

Johns Hopkins University Police Accountability Board Meeting

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

Accountability Board Members:

Aprille Weron	Present
Ateeb Ahmad Parray	Absent
Chyna Sinclair	Present
Douglas "Duke" Tremiere	Present
Ed Kangethe	Present
Elizabeth Hazel	Present
Freud-Williams Maignan	Present
Jerrell Bratcher	Present
Kamaria Hill	Absent
Kimyatta Ricks	Present
Laura Rossi	Absent
Madhu Subramanian	Present
Panagis Galiatsatos, MD	Absent
Sam Johnson	Present
Sonja Merchant-Jones	Present

Johns Hopkins Staff Present:

1. Dr. Branville Bard
2. Calvin L. Smith Jr.
3. Jennifer Mielke
4. Amy Taylor
5. Gus Sentementes (Livestream Technician)

Opening

Ed Kangethe, JH Accountability Board (JHAB) Chair, began the meeting at 6:05 p.m. with introductions by the Board members and JH staff. The meeting was broadcast live via toll-free call-in and on the [Accountability Board meetings live-stream webpage](#).

Board Business – July Minutes

Kangethe moved to approve the July 2024 JHAB meeting minutes. The Board unanimously approved.

Committee Reports – Policy Committee

Kangethe, the Board's Chair, opened the floor for the Policy Committee to share any updates. Madhu mentioned that updates were discussed in the last meeting. The finalized versions of the policies have been released publicly. During the last community engagement meeting, there were some concerns about unanswered questions related to the Public Safety department. The Policy Committee will follow up on those issues and hopefully have some comments back soon. Otherwise, there are no significant changes.

Chair Kangethe opened the floor for questions or comments; none were raised at that time.

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Old Business – Review Approval of the Training Committee

Kangethe, asked if every member had a chance to review the proposed frame of reference that was sent out in the training? By "frame of reference," means the Training Committee's scope of work, which was sent out on July 17, 2024. There were no, hands raised online, or questions in the room. A motion to approve the frame of reference as distributed was entertained. The motion was properly moved, seconded by Jerrell and the Training Committee's frame of reference was approved.

Old Business – Meeting with President Daniel's

Kangethe shared with the board that this was the Board's first meeting with the President's office. The Board had been in negotiations with the President's office for about a year when this started. Some members who helped initiate this effort, terms have ended and were not able to see it through.

The floor was then opened for board members to offer feedback on the President's meeting, including what they thought went well and what could be improved.

C: Kimyatta: I think the meeting went well. President Daniel's seemed open to ideas and receptive to what people offered. The meeting was successful.

C: Hazel: I thought it was really helpful for him to hear our questions, and I found his responses to be very informative. He provided important context to some of the issues we raised. I also think it was a positive first meeting, and I hope we can continue these in the coming years. It would be beneficial to have short informational exchange meetings with him in the future as well.

C: Weron: Ed, I think in the future, the meeting needs to be a bit better coordinated beforehand, especially regarding who is asking which questions. At one point, it felt more like an exchange between you and him rather than involving the board as a whole. If we all had the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, it would help the meeting flow better.

C: Kangethe: I absolutely agree, April, that at points it felt like it was a conversation between President Daniels and me, rather than the Board as a whole. I also think we should better coordinate the timing. We should aim to schedule a meeting after our public comment meeting with the community. This way, we can relay the direct concerns we receive from the community to him while they're fresh in everyone's mind. This is a safe space, so if anyone has suggestions, please feel free to share.

C: Bratcher: It's good to have a set of asks and know our intent and purpose going into the meeting with President Daniels or any other stakeholders. This will help ensure a clear and effective use of their time. We should always go in with clear asks that pertain to the work we're continuing to engage in.

Old Business – Community Conversations

Kangethe shared that community conversations were held in East Baltimore, the Homewood community (virtually), and the Peabody area, with board members participating in the community associates meeting. Members were encouraged to comment on any of the meetings they attended and to prioritize their feedback by discussing what went well, what didn't, and any takeaways for future planning.

Chair Kangethe, opened the floor to members who would like to share their feedback.

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Q: Weron: The first community conversation meeting was held in East Baltimore. We had an online email discussion where a few people recommended by Board members were added to the attendance list, but it looks like they were not invited. Is there a reason why they weren't invited?

