



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE SHERIFF CIVILIAN
OVERSIGHT COMMISSION HELD AT
ST. ANNE'S CONFERENCE AND EVENT CENTER
Thursday, November 9, 2023**



Attachment: [Video](#)

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

1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS & CONSENT CALENDAR

Call to Order: Chair Kennedy called the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (Commission) meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. Chair Kennedy gave an overview of the agenda, acknowledged the presence of Sheriff Robert Luna and extended condolences for the passing of four LASD deputies who died by suicide. Chair Kennedy then called on staff to take roll.

Following roll call, Chair Kennedy moved to the consent calendar and asked if Commissioners wanted to comment. There being no comments, Chair Kennedy asked for public comment.

No members of the public signed up to comment on item 1.

Approval of Consent Calendar: Chair Kennedy called for approval of the consent calendar, there being no objections, the [October 19, 2023, minutes](#) were adopted unanimously.

Family Impact Remarks: Chair Kennedy advised there were two requests for family impact remarks and acknowledged Stephanie Luna, aunt of Anthony Vargas, who shared remarks. Following Ms. Luna's remarks, Chair Kennedy called on Selena Coleman who shared her remarks.

2. REPORTS & POSSIBLE ACTION

Chair Kennedy advised that Sheriff Luna could not stay for the entire meeting and moved to item 2f.

2f. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Update

Sheriff Luna advised that in 2020 a policy on harassment of families was developed by LASD and that the policy was amended to include memorials and vigils in 2022. Sheriff Luna briefly discussed LASD's policy on harassment of families.

Commissioner Johnson questioned if Sheriff Luna thought the current policy is adequate based on the remarks made today. Sheriff Luna advised he will have to research the allegations to determine if the policy was followed.

Chief Deputy Inspector General Dara Williams reported that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) produced a report in November of 2020 and a follow-up report in July 2021, regarding the issue and that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) directed LASD to develop an updated policy. Chief Deputy IG Williams reported that OIG met with LASD in December 2021 to review

the newsletter that was in draft form, and that OIG forwarded a letter to Commander Jaeger on December 3, 2021, requesting to discuss the policy and that the meeting never took place. Chief Deputy IG Williams reported that she had not seen the policy since it was in draft form and that she was unaware of LASD's policy. Chief Deputy IG Williams suggested that LASD policies be placed in the manual of policy and procedure rather than a newsletter, which covers all departmental activities and refers to the disciplinary actions. Chief Deputy IG Williams also advised that she is unsure if OIG's recommendations from December 3, 2021, are included in the current policy. Chief Deputy IG Williams reported that OIG sent a validation draft of the OIG report card at the end of 2022 informing Sheriff Luna that no progress had been made. She also noted that the LASD complaint form has several inconsistencies and limited checkboxes making it difficult for complainants to complete the form and that the "Watch Commander Service comment report forms" need to be more user friendly.

Chair Kennedy questioned if its normal for policies and procedures to be listed in a newsletter rather than in the policy and procedure manual. Chief Deputy IG Williams advised there are unit orders only adopted by a specific unit and advised that LASD policies and procedures should be uniform and in one place for all deputies to adhere to and not to be developed for one specific unit.

Sheriff Luna advised that he will research the matter further and add harassment of grieving families as a top priority. Sheriff Luna reported that LASD will continue to communicate with OIG and reported that an extensive review of LASD policies and practices on training, deputy gangs, use of force, and hate crimes is being conducted by labor unions and LASD's Office of Constitutional Policing.

Commissioner Bonner requested Sheriff Luna make deputy gangs a priority and to develop a policy to eliminate deputy gangs and deputy cliques from LASD. Commissioner Bonner suggested the ad hoc committee draft a policy and present it to the Sheriff to discuss.

Sheriff Luna responded and advised that LASD has a policy in place for deputy gangs and that a separate policy is not necessary. Sheriff Luna advised he would investigate the matter further and if misconduct is proven, employees will be held accountable.

