

Detroit selected to host national conference for police oversight

Hundreds of professionals working in police oversight around the globe will gather in Detroit September 22-26, 2019 when the BOPC hosts NACOLE, the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement.

The BOPC worked diligently to become the 2019 conference host. The city's first civilian police commission met in 1974, so Detroiters will be commemorating its 45th anniversary next year.

"Detroit has one of the oldest civilian oversight bodies in the country," said BOPC Immediate Past-Chair Lisa Carter. "We are proud that we can host this important conference during the year that commemorates the work and vision of city residents almost 45 years ago, along with the commitment still shown by our residents today."



The BOPC, a vital civil rights body, featured a discussion on implicit bias and law enforcement at its June Community Meeting. Carter thanked the presenter, Dr. Agustin Arbulu, Michigan Civil Rights Department Director.



Detroit Board of Police Commissioners COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Accountability Through Civilian Oversight Since 1974

Community Updates
2018
Board of Police Commissioners

FROM THE CHAIR



Supreme Court ruling on excessive force shows need for civilian oversight, less lethal force options

In April, a chilling U.S. Supreme Court ruling gave "qualified immunity" to a police officer who shot a woman outside her home although she was not breaking any laws or posing any threat.

The Court's decision was particularly scary because it held no public arguments or discussion; the conservative majority apparently found the case easy, a no-brainer. Only Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Ruth Bader Ginsberg dissented and warned of the clear danger ahead: "It tells officers that they can shoot first and think later, and it tells the public that palpably unreasonable conduct will go unpunished."

For the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners, the decision tells us that civilian oversight of law enforcement is more vital to prevent that danger.

The stakes for oversight, as well as for communities and for police professional standards, have rarely been higher. The Supreme Court ruling was the latest in a systemic erosion of protections on civil and human rights underway in our nation right now.

The erosion includes rolling back constitutional protections for people who suffer unjustly in encounters with law enforcement. We also have administration that supports "rough" handling of police suspects and no longer sees consent decrees as vital to police reform.

Civilian oversight is vital to ensure those protections so that police think first and only use lethal force last- if needed at all- after other options, like de-escalation, fail. While a professional, well-trained police force is integral to community policing, civilian oversight is the safeguard the public has to ensure against missteps and abuses as police protect and serve the community.

Our role also helps protect police officers against unreasonable fear from law-abiding residents.

Detroit residents decades ago forged a common-sense process for monitoring law enforcement, stopping bad practices, and keeping bad cops off the force. That process still helps ensure accountable and effective policing today. The new federal positions makes the local role essential.

Willie E. Bell is a 30-year veteran of the Detroit Police Department and retired at the rank of Lieutenant. He is well-known and respected as a local and national advocate for civil rights and community-led police oversight.



At-Large Police Commissioner Elizabeth Brooks, speaking to a Police Academy class, has made recruiting a key part of her service to ensure the best cadets for DPD. The BOPC also is working to keep all the new officers.

BOPC seeks changes to protect city funds for police training

During the 2018-19 budget review, Police Commissioners expressed concerns about protecting city tax dollars, particularly related to recruit training, overtime costs and retaining veteran officers.

Police commissioners were particularly concerned that:

- Only Detroit residents have the \$50 cost of state required exams paid when they apply to the DPD academy.
- Academy graduates stay with DPD long enough for the city to recoup its investment. A decades-old problem, the city and the board have explored various ways to get funds back if a rookie leaves DPD soon after training.
- DPD and the Human Resources Department work to develop a retention plan to slow retirements and allow veteran officers to stay and use their experience to help mentor young officers.

"We are spending quite a bit of money to get first-rate officers, and we need to make sure our new officers stay with the Detroit Police Department long enough to get a return on this investment," said Chair Willie Bell. "We also need to have our good veteran police officers stay longer so DPD and the community can benefit from their experience and knowledge."

The Detroit Police Academy, nationally respected for its training, provides free training. Over the years, the city has looked at various ways to recoup costs directly from academy graduates who take jobs at other police departments within days or a couple years of training.

Labor and other laws stymied those efforts. However, a new state bill introduced this year may finally help.

House Bill 5540 allows reimbursement of police academy training, from 100 percent if an officer leaves within 1 year of graduation to 10% if an officer leaves after four years but less than five years later.



Sad farewell to Police Commissioner Derrick Sanders who passed away over the Easter break. Known and respected nationally for his labor leadership with the operating engineers union, Sanders took seriously his service as a volunteer and the pivotal role the BOPC has in ensuring effective policing and accountability.

Photo: Sanders with BOPC Secretary Gregory Hicks.

