



Charlotte City Council
Housing, Safety & Community Committee
Meeting Summary for August 4, 2025

COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

1. Citizens Review Board

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Committee Members Present:	Victoria Watlington (CMGC), LaWana Mayfield (CMGC), Dimple Ajmera (CMGC), Tiawana Brown (CMGC), Reneé Johnson (CMGC)
Committee Members Absent:	n/a
Other Council Members Present:	Dante Anderson
Staff Resources:	Shawn Heath, City Manager's Office Stephanie Kelly, City Clerk's Office
Guests:	John Watkins, Citizens Review Board Chair Brittenay Causieestko-Lee, Citizens Review Board Vice-Chair
Meeting Duration:	4:00 – 5:30 PM

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

City Council member Watlington called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Citizens Review Board

John Watkins and Brittenay Causieestko-Lee provided an overview of the Citizens Review Board (CRB), including its purpose, composition and examples of its advisory role. They also shared three key recommendations for Council consideration that were included in the CRB's annual report previously shared with City Council.

1. Modify annual CRB membership training from a requirement of 8 hours to 4 hours given that available training is largely repetitive.
2. Allocate two scholarships for members of the board to attend the annual conference of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE).
3. Amend City Ordinance to give the Police Chief and City Manager more time to review and respond to CRB recommendations (currently 7 days).

Highlights of Committee discussion:

- Expressed interest in reviewing the actual ordinance that created and governs the CRB (Chapter 16; Article II; Division 2; Section 16.56–64).
- Expressed interest in seeing the most recent CRB annual report in its entirety.
- Requested a summary of any current city boards and commissions where members receive a stipend.
- Noted that the City Clerk's webpage indicates individuals with felony or misdemeanor convictions, as well as CMPD employees and their relatives, are precluded from CRB membership, and expressed interest in discussing this further.
- Requested additional details on costs associated with the recommendation for conference scholarships and travel.
- Expressed interest in understanding the Chief's position on the recommendation to amend the ordinance to allow more time for review of CRB recommendations.

Additionally, a committee member expressed interest in discussing local implications of potential federal funding reductions related to – for example – rental assistance / housing vouchers

Next Meeting

Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:15 pm. The next meeting will occur on September 2, 2025.

MEETING MATERIALS

All meeting materials are available online at the [Charlotte Legistar Site](#). City Council Committee meeting videos and transcripts can be viewed on the [City of Charlotte's YouTube channel](#) (August 4, 2025 meeting link: <https://youtu.be/Zall2ETtIF8?t=21622>).

Citizens Review Board

DISCUSSION WITH HOUSING, SAFETY & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
AUGUST 4, 2025 JOHN WATKINS - CHAIR

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WHAT IS THE CITIZENS REVIEW BOARD?

- ▶ Independent board to hear citizen appeals challenging certain CMPD disciplinary decisions.
- ▶ CRB category of appeals: use of force, unbecoming conduct, arrest, search and seizure, arbitrary profiling, neglect of duty, discharge of weapon resulting in death or injury.
- ▶ Since inception: 113 appeals, high 13, low 0, Avg 4/yr

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WHO ARE THE BOARD MEMBERS?

- ▶ Eleven Member board created in 1997
- ▶ Appointments by the Mayor (3), City Manager (3), City Council (5) for a 3-year term, max 2 terms
- ▶ Supported by City Clerk's Office and legal counsel selected by the City Attorney's Office
- ▶ A representative, cross-section of the Charlotte community
- ▶ Required to complete CMPD Citizens Training Academy (12wks-2hrs/session/wk) field and classroom, and complete 8 additional hours of training each year.

WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE?

- ▶ Dual Role:
 - Review Citizens Appeals:
 - Review complete **internal affairs case file** within 45 days (4-10 hrs) – BWC, recorded interviews, written transcripts and documents
 - Conduct in-person **initial hearing** (2-3 hrs) – Citizen and CMPD
 - If necessary, conduct **evidentiary hearing** within 45 days with witnesses and cross-examinations to determine if CMPD erred with their findings (5-8 hrs). – Courtroom procedures
 - Advisory Role: We make recommendations when our case reviews reveal trends or frequent recurring issues that may be addressed through potential policy modifications. These recommendations are made to the Chief immediately, and we advise the City Manager and City Council in our annual report.

EXAMPLES OF ADVISORY ROLE

- ▶ Research and advice on the Use of Force Continuum – when and how much force.
- ▶ De-escalation emphasis and training – time, distance and patience
- ▶ Enhancements to communications between officers and to Citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

- ▶ Modify annual training from a requirement of 8 hours to 4 hours given that available training is largely repetitive.
- ▶ Allocate two scholarships for members of the board to attend the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) Annual Conference.
- ▶ Amend City Ordinance to give Chief and City Manager more time to review and respond to CRB recommendations. Currently 7 days.