

Citizen's Accountability Advisory Board

Purpose

Greater transparency and communication between the public, Council, and the Colorado Springs Police Department will foster trust and positive morale between all stakeholders. To that end, the Council shall establish an independent Citizens Accountability Advisory Board to: assist Council with data-driven audits of CSPD performance; provide a conduit to share the concerns and needs of both citizens and CSPD; analyze and synthesize such feedback to provide Council with actionable policy recommendations; establish a confidential and trusted means to express concerns, complaints, and comments regarding CSPD officers and actions; and promote improved understanding and relationships between CSPD and the public.

Legal Basis for Board

An independent Citizen Accountability Advisory Board shall be established by Council under the authority of The Charter of the City of Colorado Springs, Art. 9 § 10(a), "Boards and Commissions."

Board Makeup & Appointment Process

11 members shall be appointed by council to a 3 year term on the Civilian Accountability Advisory Board. Each council member shall appoint (1) member from their district, and the council as a whole shall appoint (5) at large members from communities disproportionately impacted by policing procedure (e.g. people of color and individuals with lower income.) Pursuant to Art 9. Section 10§(a) of the City Charter, the district-appointed members shall serve the initial term from 2020-2022, and the at large members will serve from 2020-2023, in order to stagger future appointments. No individual may serve more than two terms in total.

All eligible voters registered in Colorado Springs may apply to serve on the Board, unless they, or their family members, are currently or formerly affiliated with a law enforcement agency of El Paso County or any of the municipalities therein. Applicants who formerly served with law enforcement agencies outside of El Paso County shall be eligible to apply.

Council shall establish an application process that includes public notification, questionnaire, and interviews by council for the most promising applicants. Applicants shall disclose any potential conflicts in this questionnaire, including connections to law enforcement or the criminal justice system.

Applicants for district-based positions shall be interviewed by that council member, while applicants for at-large positions may be interviewed by any council member.

Board members shall elect officers including a Chair, Vice-Chair, & Secretary to serve two year terms.

Responsibilities of Board

1. Hold Regular Meetings

The Board shall meet once a month in open session to discuss policy, procedures, auditing, and facilitating community engagement. Additionally, the Chair and Vice-Chair may jointly call an emergency session to address pressing community concerns and/or police incidents.

The Board shall meet separately, once per month, in closed executive session with the participation of the City Attorney or an appointed representative from the Colorado State Public Defenders office as a non-voting, ex-officio member in order to discuss confidential concerns, including CSPD misconduct.

Meeting times, dates, and locations shall be determined by the chair and voted on by the board members to establish a regular schedule to hold monthly meetings. Public notification of any emergency sessions must be posted at least 24 hours before the board meets.

To preserve the privacy and confidentiality of complaints and concerns received by the committee, the schedule of the closed executive sessions shall not be made public, but notice will be given to council.

2. Establish and maintain a system of audits (including an independent external audit) and reporting. Work in collaboration with CSPD and City Council to advise on formation of data dashboard for use by council and for public transparency.

Data shall include, but not be limited to:

Hiring Practices

Training Procedures

Budget

Certifications

Aggregate Data including arrests, disciplinary action, location, demographics, use of force.

3. Recommend Policy

Offer policy and procedure recommendations to council.

Deliver biannual report of department strengths and room for growth to council and to communicate to the community via public website. A minority report or addendum may be submitted, should the Board be unable to come to unanimous agreement. The Council shall review this report and bring the proposed policy changes to a vote.

4. Complaint Intake: ability for civilian and officer complaint and comment without fear of retaliation

Complaint classification—i.e., if proven would the alleged facts result in a finding of misconduct on the part of the named officer in violation of a specific policy or policies?

The Board shall establish a secure and confidential process for citizens & CSPD officers to submit concerns of CSPD misconduct without fear of retaliation. The identity of complainants may not be discussed or shared with individuals outside of the committee. Board can then submit complaints to their choice of Police Chief, Mayor, Independent Ethics Commission, and/or DA while informing council.

All discussion of complaints shall occur in closed executive session, similar to the Independent Ethics Commission and the Colorado Springs Human Relations Commission.

5. Facilitate Community Forums & Community Connection

- Organize opportunities for the community to be heard by an independent body.
- Help inform the community of department successes, as well areas for growth.
- Help plan and organize community events promoting connections between officers and neighborhoods.
- Choose 2 officers per year for citizen award recognizing officers for representing a high standard of officer community relationship. The Board shall hear suggestions on nomination from any source: community, council, or police chief.
- Assist and advise social media and communication strategy of CAPD police department.

Benefits

A truly independent citizen accountability board builds community trust and provides perspective from a community viewpoint.

Builds trust and promotes positive morale of CSPD.

Promotes the hiring of diverse candidates to better reflect the demographics of Colorado Springs.

Improves public safety.

Validating the complaints of the community in issues of misconduct and offers officers the ability to address misconduct by other members of the force without fear of retaliation.

Auditing programs are efficient in detecting trends and common practices and are statistically reliable. They can be done using in-house resources or by contract with outside agencies. Audits are useful in confirming strengths within a program or department and can accurately measure progress over time. Unlike oversight agencies that concentrate on how complaints are handled, audits can be used to establish the level of professional, constitutionally based policing throughout the department.

Outside Assistance

The Board may receive grant funding to assist in fulfilling its mission. The purposes of funding may include, but is not limited to, contracting expert consultants and outside agencies, hiring staff, and attendance or participation at conferences.

Description of Model

Hybrid between review and audit models with focus on independent audit, review and recommendation to council, and building improved police community relationship.

Requirements of Board Members

To further the goal of having board members understand the work, training, and policies of police department:

- All members of board shall go on a ride along within 1 month of appointment to board.
- All members of board shall witness or participate in an aspect of police training.
- Each member of board shall conduct a minimum of 2 annual onsite interviews with police officers with intention of hearing police experience, needs and wants, and feedback.
- Board Members from specific districts shall attend at minimum 1 town hall per year in their district to hear feedback.
- At large board members shall attend at minimum 2 town halls per year in districts of their choice.

Reference Materials

National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement
<https://www.nacole.org/faqs>

DOJ's Citizen Review of Police <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/184430.pdf>