Board of Police Commissioners
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2018 UPDATES

2016 vs 2017 vs Jan-May 2018

1,109 CCRs Filed

1,127 $<2\%$ $+18$

403

DPD COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE YEAR TO YEAR

Accountability Through Civilian Oversight Since 1974

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Detroit Board of Police Commissioners

Spotlight: Chief Investigator Polly McCalister

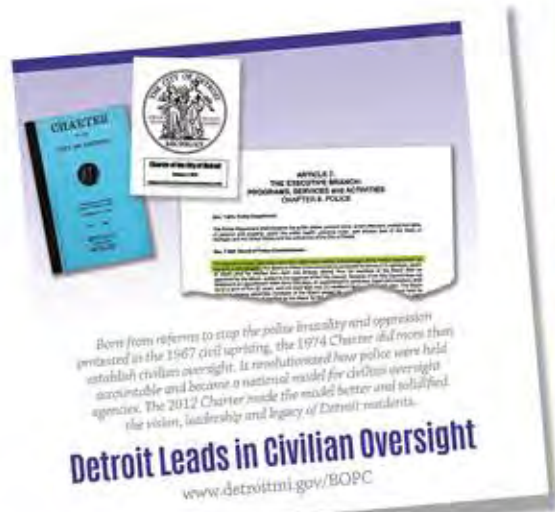


- A 17-year DPD veteran
- Holds a PhD in philosophy, with concentration in ethics and leadership
- Helped inspire and educate young people as a college professor

The Chief Investigator leads the BOPC investigative arm, the Office of the Chief Investigator and oversees the team that provides objective investigations into complaints against DPD employees, including police officers and 911 operators. Complaints are vital because they help to identify problems with police practices and employees.

Available Now:

Detroit Leads in Civilian Oversight (which first appeared in *The Michigan Chronicle*) and the BOPC Annual Report, *Turning Points*, are available at your local library and online at: www.detroitmi.gov/bopc



DETROIT BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS - DISTRICTS & PRECINCTS

PRECINCTS

- 2nd PRECINCT
- 3rd PRECINCT
- 4th PRECINCT
- 5th PRECINCT
- 6th PRECINCT
- 7th PRECINCT
- 8th PRECINCT
- 9th PRECINCT
- 10th PRECINCT
- 11th PRECINCT
- 12th PRECINCT
- DOWNTOWN SERVICES



Vacant
At-Large



Elizabeth W. Brooks
At-Large



Eva Garza Dewaelsche
At-Large



Jim Holley
At-Large



About the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners

The Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC) is comprised of 11 members. Detroiters elect seven by districts like City Council members, and four are at-large mayoral appointees approved by the Council. All 11 Board members serve without compensation as a vital civilian board to help ensure police powers and practices comply with Constitutional protections and community policing standards.

The 1974 City Charter first established a civilian oversight board. The BOPC derives its current powers and duties from the 2012 Charter, which strengthened independent, citizen oversight.

The Board has supervisory control and oversight of the Police Department.

The Board is required to meet at least once a week but may vote to recess during the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year holidays. All meetings are held in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

Accountability Through
Civilian Oversight



BOPC recently honored retired Inspector Daniel Allen, who is joined by his father, who also retired from DPD.

The BOPC leads on stopping gun violence & mass shootings

✓ **Approved a resolution** against arming school teachers. While the BOPC continued to call for reforms to stop gun violence and mass shootings, this resolution suggested several rational, effective alternatives to guns in classrooms. The BOPC alternatives included immediate steps to add security enhancements like high-tech surveillance and future steps like safer designs for school buildings and campuses.

✓ **Approved a resolution** calling for the end of retail sales of military-style weapons and ammunition that allow for mass shootings and killings. The call came before the top U.S. gun retailers took the action recommended by BOPC: Walmart and Dicks Sporting Goods banned sales of assault-style rifles and stopped sales of other weapons to anyone under 21 years old.

Police Use of Force & Accountability

THE BOPC ENSURES

- Police Officers receive training in crisis management, including de-escalation techniques, at the Academy and in-service to maintain skills
- Polices and training are clear about uses of lethal force
- Police manuals and Human Resource procedures are clear and consistent about discipline, including termination, for excessive force and other abuses of lethal force.
- Less lethal force options are available. This includes electronic control weapons, commonly called stun guns or tasers.
- Body-worn camera use, along with in-car dash cameras, are standard and routinely activated in all police encounters with the public.
- A robust, impartial process for people to file complaints against police officers or other police department employees.
- A Police Department that is diverse from top patrol to command.
- A culture of community policing, where police officers feel a part of the community, their relationships with the community are valued, and police officers and residents know and respect each other.

Upcoming Meeting Topics

- **Electronic Control Weapons:**
Are Tasers The Answer?
- **Family & Domestic Violence:**
Emerging Trends in Police Encounters
- **Police Authorized Towing**
The Changes Ahead

BOPC Meeting Schedule

Meetings for the Board of Police Commissioners are open to the public and held **Every Thursday at 3 p.m.** at Detroit Public Safety Headquarters **except 2nd Thursdays when the BOPC meets at 6:30 p.m.** at community sites. For a full schedule & list of agenda topics, visit us online at: www.detroitmi.gov/bopc

