



**CITIZEN
REVIEW BOARD
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK**

Building Trust Through Accountability

**Quarterly Report
January 1 to March 31, 2024**

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STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF 2024 1ST QUARTER CRB OPERATIONS
January to March 2024

Number of New Cases Received:	17
Number of Existing Cases Processed:	18
Number of Cases Voted No Hearing:	13
Number of Cases Voted to Hearing:	5
Number of Hearings Held:	1
Number of Hearings with Sustained Findings:	0
Number of Officers with Sustained Findings:	0
Types of Allegations Sustained:	Not Applicable

MISSION & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Citizen Review Board is to provide an open, independent, and impartial review of allegations of misconduct by members of the Syracuse Police Department; to assess the validity of those allegations through the investigation and hearing of cases; to recommend disciplinary sanctions where warranted; and to make recommendations on Syracuse police policies, practices and procedures.

In fulfillment of its legislative purpose and mission, the Board is committed to:

- Creating an institution that encourages citizens to feel welcome in filing a complaint when they believe that they have been a victim of police misconduct;
- Making the public aware of the CRB's existence and process through ongoing community outreach events and coverage by local media;
- Completing investigations and reviews of complaints in a thorough, yet timely fashion;
- Remaining unbiased, impartial, objective, and fair in the investigation, evaluation, and hearing of complaints;
- Engaging in community dialog that encourages citizen input with the CRB;
- Respecting the rights of complainants and subject officers;
- Upholding the integrity and purpose of the CRB's enabling legislation;
- Reporting to the Mayor, the Common Council, the Chief of Police and the public patterns or practices of police misconduct discovered during the course of investigation and review of complaints; and
- Operating in an open and transparent manner to the extent permitted by applicable municipal and state laws, regulations, and ordinances.

BOARD MEMBERS & TERMS

The Board Members serve staggered three-year terms and are all unpaid volunteers. Board members devote an average of ten hours per month to CRB matters, some considerably more. This includes their preparation for and attendance at monthly board meetings, preparation for and participation in panel hearings, training, and community outreach. Biographies of each board member are available on the CRB website at www.syracuse.ny.us/CRB_Members.aspx.

Members of the Syracuse Citizen Review Board

Mayoral Appointees
Mr. Joseph Favata- term expires December 31, 2024
Mr. Jose Marrero - term expires December 31, 2023
Ms. Mae Carter - term expires December 31, 2025

District Councilor Appointees
Mr. Richard Levy Board Chair- 1st District - term expires December 31, 2023
Mr. Harry Pratt- 2nd District – term expires December 31, 2024
Ms. Lori Nilsson Vice Chair- 3rd District - term expires December 31, 2024
Vacant - 4th District
Ms. Cynthia Brunson- 5th District - term expires December 31, 2023

At-Large Councilor Appointees
Ms. Bryn Lovejoy-Grinnell - term expires December 31, 2025
Mr. Jah-Quan Bey-Wright, - term expires December 31, 2024
Ms. Hatisha Holmes, Vice Chair – term expires December 31, 2024

FILING A COMPLAINT WITH THE CRB

The Syracuse CRB accepts complaints against members of the Syracuse Police Department (SPD) involving allegations of misconduct that may violate SPD rules and regulations, as well as state, local and/or federal law. The CRB accepts complaints on active misconduct – such as excessive force, constitutional violations, harassment, racial or gender bias, poor demeanor, search & seizure violations, theft or damage to property, untruthfulness, and false arrest – as well as passive misconduct such as failure to respond or refusal to take a complaint.

Any member of the public can file a complaint with the Syracuse CRB; a complainant need not be a resident of the City of Syracuse. There are several ways a complaint can be filed. A complainant can come to the CRB office in City Hall Commons at 300 South State Street, Fl 5, to fill out a complaint, contact our office to have a complaint form mailed to their address, complete the complaint form online on the CRB website, or request a mailed complaint form if necessary. The form can be hand delivered or mailed to our office. The CRB website is www.syracuse.ny.us/CRB. The CRB office telephone number is 315-448-8750. The CRB can be reached by e-mail at crb@syrgov.net.

