

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES SHERIFF
Civilian Oversight Commission

Working for transparency with respect to the Sheriff's Department

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CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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Visit our website at coc.lacounty.gov, email us at cocnotify@coc.lacounty.gov or call (213) 253-5678.

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INTRODUCTION

Foreword from the Executive Director

BRIAN K. WILLIAMS, ESQ.

"Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality," Martin Luther King Jr. As the Commission moves into its fifth year and during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are reminded of how interrelated our work is. As we collaborate to improve outcomes for all, we have a special awareness of how we rely upon each other to get us through the tough times and to build on progress in times of uncertainty.

As COVID-19 precautions were implemented in 2020, the Commission adjusted focus; moving quickly to continue conducting Commission meetings and town halls virtually. This allowed us to continue connecting with residents of Los Angeles County.

In response to public concerns, the Commission swiftly inquired about COVID-19 in the jails and developed recommendations to protect some of our most vulnerable neighbors. Additional Commission actions included use of force reform recommendations; Measure R plan and feasibility study evaluation; Immigration Policy Adherence Report; the Sheriff's Department Budget Inquiry; and resolutions that condemned violence and addressed the Sheriff's failure to cooperate with oversight. We continue to monitor previously identified priorities including the progress of body worn cameras, Mental Evaluation Teams, the Family Assistance Program, the Inmate Welfare Fund, the Prison Rape Elimination Act and secret deputy subgroups.

Although the Commission has made great strides in elevating attention to areas of community concern, we are aware of the work that remains. As we persevere, there is a special focus on the collective efforts to increase public engagement. Community members' comments at Commission meetings and town halls are vital because it's their voices driving the work of the Commission. We strive to improve police-community relations in Los Angeles County through collaborations with the Sheriff's Department, the Inspector General, community partners, elected officials and others.



PHOTO ABOVE
Executive Director Brian K. Williams.

I would like to take a moment to thank the Executive Office, the Office of Inspector General and the Sheriff's Department for their work in this collective effort. I would also like to recognize Commission staff - Starlet Atkins, Frederick Chung, Daniel Delgadillo, Erick Montalbán-Lara, Tracy Jordan-Johnson, Jennifer Wicks and Ingrid Williams - for their ongoing dedication. And, I would be remiss if I did not extend our deepest appreciation to every member of the public who reaches out to the Commission. Because when something affects one of us, it affects all of us. Thank you for trusting the Commission to hear your experiences and to move with us as we are optimistic for a better reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Williams'.

BRIAN K. WILLIAMS, ESQ.
Executive Director

December 31, 2020



PHOTO ABOVE
L.A. County Board of Supervisors. Left to right: Holly Mitchell, 2nd District; Sheila Kuehl, 3rd District; Hilda L. Solis, 1st District; Janice Hahn, 4th District and Kathryn Barger, 5th District. Mark Ridley-Thomas served as the 2nd District Supervisor until December 6, 2020.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY Board of Supervisors

The Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (Commission) was implemented by the Board of Supervisors (Board) on January 12, 2016. Even before the Commission’s inception, the Board has supported transparency and accountability with respect to the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (Sheriff’s Department).

In 2020, the Board took a number of actions in alignment with the Commission’s recommendations. The Board

passed motions related to the Family Assistance Program, body worn cameras, immigration policies, Mental Evaluation Teams, independent investigations and Measure R’s Comprehensive Public Safety Reinvestment Plan.

The Commission also monitors and will continue to report to the Board as needed in the areas of use of force, sexual assault in the jails and secret deputy subgroups.

BOARD ACTIONS

Motion	Authored by Supervisors	Date
Ratification of Assembly Bill (AB) 1185 on Sheriff Oversight in L.A. County	Solis and Kuehl	11/10/2020
Ensuring Transparency and Affirming Subpoena Power Under AB 1185	Ridley-Thomas	11/10/2020
Measure R’s Comprehensive Public Safety Reinvestment Plan	Solis	11/10/2020
Amendment to Report Regarding Options for Removing the Sheriff	Solis	11/10/2020
Report Regarding Options for Removing the Sheriff	Ridley-Thomas and Kuehl	10/27/2020
Ensuring a Transparent and Reliable Investigation into the Shooting Death of Fred Williams	Mark Ridley-Thomas	10/27/2020
Ensuring the Long-Term Viability of the Family Assistance Program	Ridley-Thomas and Kuehl	9/29/2020
First Year of Funding for Body Worn Cameras	Hahn and Barger	9/1/2020
Ending ICE Transfers without a Judicial Warrant in L.A. County	Solis and Kuehl	9/1/2020
Restoring Mental Evaluation Teams and Homeless Outreach Services Teams	Barger and Solis	8/4/2020
Ensuring a Timely and Independent Investigation of the Death of Andres Guardado	Ridley-Thomas	6/23/2020

A Year in Review

2020 ACTION AREAS

- COVID-19 in the Jails
- Use of Force Reform
- Measure R
- Subpoena Power
- Resolution Condemning Violence
- Resolution on Sheriff’s Failure to Cooperate with Oversight
- Immigration Policy Adherence Report
- Sheriff’s Department Budget Inquiry

REGULAR MONITORING

- Significant events, such as use of force in patrol
- Office of Inspector General Reporting
- Consent decrees
- Litigation costs
- Body Worn Cameras
- Mental Evaluation Teams
- Family Assistance Program
- Harassment of Families
- Brady List
- Prison Rape Elimination Act
- Inmate Welfare Fund
- Internal Administrative Investigations



PHOTO ABOVE
Executive Director Brian K. Williams, Esq. And Commissioner Sean Kennedy speak at the L.A. County Board of Supervisors meeting on January 28, 2020 at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration in downtown L.A.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Recruitment
- Transparency (AB1491)
- Use of Force Reform
- Officer Discipline
- Secret Deputy Subgroups
- Men’s Central Jail

PHOTO BELOW
Executive Director Brian K. Williams, Esq. presented to the Justice Desputies at the Public Safety Cluster meeting on January 8, 2020 at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration in downtown L.A.



Report from the Chair

The Civilian Oversight Commission in its fourth year has faced extraordinary and unexpected challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic required us to conduct our meetings and town halls remotely as we tried to solve issues affecting the well-being of the community and its interaction with the Sheriff's Department.

The COVID-19 in the Jails Ad Hoc Committee examined how the jails have responded to attempting to keep inmates and employees safe. This included urging reduction in the population of overcrowded facilities, as well as developing ways to better transport inmates for court hearings.

The demonstrations and peaceful protests arising in May 2020 following the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers have given the Commission the opportunity to review the responses of the Sheriff's Department and make recommendations on the Department's policies and procedures to prevent excessive and unnecessary use of force against protestors.

The passage of Measure R, spearheaded by community activists, requires Los Angeles County to invest in rehabilitation and mental health treatment in lieu of incarceration. It gives the Civilian Oversight Commission an important and necessary tool, subpoena power, to strengthen its oversight by opening the Sheriff's Department to further scrutiny.

Following the Commission's review of the continued existence of Deputy Cliques within the Sheriff's Department, in February 2020, the Department issued a new policy on participating in such cliques. The Commission's Ad Hoc Committee on Deputy Cliques continues to push the department to clearly prohibit joining and participating in such organizations.

