



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE SHERIFF CIVILIAN
OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING HELD AT
ST. ANNE'S CONFERENCE AND EVENT CENTER
Thursday, July 20, 2023**



Attachment: [Video](#)

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

1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS & CONSENT CALENDAR

Call to Order: Chair Kennedy called the Civilian Oversight Commission (Commission) meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. Chair Kennedy provided a brief overview of the work of the Commission and noted that Commission does not conduct investigations and that it is an advisory agency. Chair Kennedy gave an overview of the agenda and the code of conduct, and then called on staff to take roll. Following roll call, Chair Kennedy moved to the consent calendar. There were no objections to the consent calendar, so he called for public comment.

No members of the public signed up to comment on this item.

Approval of Consent Calendar: Chair Kennedy called for approval of the consent calendar, there being no objections, the June 15, 2023 minutes were adopted.

Family Impact Remarks: Chair Kennedy advised there were no requests for family impact remarks. Chair Kennedy acknowledged the presence of Sheriff Robert Luna and moved to item 2e.

2. REPORTS & POSSIBLE ACTION

2e. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Update

Sheriff Luna informed the Commission that he sent an update regarding the deputy gang report recommendations for review and advised that the update provides an overview of the progress LASD has made toward implementing the recommendations and the challenges they are facing. Sheriff Luna thanked Eileen Decker Head of Constitutional Policing for her work and noted that progress is being made.

Commissioner Bonner thanked Sheriff Luna and Eileen Decker for their efforts on eradicating deputy gangs and deputy cliques from the Sheriff's department.

Interim Executive Director Butler Vappie advised that some of the Commissioners had not received the update and that she would forward it to them.

Sheriff Luna reported on the incidents that took place in Lancaster and Palmdale and advised that the issue has been turned over to the FBI and the CA Attorney General's Office for investigation and that all questions should be referred to the FBI for comment.

Commissioner Bonner expressed his approval and thanked Sheriff Luna for his leadership and for releasing the body camera videos. Commissioners Hagans Cooper and Giggans echoed Commissioner Bonner's praise. Commissioner Johnson expressed appreciation for Sheriff Luna calling the Antelope Valley incidents "disturbing" but also expressed concern over the one-year limit to discipline deputies for misconduct.

Sheriff Luna stated that his perspective is "to hold individual employees accountable for their actions." Sheriff Luna advised that he is currently reviewing systems that are in place and how investigations are being conducted, and who is conducting them. Sheriff Luna advised that he is also searching for deficiencies in the LASD Use of Force policies, and that Ms. Decker is currently working on updating the policies. Sheriff Luna stated that changes are taking place and that he would provide and update on policy changes publicly and to the Commission when they are ready. Following Sheriff Luna's comments, Chair Kennedy called on Commissioner questions and comments.

Commissioner Bonner expressed concern over the one-year tracking system for discipline and questioned if Sheriff Luna is confident that the system is adequate to ensure discipline is not escaped by the lapse of the one-year.

Inspector General Max Huntsman advised that LASD has a reasonable tracking system and that investigations are delayed for numerous reasons. Huntsman advised that his previous chief deputy wrote a detailed report in 2021 on the discipline system with multiple recommendations for improvement and that no changes have been made. Mr. Huntsman stated that LASD needs specific policies that give deputies directions on what they can and cannot do.

Commissioner Cooper expressed concern with follow-up and that monitoring be maintained to ensure that the culture is changing. Sheriff Luna reported that Ms. Decker and the Office of Constitutional Policing will play a major role when dealing with the issue.

Commissioner Johnson requested an updated directive be distributed to Watch Commanders to ensure Sybil Brand Commissioners are permitted to visit and view jail conditions unescorted at the facilities.

Following Sheriff Luna's comments, Chair Kennedy moved to public comment.

There were 5 members of the public who commented on this item. Chair Kennedy then returned to item 2a.