A: Kangethe: I think it was more of a timing issue because a lot of planning went into this meeting. I did see that the additional groups you suggested were for all groups, but by that time, the invitation had already been circulating in the community for a while. Adding additional groups at the last minute wasn't ideal and wasn't properly planned for. So, I believe it was more of a timing issue rather than a disagreement with your choices.

C: Merchant-Jones: I would like to add context to your question. Planning was discussed, I think before you came on board in June. The chair had given me the task of organizing the community conversations, and it was decided that we would have two representatives from each community group attend each meeting.

None of the groups are more important than another, East Baltimore, Homewood, or Mount Vernon; it's just one group. The idea was to have 90 minutes for people to come with their questions and concerns from their respective communities. It wasn't done to exclude anyone.

The meeting was live, and people were given the opportunity to ask questions. However, I noticed that people from other areas, which we planned to visit later, attended and raised the issue of not being invited. This conversation wasn't meant for them. I just wanted to add some clarity.

C: Subramanian: I just wanted to say that I think our community engagement meetings with community leaders are more productive. We can hear a consensus statement or belief from within the community about their concerns or the positives they see in the Johns Hopkins Police Department. It's much easier to address or discuss these issues when they come from a few select members rather than a larger group. Often, certain viewpoints are drowned out by others due to the amount of animosity, anger, or other issues expressed. As a result, these conversations often drown out varied opinions.

C: Ricks: I think the first meeting was more effective because it was with community leaders, unlike the second meeting which was held virtually.

C: Weron: Just to clarify, since I live in the East Baltimore area, the only community leaders present were myself on the board and the two gentlemen from the Eagle Park Neighborhood Association. The rest were active and engaged community members. One issue with community associations is that they can become siloed. As a creative myself, I understand that being in meetings all the time means you might not always know what your association thinks because you're busy running the meeting and might not be part of those conversations.

While it's important to have productive conversations, I think it can be lost if the Accountability Board's charge is to interact with the community. It behooves us to have conversations with the community, not just the leaders.

A: Kangethe: This was the first series of community conversations and it's a learning experience. As a board, we should be having these conversations with the community, but we need to figure out the structure that will be the most productive. Going forward, when we handle these conversations, the approved list needs to be distributed by one point of contact. There were multiple lists going out to different groups. It needs to be centralized. Whoever is going to be invited should receive the invitation from the Accountability Board mailbox, as I believe that gives it legitimacy.

This doesn't mean that board members can't reach out to their community networks and share what meetings are coming up. Any official announcements need to come from the mailbox. I don't think this necessarily needs to be a

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policy; I just think we can all agree that it streamlines communication. If there's any miscommunication, we have one single source to trace it back to.

The chair of the engagement committee will be leading these efforts going forward, whoever that may be. That person should be the point of contact for signing off on the invitees list.

C: Sinclair: I agree with all the other points that were made. I think we should manage our time a little better and establish guidelines for the issues or concerns being raised. This way, people won't just criticize us but will address us with specific questions they may have.

Q: Weron: For those who have been on the board before, is there a format from previous community conversations that worked well, or are we starting from scratch?

A: Merchant-Jones: You can never really say what's going to happen in community meetings until you get there. Every group has its own personality. I chair meetings in the Better-Waverly community, and it's expected that I would go and represent, while others hang back and say, "You go and bring the information back."

A few of us board members went to the Mount Vernon meeting. You couldn't tell who in the audience was for or against us, but everyone greeted us with the respect we deserve and expect. The community conversations are new, so you don't know exactly which direction to go in until you encounter both pleasant and unpleasant situations.

Feedback about the Homewood meeting was that it got away from me as the committee's chair. I take responsibility for that, but overall, it was a positive meeting. I hope I was able to give context to Ms. Weron's question.

C: Bratcher: I agree with many of the points made earlier. During the second community conversation, there were concerns about some people in the East Baltimore community not being included in the invite. I believe these communications should come from the Accountability Board, and invites should be extended to everyone recommended. This didn't happen, which led to the discussion in the committee meeting.

It's important for us to establish definitions, norms, and ground rules for how commentary or questions are framed. Some people engaged in personal attacks, which is not appropriate. We're all volunteers doing this as a service, and we shouldn't be subjected to verbal assaults.

The format was changed because we anticipated issues based on previous interactions, including a Twitter post that led us to switch the format. It's important for the community to know that they should air their comments, grievances, or concerns respectfully. We are human beings, and while people can have their opinions, they shouldn't disrespect anyone based on race, gender, or other factors.

