



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE SHERIFF CIVILIAN
OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING HELD
ONLINE AT: <https://bit.ly/3ITsDjn>
coc.lacounty.gov**



Thursday, January 20, 2022

Attachment: [Video](#)

Present: Chair Priscilla Ocen, Vice Chair Sean Kennedy, Patti Giggans, James P. Harris, Lael Rubin, and Executive Director Brian K. Williams

Absent: Robert Bonner

1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS & CONSENT CALENDAR

Call to Order:

Chair Ocen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and asked staff to take roll. OCEN provided an overview of the agenda and the code of conduct and moved to the consent calendar.

Approval of Consent Calendar:

Chair Ocen called for approval, there being no objection, all items were adopted:

- Approval of [November 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes](#)
- Approval of [December 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes](#)
- Approval of [2022 Commission Meeting Schedule](#)
- Approval of [Civilian Oversight Commission \(COC\) Bylaws updates \(final\)](#)

No members of the public commented on this item, and Chair Ocen then moved to item 2.

2. REPORTS & POSSIBLE ACTION

2a. Chair's Report

Chair Ocen reported the COC is working with County Counsel to secure pro bono counsel engagement "to aid the Commission in the Deputy Gang investigation." Ocen announced that she has accepted a new position and will step down from the Commission, so this will be her last meeting. Ocen thanked everyone for their work and stated it has been an honor to work with the Commission. Chair Ocen then moved to item 2b.

2b. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Brian K. Williams thanked Chair Ocen for her outstanding leadership and wished her well with future endeavors. He also stated that Commissioner Xavier Thompson is stepping down from the Commission and acknowledged his dedicated service. Mr. Williams

discussed the [informational bulletin](#) and [application](#) publicized to recruit community members to fill two of the vacant Commissioner positions. He encouraged community members to apply and reported that February 1, 2022 is the deadline and that the names selected will be provided to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for approval. Chair Ocen then moved to item 2c.

2c. Office of Inspector General (OIG) Report

Inspector General Max Huntsman reported that effective January 1, 2022 ‘law enforcement gang’ has an official legal definition, which includes violation of Federal employment rules. Mr. Huntsman stated that OIG and the Attorney General’s office (AG) are charged with investigating that and that the State’s Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) will be charged with “pulling the ticket” on any peace officer who participates in a deputy gang or who fails to cooperate in investigations. Huntsman discussed a letter sent to the Sheriff requesting him to consult with the Unions to have a framework in place before this process begins. Mr. Huntsman reported pending litigation for the Sheriff’s failure to appear and to comply with subpoenas and oversight laws that require access to Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LASD) records. Following Mr. Huntsman’s comments, Chair Ocen moved to item 2d.

2d. Commissioner Comments / [Ad Hoc Committee](#) Updates

There being no Commissioner comments, Chair Ocen moved to item 2e.

2e. Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department Update

There being no LASD representative in attendance, Chair Ocen moved to item 2f.

2f. County Counsel Updates / Reports

Los Angeles County Counsel’s Alexandra Zuiderweg reported the COC’s request for the AG to take over LASD’s investigation of oversight officials was [submitted](#) to the AG’s office and is being considered. Chair Ocen thanked Ms. Zuiderweg for her comments.

Chair Ocen requested an update from Ms. Zuiderweg on whether any of LASD’s “activities in investigating oversight officials are in violation with any ordinances or any provisions of County Charter.” Ms. Zuiderweg advised that County Counsel is conducting that analysis and will have an update soon. Following Ms. Zuiderweg’s comments, Chair Ocen moved to item 2g.

2g. Elections for the position of Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission

Chair Ocen advised an election will be held, and Mr. Williams advised the bylaws state that the Vice Chair automatically moves to the position of Chair and the vote should take place for Vice Chair. Ocen suggested postponing the election until after the break and moved to item 3a.

3. DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION

3a. Family Impact Remarks

Chair Ocen acknowledged Terri Lovett, mother of Jalani Lovett who shared her remarks. Chair Ocen expressed her condolences and shared information about the Family Assistant Program.

She advised public comment on this item will take place during general public comment and moved to item 3b.

