



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE SHERIFF CIVILIAN
OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING HELD
ONLINE AT: coc.lacounty.gov
Thursday, May 18, 2023**



Attachment: [Video](#) and [Audio](#)

Present: Chair Sean Kennedy, Vice Chair Jamon R. Hicks, Robert Bonner, Luis S. Garcia, Patricia Giggans, James Harris, Hans Johnson, and Interim Executive Director Danielle Butler Vappie

Absent: Lael Rubin and Irma Hagans Cooper

1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS & CONSENT CALENDAR

Call to Order: Chair Kennedy called the Commission (Commission) meeting to order at 9:10 a.m., provided an overview of the agenda, requested that staff call the roll, and announced the code of conduct. Chair Kennedy then moved to the consent calendar.

Approval of Consent Calendar: Chair Kennedy called for approval, there being no objection. The April 20, 2023, Commission meeting minutes were adopted unanimously.

Family Impact Remarks: Chair Kennedy advised that no family members asked to make remarks, so he moved to item 2.

There was no public comment on this item.

2. REPORTS & POSSIBLE ACTION

2a. Chair's Report

Chair Kennedy discussed the District Attorney's report on the fatal officer shooting of Andres Guardado, which the District Attorney declined to prosecute. Chair Kennedy recounted the following:

On June 18, 2020, Guardado was shot in the back five times by LASD deputy Manuel Vega. Vega and his partner deputy Hernandez claimed that Guardado was reaching for a gun. A community member (eyewitness) stated that Guardado was not reaching for the gun, which was found 5 feet away from his body. The press reported that deputy Vega and deputy Hernandez were affiliated with a deputy gang. The two Sheriff's Department detectives, Mike Davis and Jo Valencia, conducting the investigation into the Guardado shooting both invoked their Fifth Amendment right at the coroner's inquest and refused to answer questions about their investigation.

Assistant Sheriff (AS) Holly Francisco reported that Sheriff Luna shares the same concerns about the detective's pleading the 5th during the coroner's inquest. AS Francisco advised that the Coroner's office had not conducted an inquiry for over 30 years, and no one understood the process. The Sheriff's Department requested legal advice from County Counsel and they advised that the coroner's inquest was a non-adversarial hearing. AS Francisco advised that

the detectives turned over all confidential reports to the justice officer for review and the justice officer made her determination based on the evidence provided without seeking more information from the detectives. AS Francisco related that County Counsel's advice to the detectives was that Government Code 1040 should be asserted instead of pleading the 5th and that all investigative materials were presented to District Attorney's office on December 19, 2020.

AS Francisco told the Commission that the district attorney has declined to prosecute, and the Sheriff's Department's Internal Affairs Bureau will review the Guardado killing for policy violations.

Chair Kennedy stated that he had no confidence that this investigation was done professionally, in a trustworthy manner, in an objective manner, or with integrity because the District Attorney's Office decided not to prosecute Vega. How can the public have any confidence in this investigation in light of these revelations? Chair Kennedy requested that staff invite District Attorney George Gascon to speak about the matter at the June 15 Commission meeting.

Chair Kennedy then moved to item 2b.

2b. Executive Director's Report

Interim Executive Director Danielle Butler Vappie announced to the Commission that Commissioner Lael Rubin's last day was going to be June 1st. She thanked Commissioner Rubin for her commitment to the Commission for the past six years. Butler Vappie also announced that we would be accepting applications to fill the vacant seat and instructed those interested to visit the COC website for more information.

In addition, Butler Vappie reported that the COC hosted a conference on Los Angeles County Jails on May 4th titled "Life inside a 6x8 cell" and informed the public that other virtual conference sessions will be on May 22, May 31, and June 12. Butler Vappie also reported that the COC held a community event was held in Palmdale on May 13, and that a town hall will be held on June 24 in Compton at the Florence Library. Chair Kennedy then moved to item 2c.

2c. Office of Inspector General (OIG) Report

Max Huntsman stated that a report is being prepared that will provide an update on the progress made in addressing law enforcement gangs and highlighting the Sheriff's Department's problems that have contributed to the failure to address the issue adequately. Following Mr. Huntsman's comments, Chair Kennedy called for commissioner questions and comments and then moved to item 2d.