2a. Chair's Report

Chair Kennedy reported that District Attorney George Gascón (DA Gascón) was invited to come and address the Commission about the shooting of Andres Guardado and that DA Gascón declined the invitation and requested the Commission to submit written questions to be addressed. Chair Kennedy reported that the Commission submitted the questions to DA Gascón and noted that due to legal privileges, the DA's answers to the questions were limited. Chair Kennedy reported that the Commission forwarded all the materials related to the

Guardado case to an independent body that the DA established. Chair Kennedy also expressed concern over the Commission's limited authority and advised that the Commission does not have oversight over the DA. Chair Kennedy then called on Commissioners for comments.

Commissioner Bonner agreed that the DA Gascón's response to the questions was insufficient and informed the Commission about a recent article in the Los Angeles Times newspaper indicating that the State Attorney General's office is looking into the Andres Guardado case to determine if the case should be investigated further. Chair Kennedy then moved to item 2b.

2b. Executive Director's Report

Interim Executive Director Butler Vappie announced that the Commission participated in various community events and hosted a virtual conference titled *Investigations of Fatal Officer Shootings* that included Vice Chair Hicks as the moderator with participation from the DA, OIG, LASD, and the Medical Examiner. Interim Executive Director Butler Vappie advised that the recording of the conference is available on our YouTube channel, Facebook page, and website at coc.lacounty.gov. She further announced the Commission's upcoming virtual conference series on deputies in schools, which will be held in three sessions on July 27th, July 31st, and August 3rd. Also, the Commission will be hosting its Annual Community Policing Conference, which is planned for October 2023. More information on the Commission's events can be obtained by visiting coc.lacounty.gov. Interim Executive Director Butler Vappie reported that the Commission still has 1 vacancy for a community commissioner and that interested parties should apply at coc.lacounty.gov.

Following Interim Executive Director Butler Vappie's report, Chair Kennedy moved to item 2c.

2c. Office of Inspector General (OIG) Report

Inspector General Max Huntsman stated that his deputy gang investigation is on hold pending a court order and that OIG is waiting on County Counsel to determine if they will appeal the order and the negotiations with the union. Mr. Huntsman complimented the Sheriff for engaging with his command staff and for his response made during the press conference related to the two Antelope Valley incidents.

Commissioner Bonner inquired if the County is going to appeal the judge's ruling on the issue or not. Mr. Huntsman advised that he has requested County Counsel to appeal the matter but cannot confirm if they will.

Commissioner Johnson inquired about the OIG's report on conditions in jails, specifically the cold temperature, deaths from hypothermia, and the Sheriff's failure to provide incarcerated people with thermal garments. Mr. Huntsman advised that the issue is being addressed.

Following Mr. Huntsman's comments, Chair Kennedy moved to item 2d.

2d. Commissioner Comments / Ad Hoc Committee Updates

Commissioner Bonner reported on deputy gangs/cliques and stated that the ad hoc committee will review the Sheriff's updates regarding the adoption of the recommendations and will follow up with the Sheriff and Ms. Eileen Decker after the review.

Following Commissioner comments, Chair Kennedy moved to public comment.

Nine members of the public signed up to make comment on this item.

Chair Kennedy then moved to item 3a.

3. DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION

3.a. Nominations for the election of Chair and Vice Chair

Chair Kennedy announced elections for Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission as the next topic and advised that nominations were made by Commissioner Bonner seconded by Commissioner Harris during the previous meeting and opened the floor for any other nominations. Interim Executive Director Butler Vappie advised that a motion was made during the previous meeting and called on staff to call the roll. The vote was unanimous for the re-election of Sean Kennedy as Chair and Jamon R. Hicks as Vice Chair.

There were no public comments made on this item.

Following the vote, Chair Kennedy called for a 15-minute recess at 10:20 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 10:35 a.m. Present were Chair Sean Kennedy, Vice Chair Jamon R. Hicks, Robert Bonner, Luis S. Garcia, James P. Harris, and Interim Executive Director Danielle Butler Vappie. Following the break, Chair Kennedy moved to item 3b.

