



OIRGroup.com

TO: City of Santa Monica
FROM: OIR Group
DATE: 2-4-21
RE: Sixth 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 sixth update describes the progress we have made since our last posting at the end of the year.

Project Status

We have now completed our second “virtual” Listening Session as sponsored by the City, which took place on January 19. As with the previous installment, we heard from a range of residents and others who were directly affected by the events of May 31. The different issues they experienced, and the strong emotions that were reflected in the session as a result, are important

reinforcements of the impact of those days. They are guiding our own reflections and assessments accordingly, and we appreciate people's contributions.

Since that time, we have conducted additional interviews with Police Department members who had key roles in the decision-making on that day. We have also interviewed SMPD personnel to further our understanding of how the local intelligence-gathering process unfolded in the days between the murder of George Floyd and the 31st. We also spent some time with the Interim Chief to discuss ways that the Department has already advanced internal reforms that are a direct outgrowth of "lessons learned" during the protests. We intend to incorporate a discussion of these changes into our final public reporting.

We also had the chance to be part of a regular meeting held virtually by the Board of Directors of Downtown Santa Monica, Inc. This non-profit organization works with the city to help "manage services and operations" in the downtown area, and its Board members had their distinctive own perspectives on May 31 and the aftermath. As business and property owners, and/or longtime residents, their interest in the community and their concerns about deficiencies in the response that day were important to our evolving understanding.

New members of the City Council were also in attendance at the meeting. Though we got some feedback from elected officials in that context, we also intend to reach out to them individually in the coming weeks.

Most recently, we spoke to the Interim City Manager about her experiences with events surrounding May 31. We were grateful for her cooperation and the insights she provided in relation to several of the key issues we have identified to date.

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