Department.

Ordinance Revision Summary:

- Mr. Walker provided background on the ordinance revision process, noting that the September 2025 joint meeting with City Council had initiated the current revision work. The goal is to align the ordinance with the work the Board can practically and legally perform, cutting elements that have proven unworkable while strengthening those the Board can carry out meaningfully.
- Mr. Walker explained that the materials are organized in three levels of detail: (1) a high-level presentation summary of major changes, (2) a section-by-section table outline (still in development) describing each change and the reasoning behind it, and (3) the full red-line draft of the ordinance language itself. The intent for the May 18, 2026 joint work

session with City Council is to operate at the higher levels and not get into the detailed language.

- Mr. Walker outlined the timeline: final drafting and external review (independent counsel, City Attorney, Chief of Police, City Manager) ahead of the May 18 work session with Council and a likely Council vote (requiring two readings) in late summer. Dr. Fracher stated his preference to complete adoption by fall.
- Mr. Walker noted that he will be out on parental leave at the time of the May 18 work session and identified Dr. Fracher as the lead presenter in his absence.
- **Key changes discussed:**
 - **1. Consolidation of definitions.** Definitions currently scattered throughout the ordinance would be consolidated into a single "Definitions" section at the top. The Board expressed strong support for this change as non-controversial.
 - **2. Purpose statement.** Substantial discussion occurred regarding the proposed revised purpose statement. Concerns and feedback included:
 - The proposed language was characterized as wordy.
 - Mrs. LeNoir-Kelly questioned the word "enhance" as applied to transparency, accountability, and legitimacy, observing that these are defined concepts and that "enhance" is a "soft" word. She suggested the Board be more direct and use fewer soft words with more meaning. Mrs. LeNoir-Kelly later distinguished between using "enhance" in the context of process versus people, endorsing the word when applied to process (e.g., enhancing a process for accountability) but cautioning against applying it to people.
 - Mr. Vaughan suggested "facilitate." The word "facilitate" was well-received and discussed as accurately reflecting that the Board comes alongside the work of officers already building community trust, rather than presuming to establish that trust independently.
 - Mr. Vaughan elaborated that the existing language about the Board "establishing" trust between the Department, City Council, the public, and City Manager is too much of a lift and presumptuous, particularly given the work officers themselves have already been doing to build community trust. "Maintain" was suggested as more appropriate than "establish."
 - Mr. Dillard emphasized that the term "police" appearing first in the Board's name leads the public to associate the Board with the police and reiterated the importance of public-facing language that clearly communicates the Board is there to help the community. He shared that he is developing a community outreach plan, drawing on his earlier experience as a beat officer working in low-income neighborhoods in Charlottesville, and that he intended to engage in one such area following the meeting.

- Mrs. LeNoir-Kelly noted that in many places where "the public" or "citizens" appears, the language places them last in the sentence rather than in more forward position.
- **3. Removal of independent investigation authority.** Mr. Walker explained the multiple legal, structural, and resource limitations that have prevented the Board from conducting independent investigations in its seven-year history. These include state and federal law, the police collective bargaining agreement, lack of authorized funding for an investigator, and the inability of the Board to compel officer testimony (a power held only by an authority that can terminate or discipline the officer). Mr. Walker noted that an officer's statement in an internal investigation is protected from criminal use against them, a protection the Board cannot extend, meaning any "independent" investigation could not realistically include the officer's statement. Dr. Fracher emphasized that, in place of investigations of a small number of cases, the revised ordinance would empower the Board to review every case and identify those meriting deeper attention, characterizing the change as offering more, not less.
- **4. Removal of case-specific disciplinary recommendations.** Mr. Walker explained that while state law permits localities to create entities with binding disciplinary authority, Charlottesville's locality has not granted that authority. Two practical barriers further limit the existing recommendation power: (1) a 45-day timeline from complaint receipt to the Chief's decision; and (2) the collective bargaining agreement provision that nullifies Board recommendations if an officer appeals or grieves the decision. The revised ordinance retains two related discipline-adjacent roles for the Board: assessing whether the Chief applied the discipline matrix correctly to a given case and assessing whether the discipline matrix itself needs revision.
- Mr. Walker noted that current outlets for publishing Board opinions include the Board's website, meeting livestreams (YouTube and other locations), and the meeting minutes. He emphasized that the revised reporting section identifies four audiences (Chief of Police, City Manager, City Council, and the public) and addresses required responses to Board recommendations, including potential requirements for the Chief to respond in writing to public-facing Board recommendations.
- **5. Hearings reduced in scope.** Mr. Walker and Dr. Fracher explained that the original ordinance contemplated hearings akin to an officer trial, which is not feasible for multiple legal, procedural, constitutional, union-related, and privacy reasons. The revised language preserves hearings for broader, policy-level topics: for example, automated license plate readers, where witness, expert, and community testimony can be received. The hearings provision would not be used to compel an individual officer to provide testimony.
- **6 & 7. Compelled testimony and subpoena authority.** The Board cannot compel officer testimony for the reasons discussed under independent investigations. Subpoena authority is retained in scope for third-party records (e.g., camera footage) where it may rarely be necessary. Dr. Fracher noted that further input from independent counsel and the City Attorney's Office will inform this provision. Mr. Vaughan asked who would be subject to subpoena if not the

complainant or the officer (witnesses); the discussion confirmed that the question of practical use remains open and would benefit from attorney input.