2d. Commissioner Comments / Ad Hoc Committee Updates

Commissioner Hans Johnson reported on the Quality of Life ad hoc. Commissioner Johnson discussed a couple incidents where Sheriff's Department deputies' behavior seemed inhumane and out of policy: in one incident, deputies mistakenly entered a home and detained

a minor while ignoring pleas from the minor's mother over the homes security system; the second incident involved deputies mistakenly entering the home of a Black male and making him exit his home handcuffed and without pants. On behalf of the ad hoc committee, Commissioner Johnson moved to direct staff to request policies, data, and other information from the Sheriff's Department relevant to these situations. Commissioner Garcia seconded the motion. After a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Boner reported on the Use of Force ad hoc on how several commissioners and staff participated in a Taser demonstration provided by the Sheriff's Department on May 12.

There were no further updates and Chair Kennedy then moved to item 2e.

2e. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Update

Captain Jennifer Seetoo provided an overview of Sheriff's Department's drone pilot program, which is currently being tested in Malibu, Lancaster, and West Hollywood. The pilot program will be in effect for approximately one year. Captain Seetoo advised that the drones will be used in limited instances, such as on rescue missions, to help locate missing persons, for disaster response, during active shooter incidents, for mapping and photographing crime scenes, and for traffic collision scenes.

After the presentation, Chair Kennedy asked for questions from the commissioners.

Commissioner Bonner instructed staff to circulate the Commission's report on the *Unarmed Aircraft System Program of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department* on September 28, 2017.

Following commissioner's comments, Chair Kennedy moved to public comment. There were ten people who made public comment on this item.

Following public comment, Chair Kennedy called for a 15-minute break at 11:01 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 11:16 a.m. Present were Chair Sean Kennedy, Vice Chair Jamon R. Hicks, Robert Bonner, Patti Giggans, Luis S. Garcia, James P. Harris, Hans Johnson, and Interim Executive Director Danielle Butler Vappie. Following the break, Chair Kennedy moved to item 3a.

3. DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION

3a. Family Assistance Program

Miriam A. Brown, Deputy Director from the Department of Public Health, presented on the Family Assistance Program. Ms. Brown provided an overview of the program since its inception in 2019. She informed the Commission that the Family Assistant Advocates are trained professionals from the Department of Health who immediately respond to the scene of a fatal use of force incident. Their role is to assist the families with coping, healing, and recovering from the traumatic incidents of fatal use of force. The permanent Family Assistance Program will transition to the Office of Violence Prevention.

Andrea Welsing, Director of the Department of Public Health, Office of Violence Prevention, spoke on how the Office of Violence Prevention strengthens collaboration, capacity, and partnerships to prevent multiple forms of violence and promote healing across communities in LA County. She highlighted the early implementation priorities of the Family Assistance Program. The goal is to use a trauma-informed, peer approach to provide support services for grieving families and improve the efficiency of the process across systems. She reported that the office will continue to build on best practices established from the Department of Public Health's pilot and will continue to coordinate with all partners such as the Department of Public Health, the Sheriff's Department, the Office of Inspector General, and the COC.

Erika Bonilla, from the Chief Executive Office, provided an overview of the Board of Supervisors motion established in October 2021 directing the Office of Inspector General, the Department of Public Health's Office of Violence Prevention, and the Commission, in consultation with other County departments, to report back with recommendations to make Family Assistance Program permanent. Ms. Bonilla also discussed the money earmarked for this purpose.

Following the presentation, Chair Kennedy asked for commissioner comments and questions. Chair Kennedy moved to item 3b after commissioner comments.

3b. Deputies in Health Facilities

Commissioner Garcia provided a brief overview of deputies in health facilities. The Commission first took on this matter at June 2021 Commission meeting. In September 2021, the Commission agreed that staff would request information and a staff report was presented at the January 2022 Commission meeting. The staff report attached to the agenda is an update on the issue.

Following the presentation, Chair Kennedy asked for commissioner comments and questions. Chair Kennedy then moved to item 4.

Chair Kennedy took public comment on agenda items 3 and 4 together.

4. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were eight public who made public comment on items 3 and 4.

Read the written public comment that was submitted for this meeting [here](#).

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.