We continue to rely on community input to alert us to important issues. Once we learned that families of loved ones who were killed by Sheriff's deputies were prevented from obtaining autopsy reports, we questioned why those reports were sealed. Since our inquiries, the Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Jonathan Lucas, has released these reports and has opened independent inquiries into sheriff's deputy-involved deaths in two instances.

I want to thank my colleagues on the Commission for their continued commitment to developing effective oversight of the Sheriff's Department. A special thanks to the staff of the Commission and Brian Williams, the Commission's Executive Director, for their dedication in achieving meaningful reform.

Without the support of the Office of Inspector General and the Board of Supervisors, we could not effectuate transparent and accountable law enforcement.



Lael Rubin

LAEL RUBIN
Commission Chair
December 31, 2020

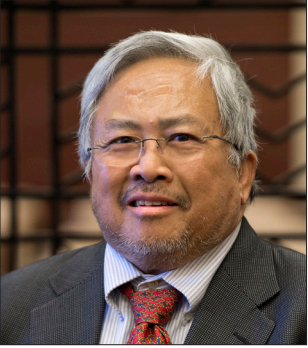
PHOTO LEFT
L.A. County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission Chair Lael Rubin addressed the Board of Supervisors on March 12, 2019 at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration in downtown L.A.

Commission Members

The Board of Supervisors appointed nine members to serve on the Commission. Five members are nominated from the Board, one from each Supervisorial District, and four members are appointed by the entire Board. Commissioners' diverse backgrounds include community organization and faith leaders, a retired law enforcement professional, a former federal judge and attorneys with a broad range of experiences—including former prosecutors, public defenders and professors.



LAEL RUBIN
Chair, Former Deputy District Attorney
Appointed by the Board of Supervisors



CASIMIRO U. TOLENTINO
Vice Chair, Former Administrative Law Judge for the State of California
Appointed by the Board of Supervisors



ROBERT C. BONNER
Former U.S. District Judge, Former U.S. Attorney and DEA Administrator
Appointed by former Supervisor Antonovich



PATTI GIGGANS
Peace Over Violence Executive Director
Appointed by Supervisor Kuehl



JAMES P. HARRIS
Former Sheriff's Lieutenant
Appointed by former Supervisor



SEAN KENNEDY
Center for Juvenile Law and Policy Executive Director and Former Federal Public Defender
Appointed by the Board of Supervisors



PRISCILLA OCEN
Loyola Law School Associate Professor
Appointed by the Board of Supervisors



XAVIER THOMPSON
Southern Saint Paul Church Senior Pastor
Appointed by former Supervisor Ridley-Thomas



HERNÁN VERA
Attorney and Former Public Counsel President and CEO
Appointed by Supervisor Solis

Mission and Values

The Civilian Oversight Commission works to facilitate public transparency and accountability with respect to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

MISSION

The Commission provides ongoing review, analysis and oversight of the Sheriff Department's policies, practices and procedures. They build bridges between the Sheriff's Department and the public, and they recommend solutions to advise the Sheriff's Department, the Board and the public. The Commission welcomes public involvement and provides opportunities for robust community engagement.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Boost transparency and reclaim accountability
- Discover gaps and patterns of misconduct
- Recommend solutions for real change
- Build bridges among various audiences
- Give the community a stronger voice

PHOTO BELOW
Commissioners listen during the January 16, 2020 meeting at St. Anne's Conference Center in Los Angeles, CA. Pictured left to right: Robert Bonner, Chair Lael Rubin, Patti Giggans, Executive Director Brian K. Williams, Sean Kennedy and Casimiro U. Tolentino.

VALUES

Independent: Housed under the Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors, the civilian team of volunteers is positioned to remain autonomous and independent in their oversight efforts.

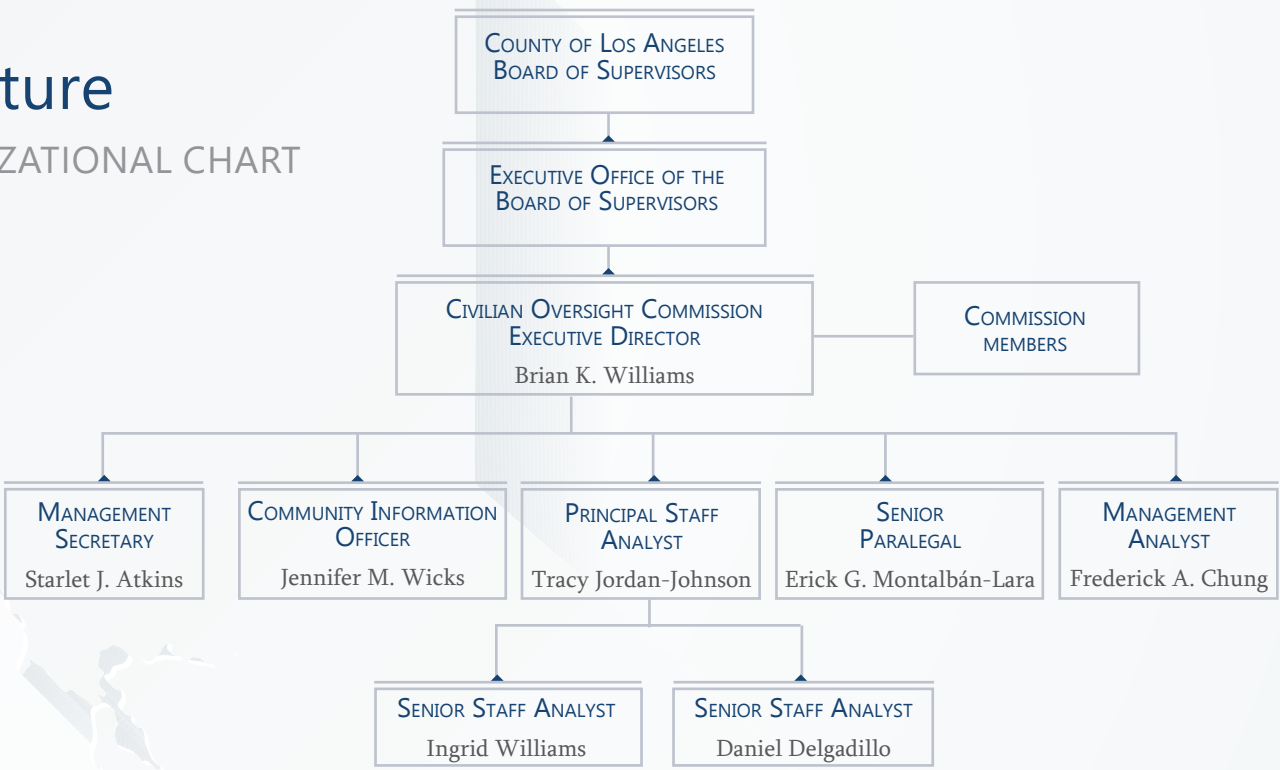
Credible: The Commission works to remain knowledgeable, respectful and transparent while striving to perform all duties in a manner that is thorough and demonstrates honesty.

Respectful: Aiming to treat all stakeholders in a sincere manner, the Commission encourages public involvement through robust community engagement opportunities.

Neutral: The Commission promotes fairness, equality and justice and creates opportunities for community members from diverse backgrounds to voice their thoughts and opinions.

