



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SHERIFF CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT COMMISSION**

Special Hearing on Deputy Gangs in the Sheriff's Department
held at Loyola Marymount University, Robinson Courtroom,
919 Albany Street, Los Angeles, CA 90015
coc.lacounty.gov



Friday, March 3, 2023

Attachment: [Video](#) and Transcript

Present: Chair Sean Kennedy, Robert Bonner, Luis S. Garcia, Patricia Giggans, James P. Harris, Hans Johnson, Lael Rubin, and Interim Executive Director Danielle Butler Vappie

Absent: Vice Chair Jamon Hicks and Irma Hagans Cooper

1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS & CONSENT CALENDAR

Chair Kennedy called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and announced the meeting as the 8th Special Hearing. He advised that Executive Director Brian K. Williams has moved on to work for Los Angeles City and that a nationwide search is being conducted for his replacement. Chair Kennedy then introduced Danielle Butler Vappie as the Interim Executive Director of the Civilian Oversight Commission (COC) and called on her for comments.

Executive Director Vappie thanked Chair Kennedy, the Commission and Pro Bono Counsel for their work on the report to eradicate deputy gangs from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD). Following her comments, Chair Kennedy requested staff call the roll, and a quorum was established. Following the roll, Commissioner Bonner inquired about the process for selecting the next Executive Director and if the Commission will have input in the selection process. Chair Kennedy advised that he would meet with Executive Director Vappie to discuss the Commission's role in the selection process. He then moved to item 2.

2. COMMISSION'S INVESTIGATION REGARDING DEPUTY CLIQUES/GANGS AND EXCLUSIONARY SUBGROUPS WITHIN THE LASD

Chair Kennedy called on the Deputy Gangs Ad Hoc Committee Chair Lael Rubin to share her comments. She thanked the ad hoc committee members and Counsel Bert Deixler for their dedication to eradicate deputy gangs and gave an overview of the steps taken to get to today's conclusion. Commissioner Rubin recalled the lack of cooperation received from the former Sheriff, and thanked Sheriff Robert Luna for his ongoing support on the issue of eradicating deputy gangs. Following Commissioner Rubin's comments, Chair Kennedy then called on Counsel Bert Deixler to summarize the investigative report and recommendations to eradicate deputy gangs.

Report and updates by Commission Chair Sean Kennedy and Counsel Bert H. Deixler

Mr. Deixler summarized his 60-page investigative [report, which includes 27 recommendations](#). He discussed the history of deputy gangs and the damage they have caused the Department and the trauma they have inflicted on the community. He noted that 75 witness interviews were conducted with current and retired LASD employees, which assisted in the report's findings. Mr. Deixler recounted the numerous invitations sent to the former Sheriff and Undersheriff to testify and each invitation was rejected, including ignoring COC's subpoenas. Mr. Deixler provided several examples of inappropriate behavior and misconduct displayed by deputy gang members, including but not limited to, favoritism when assigning deputy shifts and patrol assignments.

Mr. Deixler described "Shot Callers" as deputy gang members who make decisions and ignore the chain-of-command. Decisions include deciding who gets to be a training officer and who can take the day off. He discussed the communities' lack of trust in the Sheriff's Department and noted the enormous amount of money the County has paid out on lawsuits due to ongoing misconduct displayed by deputy gangs. Mr. Deixler advised that to change the culture, all County partners must be involved, and that the Sheriff cannot succeed without the help of the District Attorney, County Counsel and the unions. Mr. Deixler urged the Sheriff to meet with the unions and encourage them to partner with LASD to rid the Department of deputy gangs. Mr. Deixler called on the sheriff to explicitly prohibit deputy gangs and deputy cliques, which are the precursors to deputy gangs, and to be clear and direct when enforcing the policy.

Following Mr. Deixler's comments, Chair Kennedy moved to Commissioner questions. Commissioner Bonner inquired about what can be done to change the culture of LASD, and he inquired if any action was taken against former Sheriff Alex Villanueva and his Chief of Staff Larry Del Mese for their potential obstruction of justice related to the Kennedy Hall incident. Inspector General Max Huntsman stated, "I specifically brought it to the attention of the District Attorney; to my knowledge no meaningful action was taken."

Commissioner Rubin asked if a request can be made to the Attorney General and inquired if interviews were conducted with any Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs (ALADS) union representatives. Mr. Deixler reported there were no interviews with any ALADS representatives but that he welcomes any member to come forward for an interview.

Commissioner Bonner noted that the Commission would welcome the ALADS President to come and share his thoughts on deputy gangs. He also requested the Commission accept the recommendations and immediately forward them to Sheriff Luna, and he noted that Sheriff Luna must make this a top priority for it to be effective. Commissioner Bonner [called for a motion](#), seconded by Commissioner Giggans for the Commission to "approve the Report of the Commission's Special Counsel and that the Commission adopt all of Special Counsel's Recommendations (and there are 27 of them by my count) as Recommendations of the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission. Further, that the Chair of the COC forward the Report and the Recommendations of this Commission forthwith to Sheriff Robert Luna, with the Commission's strong recommendation that he adopt, implement, and enforce the Recommendations with all deliberate speed."

Commissioner Giggans moved that “the Board of Supervisors, specifically and intentionally, receive a copy of our adopted recommendations,” and Commissioner Harris seconded.

Commissioner Rubin inquired if the community groups will have an opportunity to provide input prior to the recommendations being accepted by the Commission. Chair Kennedy deferred Commissioner Rubin’s question and moved to public comment.

Public Comments

There were eight members of the public who provided public comment on this item. Following public comment, Chair Kennedy moved to Commissioner questions.

Commissioner Rubin expressed the need for community groups to contribute to the recommendations prior to the Commission’s vote. Commissioner Bonner urged the Commission to adopt the motion and advised that a supplemental report can be made, which will give the community groups an opportunity to contribute to the recommendations. Commissioner Giggans agreed that the report should be adopted, and a copy forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Deixler agreed to preparing a supplemental report.

Chair Kennedy advised that in the past, the Commission has reviewed reports, discussed the report in detail, and then waited until the next Commission meeting to vote. Commissioner Bonner disagreed with the process and urged the Commission to vote on the recommendations. Following Commissioner comments, Chair Kennedy called for a vote on the motion. Commissioner Bonner’s motion was approved by a vote of 5-2 with the absence of Commissioner Hagans Cooper and Vice Chair Hicks.

Following the vote, Chair Kennedy called for a 15-minute break at 11:00 a.m., and the meeting resumed at 11:15 a.m.

Following the break, Chair Kennedy moved to general public comment.

Public Comments

Six people provided general public comment. View [written public comments here](#). Following public comment, Chair Kennedy called on Mr. Deixler for comments.

Mr. Deixler stated that he provided a member of the public, Michele Infante, with his business card and requested that she coordinate with family members to gather information for his supplemental report. Following Mr. Deixler’s comments, Chair Kennedy called for a vote on Commissioner Giggans’ motion to forward a copy of the recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. Commissioner Giggans’ motion was approved by a vote of 6-0 with the absence of Commissioner Hagans Cooper, Vice Chair Hicks, and Commissioner Bonner.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kennedy announced the next meeting is March 16, 2023, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.