

# City of Albany

## Quarterly Report February 1, 2001

Submitted by  
The Government Law Center of Albany Law School  
on behalf of the  
City of Albany Citizens' Police Review Board



CITIZENS' POLICE REVIEW BOARD

Quarterly Report of the City of Albany  
Citizens' Police Review Board

February 1, 2001

Submitted to:

The Mayor of the City of Albany  
The Common Council of the City of Albany  
The Police Chief of the City of Albany

## BACKGROUND

Legislation creating the City of Albany Citizens' Police Review Board (the "Board") was signed into law in July 2000, taking effect on October 27, 2000. The law adds a new part 33 to Chapter 42 (Departments and Commissions) of the Code of the City of Albany. Section 42-340 of that law requires that the Government Law Center of Albany Law School submit quarterly reports containing "statistics and summaries of citizen complaints, including a comparison of the [Board's] findings with the final determinations of the [Police] Department" on behalf of the Board. This is the first quarterly report so submitted.

## INTRODUCTION

On October 27, nine residents of the City of Albany were sworn in as members of the first Citizens' Police Review Board for the City of Albany. Five residents were appointed by the Common Council, and four residents were appointed by the Mayor. The following members constitute the Board:

Dr. Manuel Alguero  
Rev. Kenneth Cox  
Dr. Morris Eson  
Marilyn Hammond  
Judith Mazza  
Herman Thomas  
Eleanor Thompson  
Paul Weafer, Esq.  
Michael Whiteman, Esq.

The Government Law Center of Albany Law School was retained by the City of Albany to provide a number of services to the Board, the City and the Community with respect to the new Board. Many of these are discussed, as appropriate, below.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

According to the legislation creating the Board, members were prohibited from taking their seats as voting members until they completed an orientation program designed by the Government Law Center and approved by the Common Council. This orientation program took place on Saturday, November 11, 2000 at Albany Law School. Among the topics addressed at the program were: review of the local law; open meetings law; Civil Rights Law sec. 50-a; and a review of the structure, operation and responsibilities of police review boards from a national perspective. All nine Board members participated in and completed the orientation program.

On November 30, 2000 the Board held its first organizational meeting at the Albany Public Library. During this meeting, the Board decided to elect temporary officers and organize committees, pending the development and adoption of its by-laws. The following officers were elected at this meeting:

Interim Chair	Kenneth Cox
Interim Vice -Chair	Herman Thomas
Interim Secretary	Michael Whiteman

The following Committees were also established, with each Board member serving on one committee:

By-Laws	Marilyn Hammond Paul Weafer Michael Whiteman
Complaint Form	Manuel Alguero Morris Eson Eleanor Thompson
Outreach	Kenneth Cox Judith Mazza Herman Thomas

During the first quarter, each of the committees met at least once, and in most cases, the committees met two to three times. In general, the following has been accomplished:

- The by-laws committee has completed a draft document for the Board's review;
- The complaint form committee has forwarded comments on the form to the Police Department and a revised form, along with a draft cover letter, has been distributed to Board members for comment;
- The outreach committee has a designated media liaison, communication protocols were established, and a draft plan for community outreach and education is under development.
- The Board met as a whole four times for the conduct of business during the first quarter. Three meetings were held at the Albany Public Library on Washington Avenue, and one meeting was held at Albany Law School . Meetings were held on November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2000, and January 11<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, 2001 . There was a public comment period at each meeting.

## TRAINING

The law creating the Board requires, among other things, that Board members graduate from the Police Department's Citizens' Police Academy within six months of the start of the member's term (sec. 42-339). During the first quarter, Board members attended two 4-hour classes as part of this training (December 11<sup>th</sup> and January 8<sup>th</sup>). In addition to the time in the classroom, Board members have started to complete the required ride-alongs with members of the Police Department. It is anticipated that this training will be completed, as required, in the second quarter.

## STATISTICS

After creation of the Board and appointment of its members, Board members received an opinion of the City of Albany Corporation Counsel's office that the Board could not receive, hear or process complaints until after the Board's By-laws and Rules of Procedure had been adopted by the Board and approved, pursuant to the legislation, by the City of Albany Common Council. As of this time, because of the opinion provided by the Corporation Counsel's office and the development of the Board's internal processes and organizational documents, the Board does not have any official information to report in relation to "statistics and summaries of citizen complaints, including a comparison of the [Board's] findings with the final determinations of the [Police] Department."

## GOVERNMENT LAW CENTER

During the first quarter, the Government Law Center engaged in the following activities as directed by the local law and pursuant to its contractual obligations with the City of Albany:

- ▶ Developed and implemented the orientation program for CPRB members
- ▶ Arranged logistics for and coordinated [public] notice for Board meetings
- ▶ Attended Board meetings and training programs
- ▶ Identified potential mediators
- ▶ Began development of mediation program
- ▶ Identified and interviewed potential investigators
- ▶ Continued development of ongoing training curriculum for the Board
- ▶ Researched various civilian review board issues across the State and country
- ▶ Attended various meetings with community groups to gather input and suggestions
- ▶ Provided various administrative functions including: designing Board letterhead; assisting with preparation of minutes of meetings; facilitating media inquiries between reporters and Board members; and, assembling materials for meetings.
- ▶ Entered into negotiations on a subcontract for community data regarding the work of the Board as required by the law

## CONCLUSION

The Board had an active first quarter organizing, completing training and education and holding public meetings.

Respectfully submitted

Government Law Center of Albany Law School  
Approved by and submitted on behalf of the  
City of Albany Citizens' Police Review Board

Dated: February 1, 2001