



THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

MAYOR DOMENIC J. SARNO

HOME OF THE BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME

MEDIA ADVISORY

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MAYOR SARNO ISSUES REVISIONS TO EXECUTIVE ORDER FOR COMMUNITY POLICE HEARING BOARD

Springfield, MA- Mayor Domenic J. Sarno announced today that he has issued revisions to the Executive Order for the Community Police Hearing Board (“CPHB”) that he first created in 2010. The revisions are intended: to improve the process for sharing information about the CPHB review of citizens’ complaints with the public; increase public awareness of the work of the CPHB; and utilize the review process to help assure the Police Department is maintaining best practices in its policies and procedures in accord with changes in the law of criminal procedure.

Mayor Sarno stated: “The public has the right to be kept informed of police misconduct cases, especially at a time of heightened concern over police use of force. The CPHB must be able to share information related to its work in a timely manner. These changes are intended to provide the resources to make that happen and modernize the policies and procedures to effectively manage the Police Department.”

The revised order provides that the Police Department’s Crime Analysis Unit will assist the CPHB by improving the database used to track matters involving citizens’ complaints. The information kept in the database will be reported to the public through the City Clerk’s office and the City’s website on a quarterly basis.

The essential responsibilities of the CPHB include:

- case reviews of all citizen's complaints, (held approximately bi-monthly), to assure that every citizen's complaint is thoroughly investigated, and to recommend whether or not disciplinary charges should be issued by the Police Commissioner against an officer involved in an incident;
- conducting periodic civil service disciplinary hearings by designation of the Police Commissioner to determine whether there is just cause for discipline and recommending to the Police Commissioner whether or not discipline should be imposed;
- holding public meetings throughout the year for the purpose of public outreach and education in an effort to improve relations between police officers and the community.

The revisions also clarify that the Open Meeting Law applies to all aspects of the CPHB work. While the 2010 revision required compliance with the Open Meeting Law, the current revision clarifies that notices of all phases of the CPHB work must be posted and minutes kept in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.

Mayor Sarno stated that, "While the deliberations of the CPHB involving complaints against employees may be required to be held in Executive Session, due to the need to manage personnel matters confidentially, the democratic process depends on the public having knowledge about the CPHB action. This revised Executive Order seeks to provide the proper balance of these interests. The members of the CPHB have worked hard to carry out their responsibilities, and the Open Meeting Law postings assure that the public will be aware of the work that is ongoing."

In addition, the revisions add a new component to the review process involving an "after action review" where recommended by the Law Department. This is for the purpose of a structured review or de-brief process to analyze what happened, why it happened, and whether the Law Department recommends any proposed changes in Police Department policies or procedures.

City Solicitor Edward Pikula stated that, "Where the evidence shows that the alleged conduct did occur, but did not violate the policies of the Police Department, the Law Department will review for the purpose of determining whether the clearly established law has changed, and if so, what procedures, practices, orders or training should potentially be changed. We will then work with the Police Department to assist on the legal aspects."

On February 23, 2016 Mayor Sarno ordered the release of preliminary data for the CPHB work over 2014 and 2015 in advance of release of Annual Reports for those years to be issued later this month. In addition, Mayor Sarno had ordered City Solicitor Edward Pikula to propose revisions in the Executive Order to address the length of time it has taken to report information. City Solicitor Pikula stated: "Maintaining the database of CPHB activity and reporting information to the public in a timely manner has been a challenge since the elimination of the

Citistat Department. Over the next thirty days we will work with Commissioner John Barbieri and City Clerk Anthony Wilson, as well as Chief of Staff Denise Jordan, as well as the members of the CPHB, to implement the changes ordered by the Mayor. The changes should help streamline and the information collecting and reporting process.”

The current members of the CPHB include: Chair Attorney George Bourguignon, Owner of a Security Business, Robert C. Jackson, Former Labor Union representative and retired Human Resource manager Albert Trangese, Former Police Officer Pastor Gail Hill, Retired educator and IT consultant Richard Muise, Funeral Director and Business Owner Paul A. Phaneuf and Property Manager Linda Caron.

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