PUBLIC MEETINGS & OUTREACH

The CRB typically meets on the first Thursday evening each month from 5:30 to 7:30 PM in the Common Council chambers in City Hall. The meeting schedule is posted at area libraries, on the CRB website, and on the calendar on the City’s main webpage. These meetings are open to the public and there is a public comment period that begins no later than 6:30 PM. The purpose of the public meeting is to develop and refine CRB policies and procedures in an open, transparent, and accountable fashion and to conduct the ongoing business of the CRB. The Board meetings typically include a vote on items that require Board approval, a series of items presented by the Chairman for the Board’s consideration, a report on the CRB’s monthly activities by the Administrator, a variety of committee reports and an opportunity for public comment. After the conclusion of the public comment period, the Board continues its meeting in a confidential Executive Session to deliberate and vote on whether or not to send the investigated complaints to a hearing. During the Executive Sessions, the Board processes on average five to fifteen complaints per month depending on the current caseload.

CRB 2020 Outreach Completion					
Name	Time	Host	Location	CC District	Date
Program Planning & Support		Yolanda Seagers	906 Spencer St.	2	1/22/24
What Triggers You & Logic Training		Yolanda Seagers	906 Spencer St.	2	1/ 23/24
Community Resource Spotlight & Clear Strategies		Yolanda Seagers	2610 S Salina St.	4	1/ 25/24
Conflict Resolution		Yolanda Seagers	2610 S Salina St.	4	1/ 26/24
NYS Winter Fair		Steve Becker	NYS Fairgrounds	N/A	2/1/24
NYS Winter Fair		Steve Becker	NYS Fairgrounds	N/A	2/1/24

OPERATIONS

Between January 1 and March 31, 2024, the CRB membership held three monthly business meetings that were open to the public. Quorum was met for 2 meetings, and all regular operating business was able to be conducted.

During this quarter, the CRB received a total of 17 new complaints and fully processed 14 existing cases.

HEARINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Once the full CRB votes to send a case to a panel hearing, a panel is appointed composed of three members of the CRB (one mayoral appointee, one district councilor appointee, and one at-large councilors' appointee), and the hearing is typically held within two to three weeks based on the availability of the complainant.

During the first quarter of 2024, the CRB held one (1) hearing to determine whether the complaint should be sustained and made recommendations to the Chief of Police. In the one (1) hearing that was held this quarter, the CRB Hearing panel did not make a recommendation of discipline. The CRB scheduled another complaint for hearing but that hearing had to be moved to the Second Quarter of 2024.

CASE SUMMARIES OF SUSTAINED FINDINGS

For the one panel hearing held during the FIRST quarter of 2024, resulting in Unfounded finding against a total of five (5) officers. The CRB offers a summary of the unfounded case below to provide the public with information related to the cases reviewed by the CRB Hearing Panels.

- **Violation of Rules and Regulations (3 Officers)**

The complaint involves an incident concerning a juvenile on the north side of Syracuse. The incident stemmed from a larceny in progress call to police at a specific address. Officers responded to the call, involving three juvenile suspects. According to police reports and inter-departmental memos, officers documented their interactions and observations during the incident. Body camera footage was also reviewed, depicting the interaction between the officers and the juveniles involved. This footage captured attempts to detain the juveniles, resistance encountered during that process, and the involvement of another individual who was present at the scene. The review concluded that although there were minor administrative issues, such as a delay in activating body cameras and a failure to request a supervisor. The officers' actions were ultimately deemed to be within SPD rules and regulations, given the chaotic circumstances and concern for safety. Additionally, the act of discarding the proceeds from the larceny was noted as part of the SPD Rules and Regulations related to the inability to store perishable items as evidence. A verbal reprimand was given to the officers involved prior to the complaint investigation being completed. No additional disciplinary action was recommended by the CRB Hearing Panel.

The CRB has not received a Findings Letter response from Chief Cecile on this matter.