3b. Conditions of Confinement at Los Angeles County Jails

- **Racially Disparate Treatment of People Incarcerated at the Century Regional Detention Facility (CRDF)**

Chair Ocen acknowledged guest speakers Loyola Law School Professor Dr. Cheryl Grills who is the Chairperson of the L.A. County Sybil Brand Commission, and *A New Way of Life* Founder and Executive Director Susan Burton, who is an advocate for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women and a former Sybil Brand Commission member.

Ms. Burton reported that *A New Way of Life* entered into an agreement to provide work force development pre-release employment classes to women held in CDRF. Burton shared concerns over the disproportionate number of Black women having access to the classes and statistics that identified the inequities. Burton shared the benefits of the program and reported meeting with LASD to discuss racial bias among Blacks. Following Ms. Burton's comments, Chair Ocen advised Dr. Grills will comment on her arrival and moved to Commissioner questions.

Commissioner Rubin thanked Ms. Burton and requested more information regarding communication between Ms. Burton and LASD on the issue. Ms. Burton reported discussing the issue during a weekly meeting with LASD. Burton advised that LASD provided a recruitment list, where 80-90% of the women were non-Black. Ms. Burton stated the current cohort has no Black women registered and expressed the need to continue pushing for equality.

Chair Ocen inquired about the type of complaints, and Ms. Burton reported that Black women don't meet the requirements identified in the recruitment classification tool. Chair Ocen requested a copy of the tool for the COC to review.

Commissioner Giggans inquired if Ms. Burton is hearing any solutions to the problems. Ms. Burton advised the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Office of Diversion and Reentry is working on mental health diversion programs and Alternatives to Incarceration sites. Following Commissioner questions, Chair Ocen welcomed Dr. Grills.

Dr. Grills advised that she tracks access to Education-Based Incarceration programs and Black women are not given access to the programs at the same rate as their counterparts. She further stated that unequal treatment has expanded beyond that issue. Dr. Grills reported multiple complaints about racially disparate treatment against Black women by Latinx LASD deputies and custody personnel. She reported favoritism among Latina women by LASD deputies. She advised that complaints of unequal treatment among Black women has been witnessed and corroborated by white and Latina women in custody. Dr. Grills advised that she formally reported the issue to Commander Masias and Captain Montoya and that four months later the response is that LASD is still investigating. She reported that names of specific

deputies who have multiple complaints against them was provided to Captain Montoya and was told that “the nature of the complaint against staff does not warrant an investigation.” Dr. Grills stated the response from CRDF and LASD is unacceptable, and she advised that retaliation against the Black women for making complaints is also an issue.

Commissioner Rubin inquired about the number of deputies identified as being part of the racial issue. Dr. Grill reported six deputies have been identified as having multiple complaints against them. Dr. Grills advised that Commander Masias informed her that the issue was turned over to higher-level personnel to investigate and according to LASD the issue does not warrant immediate attention.

Commissioner Rubin questioned if anything can be done to expedite the issue. Dr. Grills reported that Sybil Brand has been in contact with OIG to compare notes and share information about CRDF’s response.

Chair Ocen reported that staff requested a subject matter expert to attend today’s meeting and that the Sheriff declined to send a representative to report on this subject. She advised a letter was sent to the "Sheriff requesting information on grievances, participation in programs, racial breakdown on discipline and a basis for why people are being disciplined but have not received a response.”

Mr. Huntsman reported that many of the actions identified are County Policy of Equity (CPOE) violations and advised OIG is unable to conduct a thorough investigation because the Sheriff has instructed his staff not to cooperate. He reported that the AG is investigating the patterns and practices of LASD, including civil rights violations.

Chair Ocen thanked Dr. Grills and Ms. Burton and noted that she anticipates follow-up reporting from OIG.

- **Treatment of Pregnant Women at the Century Regional Detention Facility**

Chair Ocen acknowledged guest speakers Dr. Grills along with L.A. County Department of Health Services’ Correctional Health Services Senior Physician Dr. Sean Henderson and Women’s Health Director Dr. Noah Nattell.