3.b. Mental Evaluation Team (MET) Update

Chair Kennedy introduced MET as the next topic and advised that the Commission previously made recommendations in the past, to increase the MET teams. Chair Kennedy introduced the speakers: Miriam Brown, Deputy Director of Mental Health, Emergency Outreach and Triage Division; Captain Jeffrey Deedrick, LASD; and Mark Gale, Criminal Justice Chair of the Greater Los Angeles National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

Ms. Brown provided an overview of the MET program and reported that there has been a reduction in clinicians doing field work and that there has been a nationwide shortage since COVID. She discussed the implementation of alternatives to crisis response and stated that they are looking to increase mobile crisis teams with civilians and soliciting providers from the private sector to fill the vacancies. There is a lack of clinicians because most are seeking telework assignments. Ms. Brown stated that the Board of Supervisors tasked her office with developing incentives to attract clinicians. She advised that her office is working to establish a hiring and retention bonus and to increase the shift differential for individuals who work weekends and nights. Following Ms. Brown's presentation, Chair Kennedy called the next speaker.

Captain Deedrick shared a brief PowerPoint presentation discussing LASD's 24/7 MET triage desk consisting of a co-response team that partners a deputy sheriff with a mental health clinician and is maintained weekly, 365 days a year. Captain Deedrick reported 35 MET units are now available and that their goal is to have 60 units. Captain Deedrick advised that MET

response time is down to 29.5 minutes from 50 minutes. He went on to inform the Commission about the Risk Assessment Management Program, an investigative team that monitors chronic and high-risk cases, and the LASD's Intake Booking Diversion pilot program and the benefits they each provide. Captain Deedrick also discussed LASD's Crisis Intervention & De-Escalation Training, Mental Health Training, and the Veterans Mental Health Team. Captain Deedrick advised that MET falls under the Community Partnership Bureau, which he oversees, and that they collaborate with the Homeless Outreach Services Team to enhance community relationships. He noted that community engagement is a priority. Captain Deedrick discussed MET and public relations intervention training and reported that the City of Industry donated a new training trailer. Following Captain Deedrick's presentation, Chair Kennedy called the next speaker.

Mark Gale provided an overview of the County Crisis Response options. He identified 911 as law enforcement and 988 as the Department of Mental Health and discussed their benefits and challenges. Mr. Gale expressed the need for LASD to train all patrol deputies in crisis intervention. Mr. Gale expressed concern over workforce safety for field clinicians and the need for more community-based non-law enforcement responses to people in crisis. Mr. Gale voiced concern over limited staff and expansion challenges. He also discussed training conducted by National Alliance on Mental Illness, LAPD, and LASD and advised that NAMI should be involved with Crisis Intervention Training. Following Mr. Gale's presentation, Chair Kennedy called for Commissioner questions and comments.

Commissioner Giggans praised DMH and LASD for their commitment to supporting MET.

Commissioner Bonner questioned if 60 MET units would reduce the MET response time and if the lack of hiring clinicians is a budget issue or the inability to hire clinicians. Captain Deedrick advised that additional MET teams could reduce response time and that staff shortages are an issue for both departments. Captain Deedrick also mentioned that MET was unable to respond to 1300 calls.

Assistant Sheriff Holly Francisco advised that LASD is working on recruitment and that more deputies will be relocated to MET once the staff increases. Commissioner Bonner also inquired if the goal of MET is to respond to all 5150 calls and if they're part of the 1300 calls that LASD did not respond to. Captain Deedrick advised that the 5150 calls are part of the calls that LASD could not respond to.

Ms. Brown reported that workplace safety is a concern for clinicians and that that's part of the difficulty in hiring more clinicians. She advised that they want to include peer support specialists who are community health workers with personal experience with a family member. Ms. Brown also reported that many clinicians are against working with law enforcement.

Mr. Gale expressed concern about the 1300 calls that MET did not respond to and what happened to the families. Chair Kennedy shared concern about MET needing to be a priority.

Captain Deedrick stated that the 1300 calls came from various entities, including CHP and outside agencies. He offered to provide the Commission with data on all MET requests that did not receive a response.

Commissioner Cooper questioned if Ms. Brown has contacted Veteran Affairs for recruitment efforts if she has attended veterans' health fairs, and what type of individuals she is looking to hire. Ms. Brown reported that DMH is searching for licensed clinicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, and community health workers for peer resource specialists with lived experience.

Commissioner Cooper inquired about the data retrieved from the triage desk and how they use it. Captain Deedrick advised that LASD uses the data from the triage desk to improve services and expand growth.

