



OIRGroup.com

TO: City of Santa Monica
FROM: OIR Group
DATE: 12-31-20
RE: Fourth Status Update for “May 31, 2020 After-Action Review”

Introduction

OIR Group was selected by City officials to conduct a comprehensive review of the City’s response to the multi-faceted events of May 31. We are a team of police practices experts whose members have worked in the field of civilian oversight of law enforcement for nearly twenty years.

Our specific mission in Santa Monica is to independently assess the Police Department’s response to the evolving conditions on May 31, a day on which peaceful protests were rendered more complex by a significant amount of criminal activity that included vandalism and looting of local businesses. Utilizing our access to internal Department records (including audio and video recordings of events from that day), our opportunities to interview Department members involved in the response, and our involvement in various forums for receiving public feedback, we look forward to providing the City with a report that details our findings and recommendations.

This fourth update describes the progress we have made since our last posting in mid-December.

Project Status

Document Review

The City continues to provide us with new materials related to our scope of work, including new civil claims that have recently been lodged against the City and that contain specific allegations of misconduct in the police response to the events of May 31. The City has also recently provided us with additional material that were the subject of public records act requests

by interested third parties. Meanwhile, we have also had the opportunity to review official SMPD reports from the relevant time period that the Department provided to us in early December. These documents relate to matters such as uses of force that occurred, mutual aid, and operational decision-making. Other involved law enforcement agencies also provided SMPD with reports about their own participation; our access to these has helped complete our understanding of the overall response.

Interviews

Having met with all members of SMPD's executive team (including the former Chief), we have identified additional members of the Department who played key roles in the days prior to, including, and subsequent to May 31 as the protest activity continued to evolve in Santa Monica and throughout the region. We intend to speak with them in order to learn more about specific factual issues we have identified, and to get the perspective of line-level police personnel in terms of their experience of the Department's operational response. We have also begun to focus more on the "intelligence gathering" aspects of SMPD's preparations in the days and hours prior to the height of unrest activity in the afternoon of May 31.

The background we have developed in the last several weeks has also helped us to identify individuals from other stakeholder groups whom we intend to meet with in early January. This includes City officials, representatives from affected businesses in Santa Monica, and local activists with insights into policing issues and the community's experience of May 31. We look forward to the increased knowledge understanding we expect to gain from these important vantage points. And we will also be following up with selected residents who have reached out by email about their own experiences and have offered to speak with us in more detail.

Listening Sessions

We held our initial remote listening session with interested members of the public on November 17. It was well-attended and beneficial to us, not only for the range of information and opinions we encountered, but also for the further outreach that it prompted from several participants who wanted to follow up. Our second session has now been scheduled through the City, and we are grateful for the technical support and other facilitation provided by Santa Monica employees.

The session will be taking place on Tuesday, January 19 at 5:30. Details for accessing it are available through the City website.

In the meantime, we continue to welcome correspondence from individuals who would like to share information or viewpoints. Please contact us at the following email address:
Michael.Gennaco@oirgroup.com