- **8. Board membership qualifications.** Mr. Walker indicated that the City Attorney's Office has flagged certain demographic-delineation language as constitutionally problematic and has taken on that revision. Beyond that, discussion centered on residency eligibility, currently broadened by City Council action to address recruitment challenges, but with current language sufficiently broad that an applicant living anywhere could potentially qualify. Mr. Walker noted that some community members do not agree with the current breadth. The discussion concluded that residency standards are ultimately a City Council determination. Mr. Walker also noted that any changes would not impact current Board membership, and that the revision would also include a minimum 30-day application window for Board vacancies.
- **9. Codifying access to records and monitoring of internal affairs.** Mr. Walker explained that core provisions currently contained in a standard operating procedure between the PCOB and the Chief, as well as a separate memorandum of understanding regarding monitoring of officer interviews, would be consolidated into the ordinance itself. Dr. Fracher emphasized the importance of codifying these access rights so that they are not contingent on the cooperation of any individual Chief; the current Chief's openness should be memorialized in the City Code rather than left to vary across administrations.
- **10. New language on monitoring, auditing, and review.** New sections clarify what it means for the Office and the Board to monitor the Department, audit the Department, and review cases and matters, including the office-to-board workflow and the relationship between the Board and the Department.
- **11. Enhanced public reporting and outcomes.** Mr. Walker noted that the existing ordinance did not adequately define what the Board reports out. The revised section establishes a framework for findings, determinations, and recommendations: what they consist of, where they go, the audience they address, and any required response (including potential written responses from the Chief to public Board recommendations).
- **12. Mediation and alternative resolutions.** The original mediation provision is reduced because the Board and Office cannot compel an officer's participation in a mediation session and any compelled mediation could place the officer's statements outside the protections of an internal investigation. The provision is reframed to recognize alternative resolutions, including inquiries (e.g., questions about Department process), complaints about other agencies, and matters where information-sharing resolves the concern without an investigation. Mr. Walker stated that nothing in this approach dissuades a complainant from filing a complaint; the goal is simply to provide accurate information so they can make an informed decision.
- **13. Commendations.** Discussion previously held in a Board work session continues, with the proposed language making the commendation provision more robust and clearer regarding the circumstances and information that would support a Board commendation of an officer or the Department as a whole. Mr. Walker indicated general Board support for retaining commendation authority.

- Dr. Fracher closed the section by emphasizing that the May 18 work session with Council is intended as a high-level overview to surface Council reactions, not to seek a decision. Feedback gathered from Council, attorneys, the Chief, and the City Manager will be incorporated into a final draft brought to the Board for a vote (target: May meeting) before submission to Council later in the summer.
- Mrs. LeNoir-Kelly and Dr. Fracher confirmed the May 18 work session is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. in City Council chambers and is understood to be open to the public.

Remaining Work Plan Focus Area Updates:

- Mr. Walker reported that he and Dr. Dobson met with Lieutenant Via to better understand how immigration-related procedures and policies, as set out by the City Attorney's Office, are being received at the officer level. The Office intends to continue these conversations with mid-level command staff. Mr. Walker reiterated that the Chief is open to Board input on this topic.
- Mr. Walker and Dr. Dobson met with a school district administrator responsible for implementing aspects of the School Resource Officer program. A School Board work session on SROs is scheduled for April 16 at the high school. Mr. Walker advised that, while individual Board members may form their own opinions, it is not the Board's role to take a position on whether SROs should be implemented. If SROs are placed in schools, however, the Board has a meaningful oversight role: any complaints involving SROs would route through Internal Affairs and the Board can hold accountability to the stated goals and intent of the program. Dr. Fracher expressed concerns about how SROs may play out in the schools and emphasized the Board's responsibility to be receptive to reviewing those cases. Mr. Dillard shared his prior experience as a school resource officer (when the role was tied to the DARE program), observing that the prior model provided structured instruction beyond presence alone.

Public Comment (Second Period):

- No public comment was received, either in person or online.

Adjournment:

- A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Frye and seconded by Mr. LaFave. The motion was approved unanimously by members present.
- Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:01 p.m.

Motion made by Mr. Frye to approve the April 9, 2026 regular board meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. LaFave.

Approved by the Charlottesville Police Civilian Oversight Board on the 14th day of May, 2026.

Certified: 
James Walker, Director
Office of Police Civilian Oversight
Email: walkerj@charlottesville.gov
Phone: (434) 970-3794

	Yes	No
Fracher	<u>X</u>	___
Dobson	___	Absent
Frye	<u>X</u>	___
LaFave	<u>X</u>	___
LeNoir-Kelly	<u>X</u>	___
Reaves	<u>X</u>	___
Vaughan	<u>X</u>	___

Note: The law enforcement seat, currently held by Mr. Dillard, is specifically designated as a non-voting member. The seat is intended to provide the Board with an advisory perspective and expertise from law enforcement experience.