Commissioner Harris expressed concern with the limited amount of MILO training and that MILO and CIT training needs to be ongoing.

Commissioner Garcia suggested providing more community education to families. Ms. Brown advised that SMART has a brochure with contact information and that 988 became the mental health hotline. Following Commissioner questions and comments, Chair Kennedy moved to item 3c.

3.c. Taser

Chair Kennedy introduced the next topic and acknowledged speakers Amy Nguyen, Axon, Carl Douglas, Civil Rights Attorney, and Kalfani Turé, Assistant Professor Mt. St. Mary's University. Chair Kennedy called on Commissioner Johnson, who thanked the ad hoc committee members for their input on the report and urged everyone to read it. Commissioner Johnson reported that several Commissioners recently attended the new Taser 10 device demonstration and that LASD will implement a pilot program of the Taser 10 device at Men's Central Jail, North County Correctional Center, and Century Station. Commissioner Johnson reported that the Taser ad hoc committee reviewed LASD's report, and it recommends that the Commission request LASD to consult with OIG and revise the Taser policies and procedures; post taser use on their website to maintain transparency; and forward a written report of the Taser 10 device pilot program to the Commission. Following Commissioner Johnson's comments, Chair Kennedy introduced Amy Nguyen as the next speaker.

Ms. Nguyen gave a brief overview of her background and shared a PowerPoint presentation on the effects of taser use. Ms. Nguyen discussed the history of tasers and shared the Axon mission. She provided statistics on taser use and advised that based on research, the taser offers the least number of injuries and is the safest, less lethal use of force tool.

Ms. Nguyen provided statistics on fatalities and injuries and noted that Axon continues to improve on each model and conducts pre-testing before release. Following Ms. Nguyen's presentation, Chair Kennedy introduced Attorney Carl Douglas.

Mr. Douglas thanked the Commission for inviting him to come and speak. Mr. Douglas shared with the Commission an incident involving Keenan Anderson who was experiencing a mental health episode when he was approached by LASD. LASD failed to de-escalate the situation and tased him six times in the back. Mr. Anderson ultimately died after being tased. Mr. Douglas noted that all deputies who graduate from the academy are not trained to deal with mental health. Mr. Douglas discussed neuromuscular incapacity and noted that tasers are designed to incapacitate. He suggested the Commission gather data on the effects of taser use. Mr. Douglas described the painful reaction of a tased individual and voiced concern that a deputy may misinterpret the individual's movements as resisting and further exacerbate the

situation. Mr. Douglas also expressed concern with the similar look and feel of the taser gun to a handgun and stated that there have been "high profile mistakes made by officers in the height and stress of the moment hoping and intending to pull their taser and pulling their gun instead." Following Mr. Douglas' presentation, Chair Kennedy introduced Professor Kalfani Turé as the next speaker.

Professor Kalfani Turé addressed the Commission and advised that he is an Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice and African America Studies, trained in qualitative social science. Professor Turé informed the Commission that he has researched "the nature of policing and race, as well as the nature of police discretion and use of force." Professor Turé noted that he had provided expert opinion to multiple media members on police incidents of use of force. Professor Turé discussed the use of force continuum and shared a series of resources a deputy can choose from. Professor Turé discussed taser use on individuals who may be under the influence of a controlled substance or who have a preexisting condition, such as chronic heart disease that predisposes them to death because of the taser and noted that the numbers disproportionately represented low-income Black and brown communities. Professor Turé pointed out that law enforcement officers are not trained medical personnel and that they are unaware of the damage caused to the body by a taser, and that he has called for a moratorium on taser use "until practitioners are more proficient on its usage." Professor Turé suggested identifying a more humane way of dealing with crime by looking into co-responder and focusing more on de-escalation.

Following Professor Turé's comments, Chair Kennedy advised that the Commission plans to discuss and vote on the ad hoc committee's report and that, due to time constraints, discussion of this matter will be continued to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Chair Kennedy also announced that public comment on items 3 and 4 would be combined and then moved to public comment.

4. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Eight members of the public signed up to make comment on items 3 and 4.

View written public comment [here](#).

5. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kennedy announced the next commission meeting will be held in person on September 21, 2023, location to be announced. The meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m.