- **Violation of Rules and Regulations (5 Officers)**

The complaint involves an incident surrounding the handcuffing of a juvenile following a reported robbery, raising concerns regarding potential excessive force and allegations of racial profiling. Here's what unfolded: Law enforcement officers were dispatched to the scene of a robbery where several juveniles were purportedly involved in assaulting and robbing two individuals. While some of the victims were able to identify certain juveniles allegedly involved, there was insufficient evidence to directly link the detained juvenile to the reported crime. Consequently, they were released from handcuffs subsequent to a procedure aimed at identifying suspects, which did not yield conclusive results. The parent lodged the complaint expressing dissatisfaction with the handling of the situation, labeling it as wrongful detention and citing concerns of racial bias in the process. However, the officers defended their actions, emphasizing that they had responded based on the information available to them and the severity of the reported offense. Despite being interviewed regarding the complaint, the complainant remained in disagreement with the officers' rationale. This incident underscores the complexities inherent in balancing considerations of public safety with safeguarding juvenile rights. No disciplinary action was recommended by the CRB Hearing Panel.

The CRB has not received a Findings Letter response from Chief Cecile on this matter.

Hearing outcomes

Panel hearings scheduled: 2

Panel hearings held: 1

Panel hearings resulting in disciplinary recommendations from CRB: 0

Panel hearings resulting in no disciplinary recommendations from CRB: 1

Number of Cases Voted No Hearing: 13

Number of Cases Voted to Hearing: 5

BUDGET

2023-2024 Adopted
DETAIL ANALYSIS OBJECTS OF EXPENDITURE

PERSONNEL SERVICES

510100	Salaries	\$ 218,971.00
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CONTRACTUAL & OTHER SERVICES

540300	Office Supplies (Contractual & Other Expenses)	\$ 3,450.00
540500	Operating Supplies & Expenses	\$ 3,650.00
540530	Factual & Informational Expenses	\$ 1,450.00
541500	Professional Services	\$ 112,450.00
541600	Travel, Training & Development	\$ <u>7,165.00</u>

TOTAL:		\$347,136.00
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Total Complaints Received during First Quarter of 2024 (January 1 to March 31, 2024): 17

Categories of complaints as defined in CRB Ordinance (totals from all complaints received from January 1 to March 31, 2024):

	Harassment	False Arrest	Conduct	Failure To Act	Demeanor	Unnecessary Force
#	3	2	7	6	5	3
% of total						

	Excessive Force	False Ticketing
#	1	1
% of total		

*Note that a single complaint can involve multiple allegations

The number of cases fully processed and closed by the Board during first quarter of 2024: 14

The number of cases where a CRB panel recommended disciplinary sanctions be imposed by the Chief of Police during first quarter of 2024: 0

The number of complaints processed and not sent to a panel hearing during the quarter: 13

The number of cases that successfully were routed to conciliation: 0 (This process has not been implemented between the CRB and the Syracuse Police Department to date.)

The number of complainants who initiated extended contact with the CRB but did not follow through with a formal signed complaint: 9

The length of time each case was pending before the Board: 2 months on average (but some occasionally take slightly longer due to unavoidable delays).

The number of complaints in which the Board recommended that the City provide restitution to the complainant and type of restitution recommended: 0

The number of complainants who filed a Notice of Claim against the City of Syracuse while their complaint was being considered by the Board: 0 (This information is provided by the Law Department and CRB is not in receipt of this information at this report was written.)

Complaints Received per Common Council District during the 1st quarter of 2024*

District 1

Failure to Act:
Conduct:
False Ticketing

District 2

Harassment
Failure to Act:
Conduct:
False Arrest
Unnecessary Force
Demeanor

District 3:

Failure to Act:
Conduct:
Demeanor

District 4:

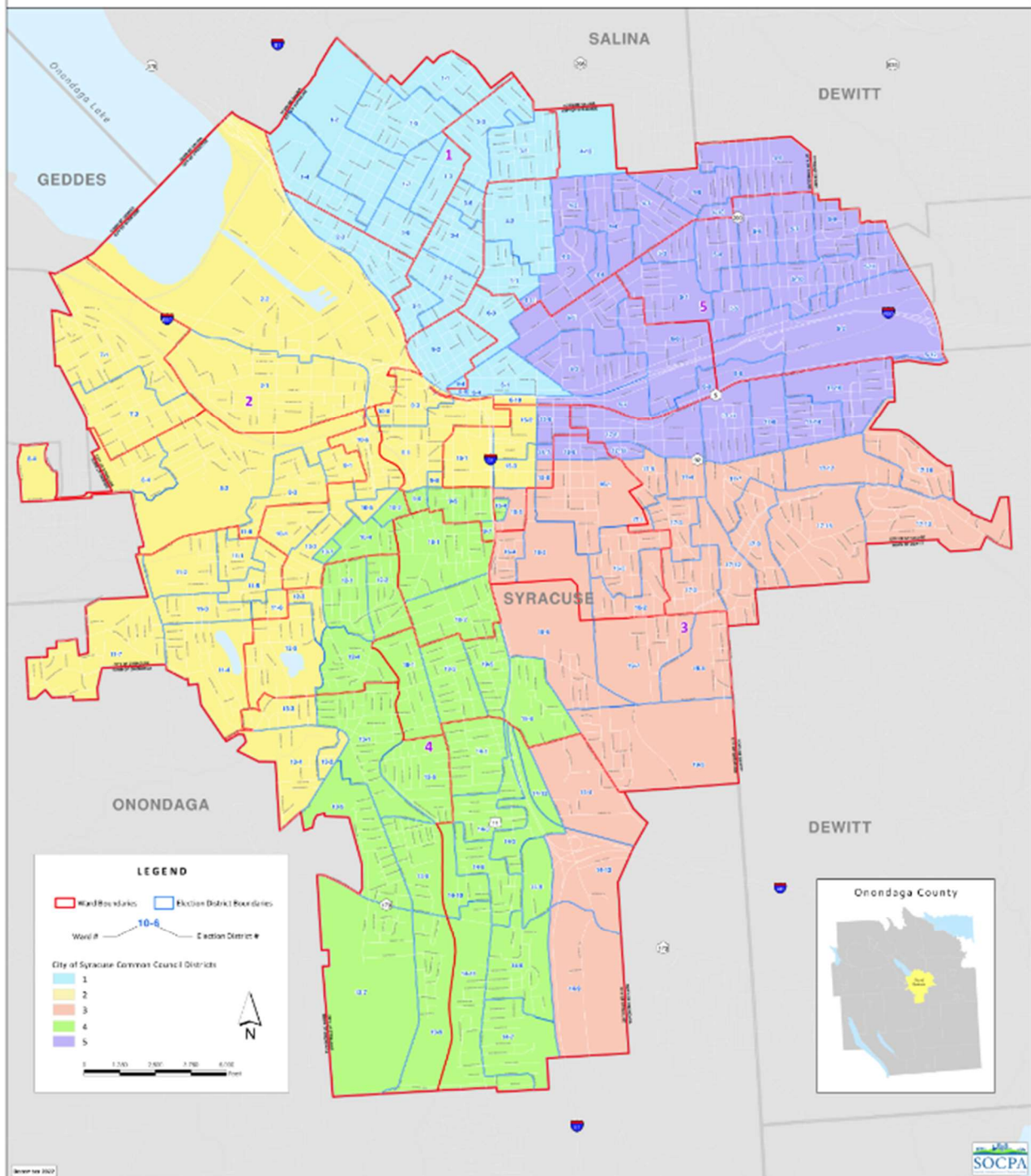
Harassment
Failure to Act:
Conduct:
False Arrest
Unnecessary Force
Excessive Force
Demeanor

District 5:

Unnecessary Force

*See the following page for a map of the Common Council Districts

COMMON COUNCIL DISTRICTS IN THE CITY OF SYRACUSE



Complainant Demographics for All Complaints Received in First Quarter of 2024

Ethnicity	#	% of complaints
White	4	20%
Black	10	59%
Latino	1	4%
Arabic	1	4%
Asian	0	2%
Unknown	1	10%

Sex	#	% of complaints
Male	8	47%
Female	8	47%
Other	0	0%
Unknown	1	6%

Age	#	% of complaints
Under 18	1	6%
19-35	10	59%
36-50	2	12%
51+	4	24%

*Percentages are reflective of the cases received in this quarter with no comparison to Census information.