Structure

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Commission staff create opportunities for community interaction through town halls, Commission meetings, conferences and social media engagement. The team supports Commissioners and the Board of Supervisors by coordinating closely with the Office of Inspector General, the Sheriff's Department and other agencies. After reviewing the Sheriff's Department policies and practices, hearing community feedback and conducting research, staff work with ad hoc committees to prepare recommendations. Once recommendations are approved by the full Commission, they are provided to the Board and the Sheriff's Department.

ESTABLISHMENT

The Civilian Oversight Commission is authorized by Chapter 3.79 of the Los Angeles County Code. The Board approved the ordinance that created the Commission on September 27, 2016.

JURISDICTION

The Commission provides oversight of the L.A. County Sheriff's Department, which is the nation's largest sheriff's department with approximately 17,000 employees. The law enforcement agency provides services to 42 incorporated cities and 141 unincorporated communities, courthouse security for the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, and the housing and transportation of inmates within the county jail system, which is the nation's largest county jail system.

L.A. County is the nation's largest county by population. A subdivision of the State of California, the County of Los Angeles is charged with providing numerous services that affect the lives of 10 million residents who live throughout a sprawling 4,084 square miles of land.





Commission Meetings

Commission meetings provide an opportunity for the public to comment on items before the Commission as well as any item that is within the Commission's jurisdiction. In January and February of 2020, in person meetings were held and plans were in place to continue meetings at St. Anne's Conference Center in Los Angeles. When the COVID-19 pandemic led the L.A. County Health Officer to impose restrictions on gatherings in March 2020, both March's Commission meeting and the Palmdale Town Hall were cancelled.

After many options were explored to continue meetings, the Civilian Oversight Commission was the first Commission to hold virtual public meetings. Meetings resumed on April 16, 2020 through the Webex Events virtual platform, and the remainder of 2020 Commission meetings conducted through this system. While adjusting to the technical limitations of the system, staff continued to refine the process to allow for live public comment and guest presentations. Those who were unable to log into the system could still watch the meeting on Facebook Live or listen through a telephone line.

Additional meetings and town halls were held to ensure that Commissioners and the public could hear community voices. Commission meetings were publicized through email notifications, social media posts and on the website at coc.lacounty.gov.

Regular Commission meetings for 2021 will be held from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month, except for August. Meetings will be held virtually for the foreseeable future. Sign up to receive email notifications of upcoming meetings on coc.lacounty.gov.

The public is encouraged to attend all Commission meetings. As the Commission works to boost transparency and accountability, community input is vital to the ongoing analysis of the department's policies, practices and procedures. Community feedback may provide direction on additional issues the Commission evaluates.

2020 BY THE NUMBERS:

- 14 Commission meetings
- 2,453 attendees at Commission meetings
- 850 speakers at Commission meetings

PHOTO ABOVE
It was a full house at the January 16, 2020 Commission meeting at St. Anne's Conference Center in Los Angeles, CA.

PHOTO BELOW
The February 22, 2020 Commission meeting was held at Bienvenidos Family Resource Centers in Los Angeles, CA. Pictured left to right: James P. Harris, Sean Kennedy, Robert Bonner, Lael Rubin, Patti Giggans, Executive Director Brian K. Williams.



PHOTO RIGHT
At the September 3, 2020 Town Hall, Lael Rubin, Inspector General Max Huntsman, Casimiro U. Tolentino, Priscilla Ocen and Patti Giggans listen to community concerns.

Town Halls and Public Outreach

Town halls provide a public forum where residents are encouraged to take the microphone to address leadership from the Commission and the local Sheriff's station. The public is encouraged to share their experiences with deputies and their thoughts about public safety in their communities. The Commission welcomes public involvement and works to provide opportunities for community engagement.

Staff had been planning a series of in person town halls throughout 2020. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Palmdale Town Hall that was scheduled for March 12 and plans for all in person town halls were halted.

Three virtual town halls were held in 2020. They took place through the Webex platform on May 13, June 11 and September 3. Just as with in person town halls, the focus of these virtual town halls was primarily to hear from members of the public.

PUBLIC INTERACTIONS

- 3 Town Hall community listening sessions
- 664 attendees at Town Halls
- 186 speakers at Town Halls



PHOTO BELOW
John Heath, United Homeowners Association President spoke at the May 13, 2020 Town Hall. Also pictured, left to right: Inspector General Max Huntsman, Casimiro U. Tolentino, Executive Director Brian K. Williams, Patti Giggans and Priscilla Ocen.

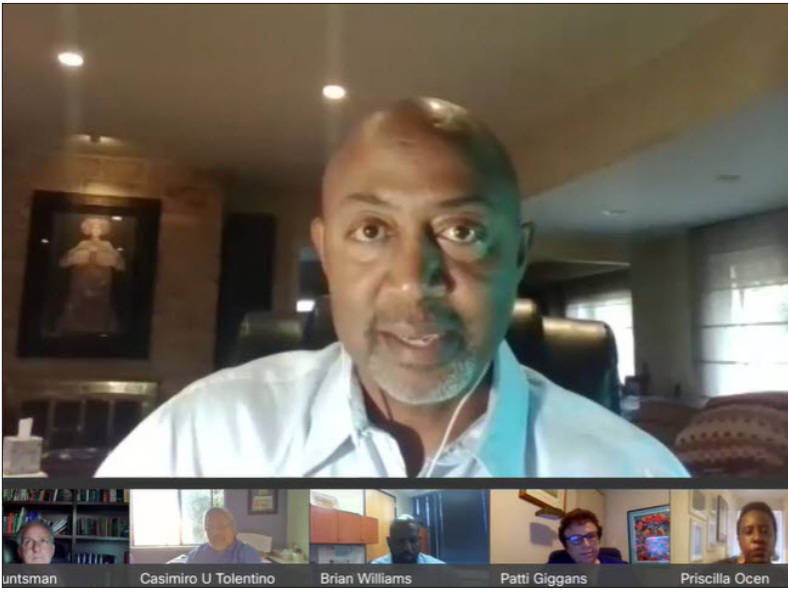


PHOTO BELOW
At the June 11, 2020 Town Hall, Patti Giggans, Executive Director Brian K. Williams, Casimiro U. Tolentino and Priscilla Ocen listen to public comments.

Public Comment

Hiring Conference

On July 1, 2020, the Civilian Oversight Commission brought together more than 100 members of the public for a two-hour engagement and dialog on “Hiring: Choosing the Right Person for the Job.” This virtual conference was created with the understanding that there are more than 25,000 full-time law enforcement officers in Los Angeles County, and the Commission has heard community feedback and concern regarding the hiring process of law enforcement officers who patrol the streets of their communities.

Civilian Oversight Commissioner, Pastor Xavier Thompson served as the moderator for the online event and introduced subject matter experts on the panel. The conference commenced with L.A. County Chief of Psychological Services, Dr. Sepideh Souris discussing pre-employment psychological evaluations and the California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) psychological dimensions.

Other panelists included Michael Rose from the City of Los Angeles Police Department who provided an

overview of their hiring process, and Commander Andrew Rosso from the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department discussed their hiring process and advised that new recruit training includes 189 hours of “Use of Force and Weapons” training. The final panelist, Professor Greg Woods from San Jose State University provided a historical overview on how law enforcement has interacted with minority communities, highlighted his partnership with the San Jose Police Department training academy on “Policing in the Current Political and Social Climate” and discussed how sworn staff must employ empathy when performing their job.

