

**GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, May 27, 2021

Committee Members Present:

Commissioner Mike Hamby, Committee Chair
Commissioner Tim Denson
Commissioner Russell Edwards
Commissioner Melissa Link

Committee Members Absent:

Commissioner Patrick Davenport

Staff:

Josh Edwards, Assistant Manager
Sherrie Hines, Chief Assistant Attorney
Cleveland Spruill, Police Chief

Committee Chair Hamby called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

A. Commission Identified Items of Interest:

Review recommendations of Community Police Advisory Board Development Task Force (Mayor Girtz assigned to GOC on January 6, 2021)

Josh Edwards presented the Mayor's last four questions for feedback from the Committee.

What is an ideal composition of an advisory board (size of body, range of backgrounds, affiliations, community representation, rotation of members, etc.)? Commissioner Hamby said he could see some benefit of having one or two persons who are retired from law enforcement. Commissioner Link does not think it should include anyone that has current or recent ties to the Athens-Clarke County Police force, maybe someone with experience in another town or decades before. Commissioner Denson suggested that someone with Police background could be an ex-officio member to give background and answer questions. In the Task Force recommendation, there are some very specific asks for appointments from different organizations. Commissioner Denson said these should be recommendations to have that kind of representation but not a necessity.

What training and knowledge are critical for advisory board members to have?

Commissioner Hamby said some training is going to be necessary. Commissioner Link said it would be crucial for everyone on the board to go through the Citizens Police Academy program. Chief Spruill said that he agrees with Commissioner Link and also thinks it would be beneficial for the advisory board members to have additional training from an attorney on case laws and guiding principles as to how police departments operate and work. Chief Spruill said that he would also volunteer his staff to train them on finding information that is already available. Commissioner Denson said training on records is important, and staff could see if NACOLE could do some trainings. He said that members of the Board need to be engaged residents who can be trained. Does not have to be a board of experts.

What level of information access is necessary for the advisory board to provide ideal service? Sherrie Hines said that complete access is not realistic and probably not legal.

Records that are part of an ongoing investigation that cannot be released because it would jeopardize the investigation will not be available. The confidential things will not be available to

the general public. The GOC should decide how they want the board to operate. Internal Affairs style complaints, totally closed cases which anyone would have access to or is the goal that this person could respond in real time, then it would be in terms of the auditor/monitor or board designee viewing things. Sherrie said that access in terms of viewing things could be pretty broad but access in terms of possessing things cannot be very broad. Commissioner Edwards said he envisions the auditor/monitor being the person who would view records or be present during an internal affairs interview to protect the integrity of the information and the integrity of the investigation. The auditor/monitor could then report back to the board after the investigation is complete. Commissioner Denson agreed. Sherrie summarized that the GOC wants the board or auditor/monitor to have access to any records that any member of the general public would have access to but for things that would normally be kept confidential, the auditor/monitor would have access to view or to be present, but not have possession of those records or divulge any information that they are not given permission to divulge.

What level of staffing and budget is necessary for the advisory board to provide ideal service? Commissioner Hamby asked Sherrie Hines to address having a contract employee or full time employee. Sherrie has no legal concerns either way. Commissioner Link asked about the independence of the role. She suggested that the auditor/monitor position be placed in the Office of Operational Analysis. Commissioner Hamby said that would broaden the Charter responsibilities of the Auditor which would then have to go to the Legislature. Commissioner Hamby said that another option the GOC has discussed is an on-call position similar to the Administrative Hearing Officer position that could serve on an on-call basis. Commissioner Denson said the work of that position is going to be more than the formal reacting to investigations; it will include reviewing police policy, ensuring that procedures are being done correctly, making policy recommendations, and conducting community outreach. Josh said a third option is that the Safety and Justice Committee has a fulltime employee allocated that could be considered for this role as well. Commissioner Denson said that people in the community want a different inlet outside of the Police Department.

Commissioner Hamby requested the Attorney's Office provide guidance on the Auditor/Monitor's Access to Confidential Police Matters and Board membership preferences. Sherrie Hines said that there is no issue with access to items that are available for the public. The confidential items will take some work with the Police Department to decide how access to these documents would work. Would need some sort of signed confidentiality agreement and clear guidelines, maybe even individual forms, when the auditor/monitor comes and witnesses confidential interviews or views confidential information to make it really clear what that person can and cannot share of what they observe and hear.

Commissioner Link wants to consider placing this position in the Office of Operational Analysis. Commissioner Hamby asked Commissioner Link to discuss at their next Audit Committee meeting.

Commissioner Edwards said that he thinks as the GOC gets closer towards defining the duties of the auditor/monitor and how they will interact with the board, it will help clarify what sort of position we should allocate to accomplish those duties.

Commissioner Hamby requested that Josh Edwards and Sherrie Hines develop a decision matrix for the GOC. The core will be to define the duties. Sherrie will resend a memo to the GOC members that addresses placing the auditor/monitor under the Office of Operational Analysis.

The meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.