Chair Ocen inquired about the number of pregnant women in custody and if they are housed together. Dr. Grills reported there were 16 pregnant women housed at CDRF as of December 27, 2021, and she believes they are now housed together as the result of an OIG request. Dr. Grills reported concerns that included lack of access to bottled water, lack of adequate time to exercise, pregnant women being shackled together, and the lack of education related to pregnancy and delivery. She advised that the women are allowed only 6 bottles of water a day and only 20 minutes to shower and exercise, dependent upon the deputy on duty. Dr. Grills reported nutrition as an issue and advised that a copy of the menu was requested from food service manager and that the women are receiving a large amount of carbohydrates and a limited amount of fruits and vegetables. She advised that OIG is working to resolve the issue. Chair Ocen then requested comments from Dr. Nattell.

Dr. Nattell advised that the diet is determined by LASD custody, and that he is not responsible for nutrition but is able to make recommendations. He advised that he was instrumental in bottled water being provided and that this is a fundamental issue throughout the County jail system. Dr. Nattell reported meeting with CRDF's dietary team and confirmed meals have a large amount of carbohydrates. He said his Department doesn't have a lot of influence over nutrition, with the exception being able to elevate complaints to the dietary team.

Chair Ocen inquired about Dr. Nattell's recommendations related to pregnant women being shackled and advised it is prohibited under State law. Dr. Nattell recommended a more conservative assessment by LASD custody staff when transporting pregnant women, considering they could be in labor and that handcuffs should be avoided. Dr. Nattell reported when deliveries take place in the jail, he conducts a review and any concerns are forwarded to an outside agency for investigation.

Mr. Huntsman reported that OIG's Cathleen Beltz is overseeing the issue and that more information will be reported in the OIG quarterly report. He noted the best solution is for the women to be released, and he commented that the tap water is not comparable to the water on the outside and that bottled water should be provided to all those in custody.

Dr. Henderson stated that Correctional Health Services is only about 5 years old and when healthcare was moved from LASD to the Department of Health Services, Correctional Health Services assumed care for all things typically under Title 22, and the things under Title 15 remained under LASD, which include dietary. He advised that medical restraints are not allowed, and that Correctional Health Services does not have control over custody restraints, housing or opportunities. He emphasized that only recommendations can be made, and he stated that they submit recommendations for improvements on a regular basis.

Commissioner Kennedy questioned if lack of water and exercise is impacting a patient's health, shouldn't there be a procedure for more doctor control. Dr. Henderson agreed that there should be a mechanism, and unfortunately it has not been established.

Chair Ocen inquired about the nature of charges against the women and what prevents them from being released. Correctional Health Services' Dr. Charles Cardenas reported he was informed the women have serious charges, which makes it difficult to release them.

Commissioner Rubin reported she is hopeful that Mr. Huntsman will include the re-evaluation of how the system is monitored. Mr. Huntsman advised that the care given to the inmates is unacceptable, and he noted the AG is conducting a patterns and practices investigation.

Commissioner Rubin inquired if the six deputies identified as having multiple complaints against them regarding racial issues can be moved prior to the investigation. Assistant Sheriff Brendan Corbett advised there is a process when a complaint is filed and that he will setup a meeting with Dr. Grills, OIG and COC to discuss the issues and what can be done. Mr. Corbett advised he was not prepared to address the issue and he will share concerns with his superior.

Commissioner Giggans stated that if the Office of Diversion and Reentry and Sheriff Villanueva are in agreement, all the pregnant women should be moved from the jails. Chair Ocen advised that the Commission will confer with Assistant Sheriff Corbett to develop a working group to address the issues discussed. Chair Ocen then thanked the speakers and moved to the next topic.

- **Management of COVID-19 in Los Angeles County Jails**

Chair Ocen acknowledged Mr. Corbett who reported on LASD management efforts on COVID-19 in the jails. Assistant Sheriff Corbett reported the current inmate population is at approximately 13,000, which is down from 17,404. He advised that 3,700 inmates are in quarantine today and that LASD now has a lab to test inmates on intake. Corbett reported working with Correctional Health Services regarding various requirements and noted that masking is a required and N95 or surgical masks are being ordered for everyone to replace their cloth masks. Corbett reported State prison inmates are under 1,000. Assistant Sheriff Corbett advised that he is working with justice partners and the best way to control the spread of COVID-19 is to get people out and that pre-trial releases and ankle monitoring is being studied.

