



**Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes**  
**Special Session**

July 8, 2020

Location: via: Zoom

**Attendance:**

**New Jersey:** Ben Saracco, Marty King, Alan Becker, Bruce Schwartz, Judy Boldurian, Pamela Mack-Brooks, Dan Norfleet

**Pennsylvania:** Daniel McArdle, Bob Melikian, Larry Davis, Pamela Mack-Brooks, Tyrone Wesley

**Emeritus Member(s)** Joe Boyle, Jeff Kessler

**Potential Member(s):**

**DRPA/PATCO:** John Hanson, Toni P. Brown, Raymond Santarelli, Jack Stief, Barbara Wagner

**Public Member(s):**

**Call to Order**

A motion was made to approve the June 10, 2020 Minutes. The Minutes were approved.

**CEO, John Hanson:**

John Hanson began the meeting by introducing Toni P. Brown, CAO; Raymond Santarelli, GC; and Chief John Stief to address the CAC's inquiry into the DRPA's Corporate Guidance on Employment Practices; specifically, minorities, persons of color, LGBTQ and police use of force and reporting requirements.

John Hanson stated that in addition to the DRPA & PATCO, he, Toni P. Brown and Raymond Santarelli also oversee the Police Department that includes 170 employees, where 160 are sworn-in Police Officers. Mr. Hanson stated that he is very proud of the department, the work they do, and how they comport themselves in the workplace. It is a very humble and effective department and their level of humility starts at the top with Chief Stief. It is rare that a problem arises related to race, although we did have one major incident which was dealt with quickly, decisively, and dramatically.

### **General Counsel, Raymond Santarelli:**

Raymond Santarelli reported that he and Toni P. Brown pulled together relevant information in response to the CAC's inquiry including their 2-page Memo, Diversity Statement, and a series of DRPA Policies. At the DRPA and PATCO, we pride ourselves on providing an open and inclusive, safe, and fair environment for everyone. Employees undergo training, regularly, and are made aware of the organization's policies and laws on harassment in the workplace, whether sexual or not. The organization makes sure all employees are aware of the complaint process, as well. Mr. Santarelli and Toni P. Brown are the intake officers for all EEO complaints. Once a complaint is received, members of their respective staffs will initiate and conduct a prompt and thorough investigation.

### **CAO, Toni P. Brown:**

Toni P. Brown added that when complaints are received a prompt and thorough investigation is conducted under either the direction of General Counsel Santarelli or CAO Brown. When an investigation reveals policy violations, CEO John Hanson determines what disciplinary action should be taken to ensure that the conduct is not repeated in the workplace.

CAO Brown also stated that, lately, our country has been going through significant challenges. On June 7th, CEO Hanson put out a very strong Statement against Racism making his position on systemic racism, discrimination, and harassment in the workplace very clear. Shortly thereafter, the CEO put out a second Statement providing additional information and resources explaining what systemic racism, micro aggressions and other discriminating behavior looks like. At the DRPA and PATCO, this behavior is not tolerated. CAO Brown explained that long before the current situation in our country, the Authority has taken this behavior very seriously. In his second Statement to all employees, CEO Hanson recognized Juneteenth Day.

CAO Brown explained that all new hires are required to go through a 20-minute orientation on the organization's EEO policies and expectations in the workplace that are the 'rules of the road.' Our policies are more than just words on paper, our policies have teeth. The DRPA & PATCO expects a certain conduct in the workplace and will not tolerate any deviation from that conduct.

CAO Brown and General Counsel Santarelli provided a 2-page Memo, Diversity Statement, and a series of DRPA Policies that were sent to the CAC Members on July 9, 2020.

### **Chief Jack Stief:**

Chief Stief reported that most police departments don't report use of force when an individual is engaged and taken to the ground, but the DRPA Police are required to prepare a full and complete report when use of force is taken in case something comes up at a later time. The report is then sent to the Camden County Prosecutor's Office for review.

Chief Stief's Memo dated June 10, 2020 regarding police training and reporting was provided to the CAC on Wednesday, July 8, 2020.

## Q&A Session:

Q. Why aren't good stories about police officers reported?

Bob Melikian

A. John Hanson reported that feel good stories generally don't sell newspapers, get interest, or drive clicks on the internet. On occasion the press does take interest in some of our stories. They did report on one of our DRPA female police officers who saved two lives with Narcan, consecutively. On a daily basis, the Chief reports how many lives have been saved through Narcan. Our officers do a fantastic job on the bridges talking to people attempting to commit suicide by jumping off the bridge. John Hanson reported that he does not like to make that information public because, scientifically, it normalizes it and spikes up the behavior. John Hanson reiterated the story of the police officer who was filmed talking to a homeless person at the Lindenwold Station. When the police officer returned to the homeless person the person filming the occurrence said, "let's see what happens now." The police officer purchased a pair of boots from a store across the street and gave them to the homeless man. That's who our police officers are. I am proud of the behavior of our police department as it is a testament to our training and leadership.