This virtual conference was one of many steps the Commission took with hopes of continuing dialog and sharing available resources between law enforcement, academia and the community.

PHOTO BELOW
Pastor Xavier Thompson, a Civilian Oversight Commissioner moderated the Hiring Conference. Also pictured, left to right: Andy Rosso, Sepideh Souris, Michael Rose and Greg Woods.



NACOLE Conference

National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement

Not to be deterred by the pandemic’s challenges, the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) held its 2020 conference online for several weeks in August and September. The conference offered more than 25 webinars designed to provided skills training to oversight stakeholders and highlight issues facing civilian oversight and law enforcement. The Civilian Oversight Commission developed and presented three webinars that provided a space for oversight professionals and other stakeholders to discuss topics like oversight and the media, crisis de-escalation and the efficacy of oversight bodies.

MEDIA: DOES THEIR CAMERA REPORT THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH?

The media has tremendous power to shape the public’s perception of people and events. What precautions do reporters and news anchors take to ensure their reporting is fair, balanced and unbiased? What is the responsibility of law enforcement spokespeople in providing information to the media? These issues were discussed among Dave Lopez, a retired local news anchor with more 40 years of experience; Jasmyne Cannick, advocate and political strategist; and Dr. Susan Swanberg, former criminal lawyer and professor of journalism. The panel analyzed how and why the media decides to report on incidents and how various sectors of our community view this reporting. The robust discussion was followed by questions from the attendees.

CALMING A CRISIS: STRATEGIES TO REDUCE USE OF FORCE

No action draws public scrutiny—and sometimes anger—quite like the excessive use of force by law enforcement personnel. This session explored factors that lead to use of force and the efforts law enforcement and policy reformers advocate to mitigate these factors.

Sergeant Annadennise Britz from the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department’s Mental Evaluation Team (MET) spoke about their co-response model that pairs a Deputy Sheriff and a Department of Mental Health

licensed clinician. MET provides mental health support, field crisis intervention and appropriate psychiatric placement in situations involving patrol deputies and citizens who have a mental illness.

Additionally, Deputy Chief Kelly McMahill, from the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department shared strategies implemented by her department to address the excessive use of force on people of color. Deputy Chief McMahill discussed the benefits of utilizing a collaborative reform process to address systemic issues and implement changes effectively. To highlight the effect excessive and fatal uses of force have on family members, Uncle Bobby X, social justice activist and uncle of Oscar Grant shared his nephew’s story and the efforts of the Love Not Blood Campaign he co-founded. The session highlighted examples of excessive use of force by law enforcement personnel and the various efforts toward reform law enforcement agencies are undergoing throughout the nation.

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE: DOES OVERSIGHT EVEN WORK?

Civilian oversight gained momentum in 2020 as a crucial component of law enforcement reform. It involves people from outside law enforcement agencies taking a role in calling these agencies to account for their actions, policies and organization. This session explored the history of law enforcement and community relations; the role and varying responsibilities of oversight agencies; and an example of effective community activism to address and change systemic issues within a law enforcement agency. San Jose State University Professor Greg Woods discussed the history of citizen encounters with law enforcement and the concept of oversight as an effective tool for reform.

Mariela Alburges, Director of Implementation of Measure R for Reform LA Jails shared the coordinated effort by several community members and organizations to develop, collect signatures and campaign for Measure R; which gave the L.A. County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission the power to subpoena witnesses and documents relevant to citizens’ or inmates’ complaints. The ballot measure also required the development of a Comprehensive Public Safety Reinvestment Plan to reduce jail populations. Lastly, Reverend Frederick Davie, Chair of New York Citizen complaint review board shared the events and steps that took place to establish the New York Citizen Complaint Review Board.

Complaints and Commendations

Members of the public make complaints concerning the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department through email, over the phone, in person or by mail correspondence to the Civilian Oversight Commission. The Commission also hears complaints and commendations during the monthly Commission meetings and town halls.

The complaints are then forwarded to the Office of Inspector General, who forwards them to the Sheriff's Department for investigation. The Office of Inspector General can monitor the investigation.

The Inspector General can investigate specific instances only in special circumstances, and they have the authority to undertake an inquiry and audit or monitor the situation. Anonymous complaints are not usually able to be investigated.

PHOTO BELOW
Commission leadership addresses the L.A. County Board of Supervisors at the meeting on January 28, 2020 at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration in downtown L.A.



L.A. County Jails

The L.A. County Sheriff's Department is responsible for the housing and transportation of inmates within the county jail system. The Commission often hears community feedback about the jails and is monitoring concerns to ensure the detention environment is just and humane.

COVID-19 IN THE JAILS

In April 2020, the Commission created a COVID-19 in the Jails Ad Hoc Committee to examine the Sheriff Department's efforts to mitigate exposure to COVID-19 within the County jails, its adherence to the Center for Disease Control guidelines and identify issues that need to be resolved. The Committee heard from numerous stakeholders on their efforts to assist in managing the spread of COVID-19.

The Committee gathered extensive information from the Sheriff's Department and other stakeholders about efforts to control and lessen the spread of COVID-19 in the jails. On September 8, 2020, the committee published [a report on the Sheriff's Department's Efforts to Mitigate Exposure to COVID-19 in the Jails](#). There has been some success, but much more must be done. Testing of inmates must continue, including before they are released into the community.

The Committee will continue to collaborate with the Sheriff's Department, the Department of Health Service's Correctional Health Services and the Sybil Brand Commission to safeguard the management of COVID-19 inside the jails.

COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee members:

- Lael Rubin
- James P. Harris
- Sean Kennedy
- Priscilla Ocen
- Daniel Delgadillo, lead staff member
- Tracy Jordan-Johnson, staff member

INMATE WELFARE FUND

In September 2019, the Commission created an ad hoc committee to review issues surrounding the Inmate Welfare Fund program. The Committee is exploring the program by coordinating meetings with the Sheriff's Department, the Office of Inspector General and the

Inmate Welfare Fund Commission to identify program improvements. In January 2020, members of the committee met with several members of the Sheriff's Department to identify ways to work with the Inmate Welfare Fund to increase the inmate welfare fund allocation.

Inmate Welfare Fund Ad Hoc Committee members:

- Casimiro U. Tolentino
- Hernán Vera (until end of term, November 21, 2020)
- Daniel Delgadillo, staff member

PRISON RAPE ELIMINATION ACT (PREA)

Every month, the PREA Ad Hoc Committee meets with the PREA Implementation and Compliance Team to share updates on compliance progress. In February, staff attended the 2020 National PREA Coordinators Conference in Long Beach. This annual meeting brings PREA Coordinators and staff from across the United States together to learn and share the latest implementation and compliance trends.

The PREA Implementation and Compliance Team was allocated \$3.6 million and 17 positions to establish a central PREA Unit and audit compliance within Sheriff's Department and the Office of Inspector General. The PREA team, Tyson Nelson from County Counsel and John Barkley and Karen Dalton from the Sheriff's Department appeared at the November 2020 Commission meeting to provide a status report. Chair Rubin requested the PREA team submit a written report to the Commission regarding various concerns addressed by the public during public comment.