Dr. Henderson advised that his report is dense and recommended forwarding the data report to review. He went on to reported 445 positive inmates, 17 deaths to-date and approximately 3,700 inmates in quarantine and isolation. He reported 15,000 inmates have been vaccinated, and 60,000 vaccines have been offered. Dr. Henderson advised that 50% of inmates are fully vaccinated. He reported that 3,000 booster shots were given and are ongoing. He noted the vaccine is offered and administered within 48 hours of request. Following these comments, Chair Ocen called for Commissioner questions.

Commissioner Harris inquired about the number of custody personnel affected by COVID-19. Assistant Sheriff Corbett reported 287 COVID-19 positive employees, 395 employees in quarantine and 1,146 employees recovered as of today.

Chair Ocen inquired about mental health, access to court appearances and COVID-19 protocol. Assistant Sheriff Corbett advised that he is working with the courts and consulting with Dr. Henderson regarding court appearances. He advised that individuals who are fully vaccinated can appear in court, but that due to the recent COVID-19 surge, the courts have postponed preliminary hearings and trials.

Chair Ocen thanked Assistant Sheriff Corbett and Dr. Henderson for their comments and called for a 10-minute recess, which began at 11:35 a.m. and open session reconvened at 11:45 a.m. Present were Chair Priscilla Ocen, Vice Chair Sean Kennedy, Patti Giggans, James P. Harris, Lael Rubin and Executive Director Brian K. Williams.

Chair Ocen provided instructions to give public comment and noted speakers would be allowed one minute. She advised that written public comment for the official record can be submitted on **coc.lacounty.gov** and then moved to public comment.

There were 8 members of the public who commented on this item.

3c. Los Angeles County Mental Health Crisis Response Alternatives ([staff report](#))

Chair Ocen suggested combining the last two items to maximize time. She welcomed speakers and opened the floor to comments from L.A. County Department of Mental Health Deputy Director Miriam Brown, who [shared a presentation](#) on mobile crisis operations, practices, and LASD's response to calls regarding individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. Ms. Brown discussed outreach efforts and shared the factors used by LASD to determine the best approach to use when faced with a mental health incident. She reported that the mobile crisis response team works until 3:00 a.m. and is working to increase services to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Ms. Brown reported 36 Psychiatric Mobile Response Teams, 120 Law Enforcement Teams and 33 LASD Mental Evaluation Teams (MET).

Commissioner Giggans reported that the MET ad hoc recently met to discuss how to increase the number of MET units from 34 to 60, which was approved by BOS. Commissioner Harris advised that it was agreed the number would gradually increase and he anticipates the MET units increasing to 45. Chair Ocen noted how critical this issue is. She also suggested adopting the San Francisco model and eliminating law enforcement when dealing with mental health situations.

3d. Update on Prior Commission Actions: Deputies in County Health Facilities ([staff report](#))

Chair Ocen welcomed Harbor UCLA Medical Center's Chief Executive Officer Azar Kattan, who described the policy and procedures involving LASD deputies in the care setting and provided an overview of the deputies' training and interactions with mental health patients.

Professor Sunita Patel shared concerns from patients. She addressed three specific issues of concern which included privacy rights, dignity and the potential for harm to patients.

Chair Ocen inquired about how LASD deputies engage with staff and patients and if they follow Harbor-UCLA's or LASD's policies. Ms. Kattan reported LASD is required to follow Harbor-UCLA policies and LASD personnel are oriented into the Harbor-UCLA policies. She advised issues arise when outside deputies intervene who are not familiar with the policies. Following comments by Ms. Kattan, Chair Ocen moved to public comment.

There were seven members of the public who provided comments.

Following comments, Chair Ocen announced Vice Chair Kennedy will take on the role until a new chair is elected. She advised the election will take place during the next COC meeting.

Chair Ocen briefly discussed L.A. County Sheriff's Deputies in Schools Update and the draft [2021 Work Highlights](#). She announced that the ad hoc committees are active and encouraged those interested to apply to the Commission. She advised the [Budget ad hoc is asking for public comments](#) regarding 2022-23 LASD budget priorities prior to the LASD going to the CEO's office.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were seven members of the public who provided general public comment. View the [written public comments submitted online](#).

5. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ocen adjourned the meeting at 1:01 p.m.