

# Port of Seattle

## Police Civil Service Commission

Commissioner Oris Dunham  
Commissioner Debrena Jackson Gandy  
Commissioner Kirk Merrill

**October 05, 2021**  
**Police Civil Service Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Approved \_\_\_\_\_**

**Call to Order:** Commissioner Debrena Jackson Gandy called the October 5, 2021, meeting of the Port of Seattle Police Civil Service Commission to order at 10:05 AM.

**Roll call/In Attendance:**

Commissioner Debrena Jackson Gandy – Chair  
Commissioner Kirk Merrill – Vice Chair  
Commissioner Oris Dunham  
Ericka Singh, PCSC Secretary, Human Resources  
Tom Tanaka, PCSC Legal Counsel, Port of Seattle Attorney Services  
Brandy Brown, PCSC Administrative Support, Human Resources  
Stephanie Brosio, PCSC Administrative Support, Human Resources  
Acting Chief Mike Villa, Port of Seattle Police Department  
Derek Bender, Sr. Talent Acquisition Representative

- 1. Approval of Minutes:** Commissioner Jackson Gandy moved to approve the minutes from the April 6, 2021, meeting. The motion was second by Commissioner Dunham and it was unanimously carried.
- 2. Approval of Agenda:** Commissioner Jackson-Gandy moved to approve the agenda. The motion was second by Commissioner Merrill and it was unanimously carried.
- 3. Public Comments:** No public comments were offered.
- 4. Order of Business**
  - a. Hiring Update**

Two new Lateral Hires are starting October 25. The department is still actively recruiting for laterals. Oral boards for laterals were conducted in September and additional scheduled in November.

Recently completed a Port-only entry level hiring process. There were 15 applicants, 11 took the physical, 8 completed the oral boards and 6 made the list.

At this time the Public Safety Testing agreement for entry level Candidates is currently on hold.

There are currently 16 commissioned positions open: Chief, 1 Sergeant and 14 Officers. There are 6 non-commissioned positions open: 1 Police Specialist, 1 Dispatcher and 4 Traffic Support Specialists.

Six officers tested for Sergeant, 4 passed. Armon Barros was promoted to Sergeant in August. In September Police Specialists completed assessment to prepare to fill two upcoming vacancies due to retirements in October and December. The Commander process will begin in November 2021.

**b. 21CP Recommendations: Police Task Force Progress Update**

Recommendations were presented to the commission on September 14. There were 52 recommendations. Documents can be found online:

<http://meetings.portseattle.org>

Final reports will be available online at the Port of Seattle Website. Next steps are implementation plan for recommendations and development & training policy updates. Overall, the results of the 21CP and the task force was positive with recommendations of where the department could continue to improve.

There were three primary areas of priority that were identified.

- There was a need for the Police Department to focus on internal procedural justice to address a perception of inequity experienced by many in the specialty selections and promotions.
- Increasing the organizational transparency can improve perceptions of the Port of Seattle Police Department.
- Response to homelessness is the single most important step that will help reduce the external disparities around uses of force.

The implementation plan is the next step. The department is working with the Task Force on the implementation plan.

**c. IACP Video (23:19)**

IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police) reached out to the Port of Seattle Department to create a video to highlight the department due to the uniqueness of the airport and seaport aspects. The video was shared at a conference to highlight the Port of Seattle Police Department.

This video is available on their [website](#).

**d. CALEA Accreditation**

Every four years the Department completes an on-site assessment to review the Port of Seattle policies, procedures and living the spirit of the accreditation. Due to COVID-19, this year's assessment was done virtually.

Over July 26-27, 2021, over 20 interviews were conducted with department personnel, Port of Seattle Leadership, and outside stake holders. All of the department's compliance with standards were checked.

The assessors gave us a very favorable report. On November 18, 2021, full commission hearings will be conducted. This is the final step to be reaccredited. At this time the expectation is the department will be re-accredited and we are already to start the Fourth Cycle of Accreditation.

**e. Legislative Changes**

There have been multiple bills that were passed and went into effect in July 2021. Some of the bills will have impact on the department.

ESHB 1054 impacted vehicle pursuits and what officers must have to pursue a suspect. It requires an officer to have probable cause & authorization from a supervisor prior to proceeding with the pursuit. This has little impact, as the department gets into very few pursuits, maybe one a year.

ESHB 1054 also impacted the type of equipment that a department can be used. Departments are restricted from using military equipment. This has created debate on what is consider lethal vs. Military grade. Weapons and ammunition greater that. A 50 caliber and larger is classified as military. Some less lethal munitions are larger than .50 caliber. A 40-caliber munition is larger than the .50 caliber.

ESSHB 1310 addresses Use of Force, Probably Cause and De-Escalation. The department is a head of the curve as it relates to this bill. Training & De-Escalation is apart of the departments training. Part of the conversation is identifying the "imminent threat" of the suspect and do they have the opportunity.

SSB5066 addresses the Duty to Intervene. The Port of Seattle already had policy that related to the bill. It requires offices to interview if they see a fellow officer using excessive force. Failure to intervene could result in decertification of the officer (ESSSB 5051).

SHB 1223 addresses Custodial Interrogations. This states that the department must audio and video record interrogations for felony crimes and juveniles. Once the suspect has been detained and the officer asks questions about the crime, that audio must be recorded. The best way to be in compliance would be to have body worn cameras. The Port has agreed, and the department is moving forward to purchase the body worn cameras. This goes into effect in January 2022.

Some of these changes have impacted the ability for the department to hire. Currently there is a hiring crisis in law enforcement. The changes between how to police and the fear of possible consequences (de-certification) has changed the way many officers have been trained over many years. Due to this, many officers are choosing to leave the profession. There is a decrease in the number of applicants, and it is very competitive between departments when it comes to recruiting.

**Other Business:**

Commissioner Jackson Gandy raised the question about the recent departure of former Chief Rodney Covey. Now that the investigation has concluded, was there any other details that can be shared with the Police Commissioners. There was an understanding that it was related to masking. Acting Chief Mike Villa clarified that it was not related to masking. The masking situation was an unrelated to the departure of the Chief Covey. It was a separate situation in of itself with a former Port Police Officer. Legal Counsel Tom Tanaka also confirmed it was not related to his departure. There was an investigation for a Code of Conduct violation. The findings of the investigation resulted in the termination of Chief Covey. This is considered an internal Human Resources matter. The Civil Service Commissioners are only involved in these matters if an officer decides to appeal their termination to the Police Civil Service Commission itself.

Before the end of the meeting, PCSC Commission Chair Jackson Gandy recognized the departure of Commissioner Merrill at his final Police Civil Service Commission Meeting. Commissioner Merrill was thanked for his service as a member of the Police Civil Service Commission.

No other business was presented.

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Jackson Gandy at 11:23 AM