

# Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Police Oversight Commission



April 10, 2025

## REGULAR MEETING – 5:00 P.M. CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER

22 Civic Center Plaza Santa Ana, CA 92701

### CALL TO ORDER

**MINUTES:** *Chair Vega called the meeting to order at 5:05 P.M.*

ATTENDANCE	<b>Commission Members</b>	<b>Gabriel Castillo Laughton</b>
		<b>Evangeline Gawronski</b>
		<b>Amalia Mejia</b>
		<b>Carlos Perea</b>
		<b>Nadin Said</b>
	<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>Keith Carpenter</b>
	<b>Chair</b>	<b>Danny Vega</b>

### **Staff Members**

<b>Deputy City Manager</b>	<b>Sylvia Vazquez</b>
<b>Police Commander</b>	<b>Jorge Lopez</b>
<b>Assistant City Attorney</b>	<b>Jonathan Martinez</b>
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	<b>Abigail Y. Alcala</b>

## **ROLL CALL**

**MINUTES:** Recording Secretary Abigail Y. Alcala conducted roll call.

Commissioners Gawronski, Mejia, Perea, and Said, Vice Chair Carpenter, and Chair Vega were present. Commissioner Castillo Laughton was absent.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**MINUTES:** Chair Vega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS** – Public comments will be held during the beginning of the meeting for all comments on agenda items. Members of the public may provide comments on any agenda or non-agenda items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the commission.

**MINUTES:** Recording Secretary Abigail Y. Alcala reported the following email comments received: one (1) comment regarding Agenda Item No. 3.

The following individual addressed the Commission via teleconference:

1. Manuel Arreguin expressed concern regarding the police department's process in handling complaints submitted to the police oversight commission due to the lack of the police oversight director.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Approve staff recommendations on the following Consent Calendar Items: 1 and 2.

**MINUTES:** At 5:10 P.M., the Consent Calendar was considered.

**MOTION:** Vice Chair Carpenter moved to approve Consent Calendar Item Nos. 1 and 2, seconded by Commissioner Said.

The motion carried, 6-0-0-1, by the following roll call vote:

<b>AYES:</b>	COMMISSIONER GAWRONSKI, COMMISSIONER MEJIA, COMMISSIONER PEREA, COMMISSIONER SAID, VICE CHAIR CARPENTER, CHAIR VEGA NONE
<b>NOES:</b>	NONE
<b>ABSTAIN:</b>	NONE
<b>ABSENT:</b>	COMMISSIONER CASTILLO LAUGHTON
<b>Status:</b>	6 – 0 – 0 – 1 – Pass

### **1. Excused Absences**

**Recommended Action:** Excuse the absent members.

## **2. Minutes from the Regular Meetings of March 13, 2025.**

**Recommended Action:** Approve minutes.

**\*\*\*END OF CONSENT CALENDAR\*\*\***

### **BUSINESS CALENDAR**

## **3. Military Equipment and Santa Ana Police Department Policy No. 707**

**MINUTES:** *At 5:12 P.M., the Business Calendar was considered.*

*Commander Matthew Sorenson gave a presentation regarding military equipment policy 707.*

*Chair Vega asked whether the community events referenced in the presentation included the armored vehicle visiting schools.*

*Commander Sorenson clarified the armored vehicle visits schools without additional military equipment weapons and is the most requested item at community events.*

*Commissioner Mejia questioned the cost effectiveness of investing in an armored vehicle if it is mainly being used for visual representation at community events.*

*Discussion ensued regarding the use and funding of armored vehicles, frequency of equipment deployment, vehicle capabilities, risk assessment process for the use of military equipment in critical incidents, protests, and SWAT team activations.*

*Commander Sorenson answered the commissioner's questions and provided clarification.*

*Commissioner Perea requested copies of the department's military equipment policies, asked for clarification regarding the annual compliance requirements stated in AB481, requested public accessibility to police data including settlements and community forums on military equipment usage, and expressed concern regarding website navigation and accessibility.*

*Commander Sorenson spoke regarding AB 481.*

*Chair Vega asked whether there needed to be a majority agreement for staff to receive input from the committee.*

*Deputy City Manager Sylvia Vazquez clarified that staff would receive input and return at a future meeting to provide updates.*

*Commissioner Perea commented on the accessibility of police oversight matters, requested a tab on the city's website main page, data, policies, designated place to submit complaints, revisions to the policy related to the use of military equipment and surrounding cities models, and asked whether the police department has had or is planning on having community forums regarding the military use equipment.*

*Commander Sorenson reported the lack of prior community forums and the intention to organize one in the future.*