Commissioner Bonner suggested a specific policy be developed for harassment of family members whose loved ones have died at the hands of LASD. Chair Kennedy tasked the deputy gangs ad hoc committee to draft a policy on harassment of families. Commissioner Johnson recommended inviting an ALADS representative to speak to the Commission.

Sheriff Luna went on to report that four deputies lost their lives lost due to suicide and expressed condolences to families and department members affected. Sheriff Luna reported that grief counselors were available 24 hours a day 7 days a week to all LASD staff surrounding the four deaths and noted that employee wellness is a top priority. Sheriff Luna stated in August 2023, the Risk Management Bureau partnered with the Psychological Service Bureau to develop a suicide prevention campaign within the department.

Sheriff Luna further reported that he and other LASD members attended the Commission's annual Community Policing Conference. He also advised that LASD continues to hold community dialogue meetings and that LASD recently held one in Lancaster and that previous community dialogue have been held in Palmdale, Compton, South L.A. and that one was being held in East Los Angeles this evening. Sheriff Luna reported that Palmdale, Lancaster, and East Los Angeles now have two Captains assigned to those stations. Following Sheriff Luna's comments, Chair Kennedy moved to item 2a.

2a. Chair's Report

Chair Kennedy reminded the Commission about the incident involving news journalist Josie Huang, who was slammed to the ground and arrested for recording deputies with her telephone who were making an arrest. Chair Kennedy inquired if there is policy in place for journalist recording LASD arrest or protest incidents. Sheriff Luna advised he is not familiar with the case and will need to research department records. Chair Kennedy suggested the Commission's Use of Force ad hoc committee communicate with LASD on this issue.

Chief Deputy IG Williams reported that MPP-0-31/0816 policy covers photography, audio, and videotaping by the public and the press. She discussed the 2023 OIG report card and noted several videos available publicly showing LASD actively discouraging members of the public from recording.

Commissioner Hagans Cooper requested a copy of the policy, and Sheriff Luna advised that the policy is available online. Commissioner Bonner called on staff to provide a copy of the policy to Commissioners. Chair Kennedy requested the Use of Force ad hoc committee to review the policy to determine if it is appropriate to ensure that reporters can safely report the news about LASD. Chair Kennedy then moved to item 2b.

2b. Executive Director's Report

Chair Kennedy reported that Interim Executive Director Vappie is unavailable and that a new Executive Director has been identified and will be starting soon. Chair Kennedy then moved to item 2c.

2c. Office of Inspector General Report

Chief Deputy IG Dara Williams reported that several OIG reports will be forthcoming at the end of the year and that OIG plans to publish a report card for 2023 along with a comprehensive report card on previous recommendations made that may not have been addressed. Chief Deputy IG Williams advised that the policy was forwarded to Chair Kennedy and Commissioner Bonner. Following the OIG report, Chair Kennedy moved to item 2d.

2d. Commissioner Comments/Ad Hoc Committee Update

Commissioner Bonner reported on deputy gangs and the subpoena that was issued for former Sheriff Alex Villanueva and Undersheriff Timothy Murakami to testify before the Commission on deputy gangs, cliques, and sub-groups. He recommended the Commission continue to pursue the issue and noted that the investigation is still open. Commissioner Bonner reported that once testimony is received from former Sheriff Villanueva and Undersheriff Murakami, the Commission anticipates special counsel will augment the report that was submitted in early

2023. Commissioner Bonner stated that it has been a two-years process. He stated that County Counsel was directed at the October 19, 2023, meeting to proceed forthwith the petition the Superior Court to order former Sheriff Villanueva and Undersheriff Murakami to testify before this Commission. Commissioner Bonner requested the petition be filed and requested County Counsel provide a timeline of when the petition will be filed.