Q. What is the breakdown by gender on the police force?

Straso Jovanovski

A. The information to this question was not available at the meeting, but John Hanson reported that it is hard for the DRPA to compete with municipalities with recruitment, particularly for women, because of the reforms the authority went under. The Authority's benefits are not as generous as municipalities, especially for women of childbearing age.

Q. Where are we with body cameras for police officers?

Alan Becker

A. Chief Stief reported that he met with Watch Guard this afternoon. The newest edition of the Watch Guard cameras came out six weeks ago. Chief Stief is waiting for a quote from Watch Guard and will take it to the Board for approval and expects to have the cameras in use by the end of the year.

Chief Stief also reported that the car videos in use are presently 6 years old and will be replaced with new Watch Guard car cameras at the same time the body cameras are incorporated. The Watch Guard cameras are the latest and best product on the market.

Q. Do you share crime statistics with Rutgers?

Ben Saracco

A. Chief Stief reported that the DRPA Police Department collects its own crime statistics but does not share the information with Rutgers or anyone else, however, the information is available. The DRPA Police have very few problems on the walkways as there is a bike officer assigned during all hours of operation, so someone is always on the walkway. It is one of the reasons why we are so successful at saving individuals who are contemplating suicide. Chief Stief will provide to the CAC information related to walkway incidents that occurred during the past two years.

Alan Becker also stated that at the Board Meetings, information related to DRPA crime statistics are always included in the CEO's Report to the Commissioners.

Q. Does the DRPA track LGBTQ applicants? How does the DRPA encourage LGBTQ applicants to apply for positions?

Bob Melikian

A. CAO Brown reported that the DRPA used to advertise positions only on the DRPA website. Now, job vacancies are advertised on 37 job boards which has resulted in a more varied a pool of applicants. The DRPA has no interest in any applicant or employee's sexual orientation, we only focus on whether a candidate is qualified for the position. The DRPA falls under Title VII, which only recently, as a result of U.S. Supreme Court, now covers sexual orientation and gender identification. Our policies have always been expansive enough to make sure everyone is treated fairly despite their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identification. The DRPA does not ask any applicant about their sexual orientation. If they meet the minimum qualifications for the position, pass the applicable exams, perform well in their interview and rise to the level to be selected by the CEO, the DRPA embraces whoever comes on board.

CEO Hanson further reported that the DRPA's hiring practices are inclusive and progressive to include any member of the LGBTQ community. The DRPA actively recruits members of all minority communities that also include those who have prior criminal convictions. Of course, we are very careful in our selection of someone who has a criminal conviction. We carefully consider the type of conviction, the job being applied for, and when the conviction occurred, but our strong belief is that once a person paid their dues they should not continue to be penalized.

CAO Brown further reported that under the Ban the Box Legislation, the employer can ask if an applicant has had a criminal conviction when the offer is extended. Under NJ Opportunity to Compete, an employer can ask about criminal convictions after the first interview. At the DRPA we provide the best opportunity to an applicant if they are competent, capable, and qualified. The DRPA has hired individuals with criminal convictions after lengthy discussions with the candidate and CEO as to the nature of the conviction. The DRPA has hired a few individuals who have criminal convictions and they are strong, dedicated employees to date.

CAO Brown also reported that in the past, PATCO dealt with a transgender issue. We dealt with this issue long before this issue was commonplace. The employee told CAO Brown that because of the training at the Authority, she felt welcomed and safe at the workplace. She has since retired.

Q. Do the DRPA Police talk to everyone in the same tone regardless of age, etc.?

Bruce Schwartz

A. Chief Stief reported that he has a General Order that requires his supervisors to review, on a monthly basis, all in car audio and video seven times to make sure the officers are conducting themselves professionally and prepare a report for his review. He reported that the DRPA police go through more training than any police department in the area. Specifically, the Milo Video Simulator is one of the best tools that includes 800 different scenarios. The police officers train on the Milo

Video Simulator multiple times per year. The training helps police react to and/or de-escalate any given situation.

John Hanson reported that he meets with all employees a few times each year to discuss whatever is on their mind or to answer questions about the Authority. A police officer requested vests to hold various items that are carried on their belts. He had a discussion with the Chief who said the vests give a military appearance and the wrong message to the public and its officers. Chief Stief holds the department to a very high standard and they conduct themselves accordingly.

**Next CAC Meeting:** Will be held via Zoom on August 12, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m.

**Next DRPA Board Meeting:** Will be held virtually on August 19, 2020