PREA Ad Hoc Committee members:

- Patti Giggans
- Sean Kennedy
- Pricilla Ocen
- Lael Rubin
- Daniel Delgadillo, staff member

Use of Force

USE OF FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

AN UNFAULtering PRIORITY

Reform is at the heart of the Commission’s mission. Since its inception, the Commission has committed itself to highlight systemic issues; analyze policies, practices and procedures; and develop recommendations that will facilitate reform within the Sheriff’s Department. The Commission continues to operate with its vision to facilitate public transparency and accountability with respect to the Sheriff’s Department; both of which are essential in creating the necessary environment for reform.

Following the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent protests nationwide, the Commission issued a statement in which it recommitted itself to hold the Sheriff’s Department accountable for uses of force and being responsive to the communities it serves.

In early June 2020, the Use of Force Ad Hoc Committee set out to create a [non-exhaustive list of reform recommendations](#) to address systemic issues highlighted by the recent fatal uses of force and the civil unrest that followed. The list of [24 recommendations was adopted by the full Commission](#) during the July 30, 2020 Commission meeting. The first 18 recommendations were developed to specifically address systemic issues within the Sheriff’s Department, the latter were intended to address the systemic issues within the current civil justice system. The draft list of reform recommendations was shared and discussed with Sheriff Villanueva and

PHOTO BELOW
At the January 16, 2020 Commission meeting, Robert Bonner and Lael Rubin respond to a presentation from the Sheriff’s Department regarding the proposed Body Worn Camera policy.

the Department’s Use of Force subject matter experts during a virtual meeting with the committee. Some of the recommendations are:

- Immediately prohibit the use of chokeholds and other restraints on the carotid artery;
- Immediately ensure that a deputy witnessing excessive or unnecessary use of force by another deputy has the duty to intervene; and
- Establish a national registry of police officers who have been discharged for misconduct or who have resigned pending disciplinary action.

The Commission continues to push forward in their effort to eradicate policies, practices and procedures that prevent public transparency and accountability. For 2021, the committee plans to focus on identifying opportunities to improve the disciplinary process.

"It is our belief that [the body worn cameras policy] should have been publicly vetted before an actual policy is adopted. So, the ability to look at policies before they are adopt by the Department is important."

- Brian K. Williams, Esq., Executive Director
January 28, 2020

BODY WORN CAMERAS

During the January 2020 Commission meeting, Sheriff’s Department Commander Chris Marks presented the proposed Body Worn Cameras policy, an overview of the draft policy timeline and the status of the infrastructure needed for implementation. On October 1, 2020, Sheriff Villanueva announced that the first body worn cameras would be in use that night. Cameras were first deployed to the Century, Industry, Lakewood, Lancaster and West Hollywood patrol stations, followed by the Compton and East Los Angeles patrol stations. The Commission will continue to monitor the body worn cameras deployment and policy efficacy.

BACKGROUND

In July 2018, the Commission adopted the Body Worn Camera Report. Among the recommendations was a call for the Board of Supervisors to make the Body Worn Cameras budget and funding a priority and request the Sheriff’s Department develop a clear Body Worn Cameras policy and emphasize that policy violations will result in discipline.

Use of Force Ad Hoc Committee members:

- Xavier Thompson
- Robert Bonner
- James P. Harris
- Sean Kennedy
- Ingrid Williams, staff member

Resolutions

CONDEMNING VIOLENCE

On September 12, 2020, an unidentified gunman attempted to murder two L.A. County Sheriff Deputies while on duty in the City of Compton. Both deputies sustained multiple gunshot wounds and underwent surgery. During the September 17, 2020 Commission meeting, there was a unanimous vote to issue a resolution condemning acts of violence. The resolution expressed that the residents of Compton and all other communities deserve to live in a community free of violent incidents that further ignite community trauma.

As such, the Commission strongly and unequivocally condemned the premeditated attack on Deputies that occurred on September 12, 2020 and any act of violence against community members and law enforcement.

SHERIFF’S FAILURE TO COOPERATE WITH OVERSIGHT

Sheriff Alex Villanueva campaigned on a promise to reform, rebuild and restore the Sheriff’s Department. Since he took office in 2018, the Commission attempted to create a strong working relationship with the Sheriff to increase and improve the Department’s transparency and accountability. Unfortunately, that relationship slowly deteriorated as Sheriff Villanueva made efforts to block meaningful reform and refused to participate in oversight.

There was a series of events that led the Commission to regretfully issue a Resolution of no confidence, including: Sheriff Villanueva’s attempts to rehire deputies who were terminated for cause such as fabricating evidence and domestic violence; despite the creation of a policy prohibiting deputy gangs, deputy gangs continue to operate within the Department; Sheriff Villanueva’s lackluster effort to ensure independent investigation of deputy use of force; numerous deputies violated the First Amendment rights of residents participating in protests as well as journalists covering those protests; Sheriff Villanueva’s mishandling of the Kobe Bryant helicopter crash photos that were inappropriately taken and shared by deputies; Sheriff Villanueva’s use of a sexist and racist slur to describe a member of the Board of Supervisors; and his initiation of a criminal investigation of the Inspector General.

Also, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission sought information regarding management of COVID-19 in the jails and requested Sheriff Villanueva personally attend the Commission meeting to provide an update, but he failed to appear. The Commission then issued a subpoena for his attendance, which he defied and challenged in court.

Because of the above, the Commission unanimously voted at the October 15, 2020 meeting to issue a resolution expressing no confidence in Sheriff Alex Villanueva’s leadership of the Department and condemning his failure to cooperate with oversight.



Sheriff's Department Budget

In 2020, Los Angeles County faced a range of budget curtailments affecting nearly every County department in response to the economic crisis created by COVID-19.

In a press conference on May 4, 2020, Sheriff Villanueva announced that budget curtailments for the Sheriff's Department would result in a budget gap of approximately \$400 million and advised the public that the Altadena and Marina del Rey Stations would close for cost savings. The Commission engaged the community and heard feedback at various virtual meetings. The Sheriff later determined he would not close the two stations.

At the October 15, 2020 Commission meeting, Sheila Williams of the Chief Executive Office provided an [overview of the Sheriff's Department final adopted 2020-21 Budget](#) of \$3.582 billion. She shared a description of the Department's programs, budgeted positions and a breakdown of the funding for the Body Worn Camera Program and Mental Evaluation Teams.

Sheriff's Department Division Director of Administrative Services Division, Conrad Meredith and Captain John McBride provided an overview and answered questions about the Sheriff's Department budget.

The Commission determined a need to further monitor the Sheriff's Department budget operations and created the Budget Ad Hoc Committee to gather information, conduct analysis and make ongoing recommendations to the Sheriff's Department and the Chief Executive Office.