*Commissioner Said requested crime rate data of surrounding cities, spoke regarding other cities military equipment policies, and expressed concern regarding the use of other cities military use equipment policy with higher crime rates as it may negatively affect residents.*

*Commissioner Mejia requested clarification regarding the definition of force as it was used in the presentation.*

*Commander Sorenson stated the use of force was defined as military equipment being used as a means to take someone into custody.*

*Commissioner Mejia spoke in support of a public forum, and requested data on types of incidents that lead to use of equipment and more information on how crowd control is being defined and managed.*

*Commissioner Gawronski thanked Commander Sorenson for the presentation.*

*Vice Chair Carpenter expressed concern regarding the use of military equipment and long-range acoustic devices as force options deployed in civilian environments.*

*Chair Vega asked whether the military equipment is visible during peaceful protests.*

*Commander Sorenson spoke regarding the procedure with military equipment during protest and clarified the equipment is kept at the command post out of sight.*

*Commissioner Mejia expressed concern regarding the lack of a crowd control policy.*

*Commander Sorenson spoke regarding crowd control incident action plans with priorities being protection of life and allowing people to peacefully protest.*

*Vice Chair Carpenter expressed concern regarding maintenance cost of armored vehicles and stated he would rather see funds be used to hire additional officers.*

*Commissioner Perea asked whether there has been any missing equipment in the last 15 years.*

*Commander Sorenson stated there had been no instances of missing equipment.*

## **STUDY SESSION**

### **4. Police Oversight Commission Bylaws Discussion**

**MINUTES:** Assistant City Attorney Jonathan Martinez gave a brief overview regarding potential bylaws for the Commission.

Commissioner Said spoke in support of drafting bylaws from both the Planning Commission bylaws and the City of Riverside's Police Oversight Commission bylaws. Vice Chair Carpenter expressed concern regarding the ability of the Police Oversight Director to be fully independent.

Assistant City Attorney Martinez clarified the distinction between bylaws and the ordinance of the Police Oversight Commission.

Chair Vega asked whether the commission could review complaints although they do not have the ability to give a recommendation.

Assistant City Attorney Martinez stated the complaints continue to be available for review in his office.

Discussion ensued regarding the commission's ability to review complaints pending a police oversight director.

Chair Vega asked whether there was an update on the Police Oversight Commission director.

Deputy City Manager Sylvia Vazquez stated there would be an announcement regarding Police Oversight Commission at the next City Council meeting.

Commissioner Perea spoke in support of a blend of the Planning Commission and the City of Riverside's Police Oversight Commission bylaws and requested to review the bylaws of the Rent Board Commission or a commission with longer terms. He spoke regarding updating the city charter to make the commission more independent.

Discussion ensued regarding a process to review the commissions' bylaws as a reoccurring agenda item and spoke regarding examples and sections to be included in the initial draft of bylaws.

Assistant City Attorney Martinez answered the commission's questions regarding the drafting process and stated staff could present a draft at the next commission meeting to discuss and make changes based on the commission's recommendation.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Said moved to request a draft of the commission's bylaws including items one through six, 10 and 14 from the Santa Ana Planning Commission bylaws, a process to agendize items similar to the City of Riverside's Police Oversight Commission bylaws Article 7 Section 6, and a process to receive and review complaints without an independent oversight director, seconded by Chair Vega.

The motion carried, 6-0-0-1, by the following roll call vote:

**AYES:** COMMISSIONER GAWRONSKI, COMMISSIONER MEJIA,  
COMMISSIONER PEREA, COMMISSIONER SAID, VICE  
CHAIR CARPENTER, CHAIR VEGA  
NONE  
**NOES:** NONE  
**ABSTAIN:** NONE  
**ABSENT:** COMMISSIONER CASTILLO LAUGHTON  
**Status:** 6 – 0 – 0 – 1 – **Pass**

### **STAFF COMMENTS**

**MINUTES:** Deputy City Manager Sylvia Vazquez reminded the commission that they are welcome to do a ride along with the police department.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

**Minutes:** Commissioner Gawronski asked whether SWAT is able to do a ride along.

Deputy City Manager Sylvia Vazquez stated SWAT has not yet conducted a ride-along but will inquire about the possibility of doing so.

Vice Chair Carpenter requested a pdf copy of future agendas and his stipend be paid.

**ADJOURNMENT** - Adjourn the Police Oversight Commission Meeting.

**MINUTES:** Chair Vega adjourned the Police Oversight Commission meeting at 7:02 P.M.

The next meeting of the Police Oversight Commission is scheduled for May 8, 2025 at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted:

  
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Abigail Y. Alcala  
Recording Secretary