County Counsel, Amara Kirby, advised that outside counsel is drafting the petition and that she anticipates being able to share it with the Commission next week. Commissioner Bonner recommended County Counsel give outside counsel a timeline to file the petition. Commissioner Bonner requested that County Counsel file the petition within a week to get an order from Superior Court requiring Alex Villanueva and Timothy Murakami to appear before this Commission and provide their testimony under oath at our next meeting on December 14, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. Following Commissioner comments, Chair Kennedy moved to item 2e.

2e. Sybil Brand Commission

Chair Kennedy introduced Eric Miller, a member of the Sybil Brand Commission, who discussed conditions in the jails and advised that the Sybil Brand Commission sent a letter to the BOS describing serious concerns with conditions in the jails including the Inmate Reception Center, Twin Towers and Central Regional Detention Center. Mr. Miller highlighted concerns with in-custody deaths, lack of mental health treatment for those incarcerated, unsanitary jail conditions, overcrowding, and understaffing. He expressed serious concern over inadequate supervision of people with significant mental illness in the jails not being monitored, which makes them vulnerable. He stated that LASD has been notified repeatedly about the ongoing issue.

Following Commissioner comments, Chair Kennedy moved to public comment. No members of the public signed up to comment on item 2.

3. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

Chair Kennedy advised that the Commission was informed that an MOU between the Commission and LASD is required for ad hoc committees to receive confidential information from LASD. Chair Kennedy reported that the Commission has requested County Counsel to draft an MOU on numerous occasions but continues to experience ongoing delays, which makes it difficult for the Commission to provide meaningful oversight.

Commissioner Bonner stated that agenda item 3 should read “MOU permitting ad hoc committees of the Commission to receive confidential documents, reports and information,” rather than the full Commission due to Brown Act restrictions. Commissioner Bonner went on to state that on occasion “the Commission needs to see reports and information that are privileged or confidential under the police officers bill of rights or related statutes.” He proposed bypassing County Counsel and moving forward with drafting the MOU and forwarding it to Sheriff Luna for review and approval signature. Commissioner Bonner made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Giggans.

Following Commissioner comments, Chair Kennedy moved to public comment. There was one member of the public who commented on item 3.

VOTE ON THE MOTION

Following public comment, Chair Kennedy called for a vote on the motion to have the Commission draft the MOU granting access to protected confidential information and forward it to Sheriff Luna for review and approval. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Bonner commented on new deputy gangs possibly forming in the East L.A. Sheriff station and County Jails, and he suggested the Chair consult with special counsel about conducting additional special hearings into the continued existence of deputy gangs, cliques, and sub-groups within the LASD.

Following the vote, Chair Kennedy called for a 15-minute recess at 11:00 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 11:15 a.m. Present were Chair Sean Kennedy, Vice Chair Jamon R. Hicks, Robert Bonner, Irma Hagans Cooper, Luis S. Garcia, Patti Giggans, James P. Harris, and Hans Johnson. Following the break, Chair Kennedy moved to item 4.

4. HARASSMENT OF FAMILIES

Chair Kennedy announced the next topic and introduced Rebecca Brown from Check the Sheriff, who gave a [presentation](#) and discussed various cases surrounding the harassment of grieving families. Ms. Brown's provided several recommendations to LASD.

Chair Kennedy then asked Chief Deputy IG Williams to comment. Chief Deputy IG Williams stated that several of the recommendations from Check the Sheriff, the OIG has made in some form or another in their reports. She reiterated that the community could submit complaints to the OIG's office about LASD misconduct. The reason why the community should submit the complaint about LASD to the OIG is for preservation of evidence, if there is associated video with the complaint.

Commissioner Bonner asked that staff get a copy of LASD's policy on harassment of family for the Commission to review.

Following Commissioner comments, Chair Kennedy called for public comment. There were fourteen members of the public who commented on item 4.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were six members of the public who commented on item 5.

View written public comments by clicking [here](#).

6. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kennedy advised the next Commission meeting will be held on December 14, 2023, at Peck Park in San Pedro. The meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.