Budget Ad Hoc Committee members

- Casimiro U. Tolentino
- James P. Harris
- Hernán Vera (until end of term on 11/21/2020)
- Tracy Jordan-Johnson (lead staff member)
- Frederick Andy Chung (staff member)

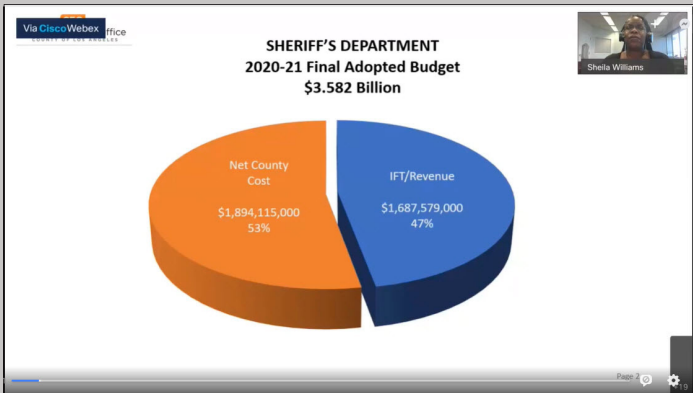
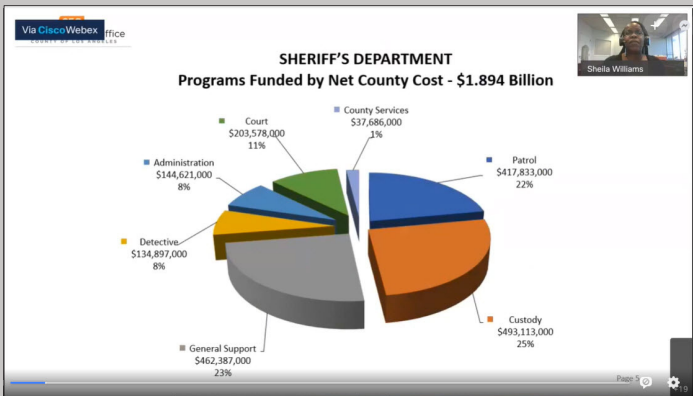
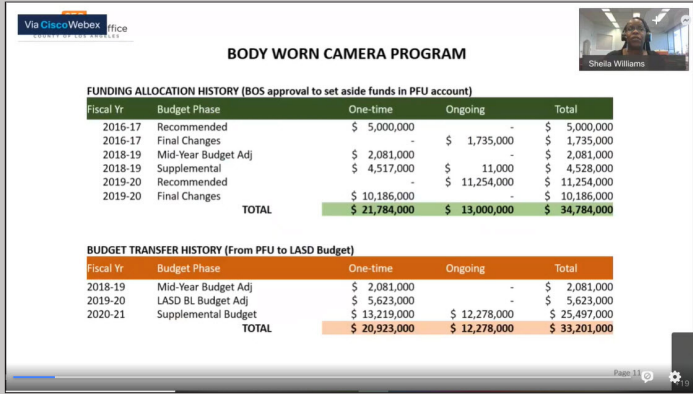
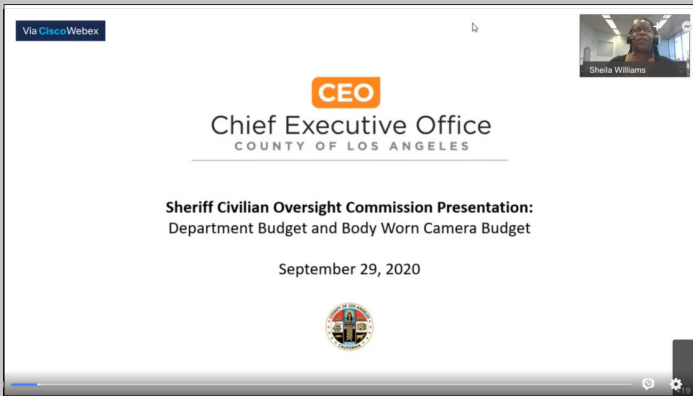


PHOTO ABOVE
Sheila Williams from the Chief Executive Office, presented this PowerPoint at the October 15, 2020 Commission meeting.

Immigration Policy

Cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement

In 2020 the Commission continued its ongoing review, analysis and monitoring of the Sheriff's Department Immigration Policy adherence after adopting the twelve recommendations approved by the Commission on May 21, 2019.

Monitoring efforts included consultation with the Sheriff's Department and the Office of Inspector General regarding the Sheriff's Department agreement with and implementation of enhancements associated with the Commission recommendations. By April 2020, the Sheriff's Department Patrol Operations completed installation of "Standard Station Lobby Information Boards" in the Central Division, which includes Compton Station, South L.A., East L.A. Station, Century Station and Marina del Rey Stations. This is in one of four divisions.

The information boards include Sheriff's Department immigration policy adherence information and other important postings for stakeholders who may enter the lobby. The remaining three patrol divisions completed the lobby information boards installation process by the end of November 2020.

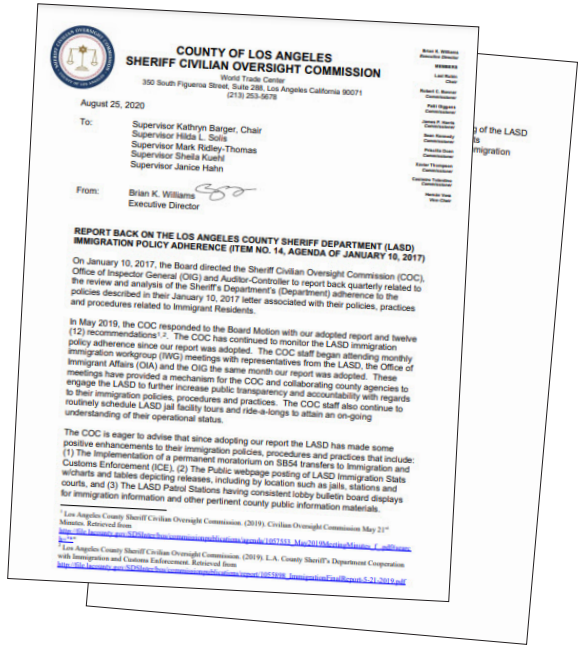
In August 2020, after consulting with the Commission, the Office of Inspector General and other stakeholders, Sheriff Villanueva decided to implement a permanent moratorium on inmate SB54 transfers to Immigration and Customs Enforcement based solely on a civil immigration detainer. Commission consultation efforts with the Sheriff's Department were also instrumental in the development of the public webpage posting of Sheriff Department's Immigration statistics with charts and tables depicting releases, including by the location such as jails, stations and courts.

The Commission continues to encourage the Sheriff's Department to enhance its immigration operations and policies as the Commission maintains ongoing monitoring of their immigration policy adherence.

Immigration Ad Hoc Committee members

- Casimiro U. Tolentino
- Lael Rubin
- Priscilla Ocen
- Hernán Vera (until end of term, November 21, 2020)
- Tracy Jordan-Johnson, staff member

PHOTO BELOW
The report back to the Board of Supervisors on the Sheriff's Department Immigration Policy Adherence on August 25, 2020.



Measure R

On March 3, 2020, the residents of L.A. County approved Measure R, the Civilian Police Oversight Commission and Jail Plan Initiative, by nearly 73% of the vote. Measure R gave the Commission the power to subpoena witnesses and documents to investigate complaints. Measure R also mandated the Commission to develop a Comprehensive Public Safety Reinvestment Plan (Plan) and a feasibility study to implement the proposed Plan.

In response to the passage of Measure R, the Commission created the Measure R Ad Hoc Committee to address the requirements of drafting the Plan. The committee has been meeting regularly with subject matter experts to obtain a greater understanding of how to best realize this complex mandate.

Because of the global pandemic and lack of personnel and resources, the Plan and feasibility study have not been completed within the seven months outlined in the measure. The Commission is still seeking sufficient funding to complete this task.

Measure R Ad Hoc Committee members

- Priscilla Ocen
- Robert Bonner
- James P. Harris
- Sean Kennedy
- Erick Montalbán-Lara (staff member)



PHOTO LEFT
Brian K. Williams,
Sean Kennedy
and Sheriff Alex
Villanueva discuss
subpoena power
at the L.A. County
Board of Supervisors
meeting on January
28, 2020 at the
Kenneth Hahn Hall
of Administration
in downtown L.A.

Subpoena Power

Fueled by calls for more aggressive civilian oversight of law enforcement, subpoena power was a hot topic in 2020. The Commission obtained subpoena power from three sources: the Board, Measure R and the signing into law of AB-1185 by Governor Newsom.

On January 28, 2020, the Board unanimously voted to amend the Commission’s ordinance, granting the Commission the power to issue subpoenas through the Office of Inspector General. At the February 22, 2020 Commission meeting, County Counsel outlined how the newly granted subpoena power may function. Prior to obtaining subpoena power, the Commission was limited by a memorandum that outlined which documents could be accessed.

On March 3, 2020, the passage of Measure R gave subpoena power directly to the Commission. Although Measure R did not outline a procedure for issuing subpoenas, the Commission was no longer bound to issue subpoenas through the Inspector General. In response to the passage of Measure R, the Commission created a Subpoena Ad Hoc Committee to develop necessary criteria that must be met before a subpoena is issued.

Similarly, AB-1185 gave subpoena power directly to the Commission. On September 30, 2020, Governor Newsom signed AB-1185 into law, which will take effect January 1, 2021. AB-1185 gives the chair of the sheriff oversight board the power to issue subpoenas in accordance with current law when deemed “necessary or important to examine... any person as a witness...” or “any officer of the county in relation to the discharge of their official duties on behalf of the sheriff’s department...” or “any books, papers, or documents in the possession of or under the control of a person or officer relating to the

affairs of the sheriff’s department” as defined by Gov. Code §25303.7(b)(1)(A)(B)(C).

Although the Commission has been vested with subpoena power, the Commission intends to work with the Sheriff’s Department to obtain the documents or information needed to perform our oversight duties; however, having subpoena power is a good tool to have when communications break down.

Subpoena Ad Hoc Committee members

- Robert Bonner
- Xavier Thompson
- Casimiro U. Tolentino
- Hernán Vera (until end of term on 11/21/2020)
- Erick Montalbán-Lara, staff member

Deputy Gangs

A long-standing issue, deputy gangs, sometimes referred to as cliques or secret subgroups continues to be monitored by the Commission. In 2019, L.A. County executed an agreement with the RAND Corporation, calling for a comprehensive study of subgroups within the Sheriff’s Department that includes examining their formation, purposes, activities and the internal and external perception of such groups.

At the July 30, 2020 Commission meeting, Chair Rubin advised the Deputy Cliques Ad Hoc Committee that the release of the RAND study would be delayed due to COVID-19. Then, Inspector General Max Huntsman provided an overview of the subgroups and reported an investigation is being conducted at the request of County Counsel based on complaints received.

At the August 20, 2020 Commission meeting, Sheriff’s Department Chief Matthew Burson and Internal Affairs Bureau Captain William Jaeger addressed allegations of the subgroups and the new policy regarding deputy cliques.

At the October 15, 2020 Commission meeting, Inspector General Huntsman presented on how criminal gang investigations are conducted and reported that his staff conducted a comprehensive [Analysis of the Criminal Investigation of the Alleged Assault by the Banditos](#). In response to the analysis, Sheriff’s Department Lieutenant Mark Lopez [read a letter](#) to the Inspector General on behalf of the Sheriff.

At the December 17, 2020 Commission meeting, RAND Corporation’s Sam Peterson provided a summary of the independent research study on secret deputy subgroups; he shared that the goal was to understand internal and external perspectives and advised the study involved interviews, surveys and research. Then, Sheriff Villanueva provided an overview of deputy subgroups dating back to the 1970s. He went on to discuss the fight involving deputies at Kennedy Hall in September 2018, and he reported the incident was investigated.

Sheriff Villanueva shared that a separate investigation is being conducted at the Compton Sheriff’s station and once the investigation is completed, the report will be forwarded to the Inspector General. He advised that a policy on deputy cliques was put in place in February 2020 and is being enforced. He highlighted that the policy cannot be applied retroactively and noted misconduct must occur to be considered a policy violation.

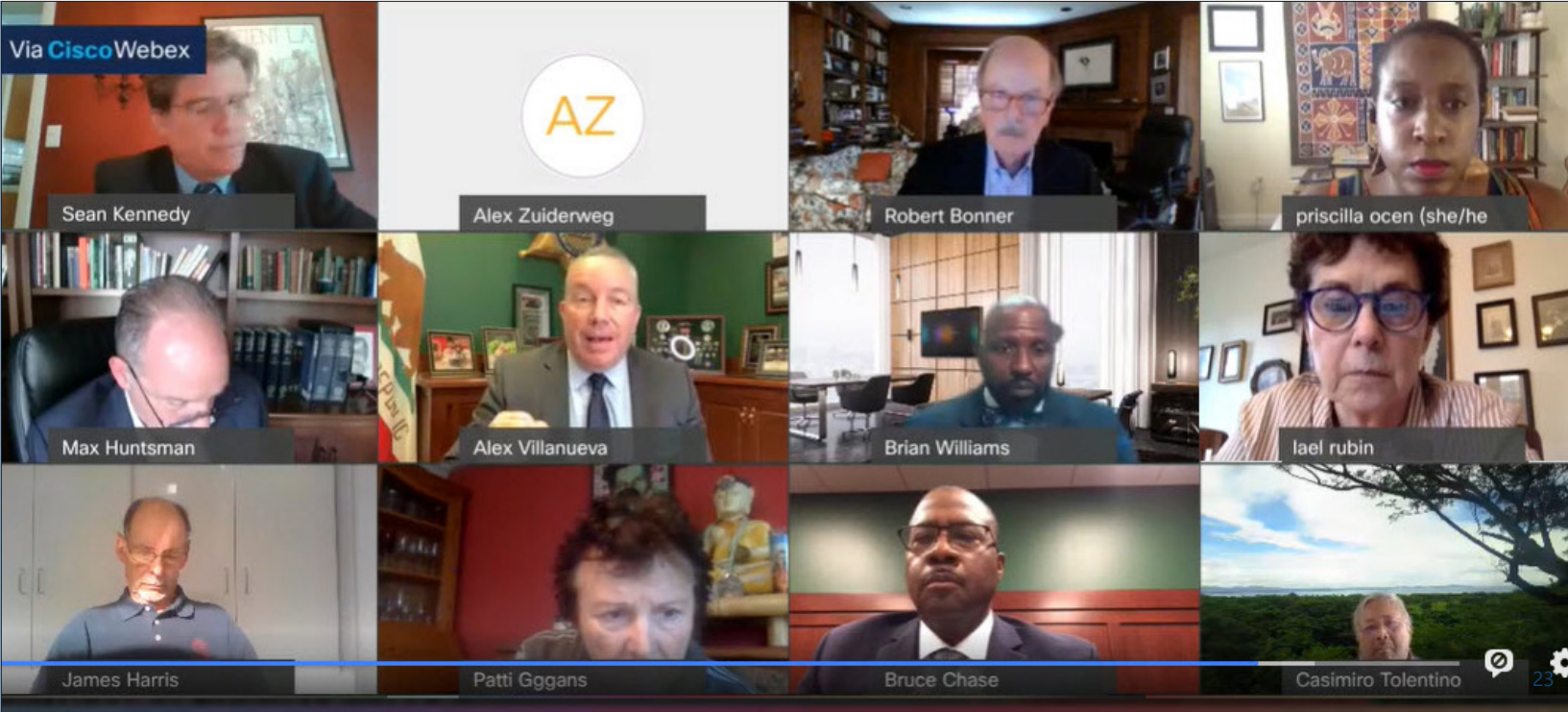
Deputy Cliques Ad Hoc Committee members

- Lael Rubin
- James P. Harris
- Sean Kennedy
- Robert Bonner
- Daniel Delgadillo, staff member

PHOTO BELOW
At the December 2020 Commission meeting, Sheriff Alex Villanueva spoke about secret deputy subgroups within the Department.

“We simply want to have a good level of cooperation to be able to have the questions answered that we have to ask; and to have not just documents, but there are occasions where we would like to have witnesses come before the commission to testify. That, too, is important.

- Brian K. Williams, Esq., Executive Director
January 28, 2020



Mental Evaluation Teams

The need to have co-responder teams also referred to as Mental Evaluation Teams (MET) staffed by a Sheriff's Department deputy and a Department of Mental Health clinician to work together to respond to situations involving calls associated with people who have mental health issues continues to be a concern of the Commission.

In early 2020, budget curtailments associated with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic placed MET positions at risk for elimination. The Commission monitored the budget activities and at the July 16, 2020 Commission meeting voted to write a letter in support of the Sheriff's Department's MET Program. In August 2020, the Board directed the Chief Executive Office to work with the Sheriff's Department to shift funding to restore the MET positions, which left the number of MET teams at 33.

At the October 15, 2020 Commission meeting, the Chief Executive Office and Sheriff's Department presented a general overview of the MET budget. The Commission continues to monitor the status of MET teams and their progress.

Internal Administrative Investigations

In 2020, the Office of Inspector General continued to report to the Board and the Civilian Oversight Commission on the status of Sheriff's Department Internal Administrative Investigations and Dispositions of Disciplinary Actions. On January 16, 2020, Inspector General Max Huntsman advised the Commission of his concerns regarding the Sheriff Department's compliance with Los Angeles County Code Section 6.144.90 concerning internal discipline, among other matters. Inspector General Huntsman emphatically advised the Commission that he has requested complete and full access to all internal investigations, including those designated as "Private" and disciplinary cases, but advised he is not receiving access to requested information.

In March 2020, the Office of Inspector General provided a report back on the Sheriff's Department Internal Administrative Investigations for the period of September through November 2019, which referenced five inactivated administrative investigations that were within Department policy. However, the Office of Inspector General report also highlighted the review of a case involving a custody assistant being discharged for falsification of jail log records and the department entering into a settlement agreement to reduce the discharge to a 10-day suspension, which County Counsel did not approve. To ensure transparency and accountability the Office of Inspector General continues to monitor these investigations and notify the Commission of their findings.

Family Assistance Program

The Family Assistance Program is the result of successful collaboration between the public, the Sheriff's Department, the Commission and other County Departments. On July 9, 2019 the Board of Supervisors directed several County departments to collaborate with the Department of Mental Health to establish the Family Assistance Program. The mission of the program is to provide trauma-informed responses, services and support to families, friends and witnesses to all incidents resulting in an in-custody death or fatal use of force at the hands of the Sheriff's Department. The Department of Mental Health began implementing Family Assistance Program in August 2019, the second half of the program's pilot year took place during the first six months of 2020. The Department of Mental Health responded to 45 incidents during the program's pilot year. Of the 45 incidents, the Department of Mental Health reported 51% (23) of the deceased were of Latinx ethnicity, followed by 29% (13) of African American descent and 20% (9) who were Caucasian.

Harassment of Families

Investigation into harassment of families following a fatal use of force of their loved one

The Commission is committed to bridging the gap between the Sheriff's Department and the public. Part of that responsibility involves elevating and addressing the concerns of the community. During various Commission meetings, concerns were raised by families and community members regarding the harassment of families impacted by officer-involved shootings by Sheriff's Department patrol staff. In response, the Commission requested that the Office of Inspector General look into the allegations and share their findings.

On January 16, 2020, Inspector General Max Huntsman presented his office's findings and recommendations during the monthly Commission meeting. Following the Inspector General's presentation, Assistant Sheriff Steven Gross assured the Commission that the Sheriff's Department inquiries into the allegations of harassment were ongoing and that the findings would be shared with the Commission once completed.

PHOTO BELOW
On January 16, 2021, Inspector General Max Huntsman reported back regarding allegations of harassment of families impacted by officer-involved shootings by Sheriff's Department Patrol Staff.

On March 12, 2020, the Commission received Sheriff Villanueva's correspondence regarding the allegations of harassment from deputies of the East Los Angeles, South Los Angeles and Century stations. Sheriff Villanueva outlined the complaint process and summarized the inquiry related to the various allegations of harassment and the dispositions for each personnel complaint. In response to Sheriff Villanueva's correspondence, the Office of Inspector General requested additional documentation to review all complaints of harassment by family members and conduct an independent assessment.

The Office of Inspector General assessment results and recommendations were presented during the December 2020 Commission meeting. The Commission approved a motion to request the Sheriff's Department to develop a policy regarding the treatment of families and the request was forwarded to Sheriff Villanueva immediately following the December Commission meeting.



Looking Forward

Although 2020 provided numerous challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission remains focused on improving transparency and accountability within the Sheriff's Department. The Commission works to build bridges and increase community engagement with stakeholders and the Sheriff's Department. Encouraging respectful dialogue and community inclusion, the Commission will continue to offer opportunities through conferences, town halls and meetings.

Staff and Commissioners continue to monitor feedback from the community, collecting comments and questions from the public and providing that information to the Sheriff. After listening to community feedback and conducting research, Commission staff analyze topics for further action and work with ad hoc committees to prepare recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, the Sheriff's Department and the public. Commission staff will continue to track the progress of recommendations provided to the Sheriff's Department and monitor reports and information provided by the Department.

The communities' values and needs must be at the core of the Commission's work. Effective oversight starts with listening to the community and their expectations of local law enforcement, especially in a County with such diverse populations and vast geographic area. As we continue to support public safety in our neighborhoods, we strive to balance that with protecting the civil rights of the most vulnerable populations.

Acknowledgments

In closing, we are thankful for the support of the Board of Supervisors, the Executive Office and many County departments. Most importantly, as we work to bring effective oversight to the L.A. County Sheriff's Department, none of this would be possible without the continued engagement from dedicated members of the community.

A special thank you to L.A. County Supervisors Hilda L. Solis, Holly J. Mitchell, Sheila Kuehl, Janice Hahn, Kathryn Barger and former Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. Thank you to Executive Officer Celia Zavala and the Executive Office staff for their assistance. You have each put a special trust in us, and we are deeply grateful for your ongoing support.

PHOTO LEFT
The public gathered at the January 16, 2020 Commission meeting at St. Anne's Conference Center in Los Angeles.

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