No one should have to endure disrespect just because we're part of a contentious board or group.

Q: Ricks: My question is to the Board, and it may be just for our committee. Do we have any idea or suggestions of what we're going to do moving forward for the next community meeting? The full board was represented at the last meeting and I was wondering if plans of moving the meeting forward had been discussed.

A: Merchant-Jones: No, we haven't had an opportunity as a committee to discuss any of that. At the next committee meeting, we can address it, but we just haven't had a chance to do that yet.

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C: Kangethe: These community conversations are necessary, and I hope we continue them in some form. Our main goal is to get feedback from the community and share it with police department leadership. I've been part of uncomfortable conversations where personal attacks happened, and no one should be subjected to that.

I'm not in favor of this police department, but I've made friends with many board members who are. Conversations should never devolve into personal attacks. As a board, it's our duty to continue these conversations. If we want to establish legitimacy with the communities we represent, we need to keep having these conversations.

C: Hazel: I was able to attend the first meeting in East Baltimore and the one in Peabody. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the last community conversation, but wanted to say that both meetings were such positive and productive conversations. It really made me feel proud of what we're doing—going out there, talking to people, and getting their feedback.

Yes, we all have ideas on how to streamline and make it better, but we're learning. We're building the plane as we're flying it. It's really disappointing that a few people took the opportunity to block and silence those community members, as their feedback was really important and critical. I'm happy to continue these community conversations. I think it's critical to what we do.

C: Merchant-Jones: One of the things brought up was verbal attacks. We can't control what people will say, but we can control how we react to it. Maybe we can discuss how to react to things we don't like in the future. I received an email from Claude Guillmaude suggesting that, due to fear (her words, not mine), we should meet on Zoom instead of in person. Our meetings are livestreamed. When chairing a committee, we do our very best. I know it's not always possible for board members to attend all meetings, but being more prepared will help us know the direction we're going in.

New Business – Annual Public Meeting

Kangethe opened the discussion by sharing information about the Annual Public Comment meeting, scheduled on October 23rd, 2024. Before the board's current iteration, the previous board had proposed a hybrid format, meaning both an in-person and an online component. Since we had just completed our first round of community conversations, Kangethe wanted to gauge the board's opinion to see if this format was still acceptable. Many current board members weren't part of the board when this decision was made. New members might have had questions about the meeting, as it would be their first time participating. Some members expressed that they were fine with a hybrid meeting, while others pushed for the in-person community component. **Chair Kangethe, opened the floor to members for questions, concerns, and feedback.**

Q: Weron: What is the public meeting for? From what I remember last year, it was online, and the board didn't respond to questions but listened to them.

A: Kangethe: It really wasn't questions; it was more feedback. People were mostly giving comments. There were some questions, which I believe were taken in chat and will be responded to later. The purpose was for the Board to listen to community feedback.

Q: Hazel: For clarification? Were you thinking hybrid compared to all virtual or all in-person? Personally, I already know I'll have to join on Zoom, so I wanted to discuss the different options you were considering from the original conversation.

A: Kangethe: Some members preferred joining on Zoom, while others, including myself, thought we could have an in-person option. So, we decided on a hybrid format. For example, we could meet in an auditorium at a school, where

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board members who feel comfortable can attend in person, and the community can come out. We would still have the Zoom option available.

C: Bratcher: I would ask that we consider hosting the meeting in person. The community has expressed a desire for an in-person opportunity to engage with us and share their comments or feedback.

C: Hazel: I've been thinking about different ways we could use technology to improve our meetings, maybe experiment and try something new. I like using Zoom, not because I'm afraid to meet in person, but because I have childcare responsibilities, like many others. I strongly believe we should keep the Zoom option open so people can join remotely. In one of the meetings, we had two visitors monopolizing the conversation, so no one else was heard. I wonder if we could split it up somehow. For example, in Zoom, we could use breakout rooms. We could have a group in person and 2-3 breakout rooms, each staffed with 2-3 accountability board members and maybe a staff person from public safety. This way, everyone feels supported, and we might get more useful feedback by splitting things up a bit.

C: Weron: One of the things that stood out to me at the community conversation meeting was that many of our communities are under-resourced in terms of internet connection. Digital equity is a huge problem in Baltimore City. If possible, we should have locations where people can go to watch and participate, like local schools, libraries, or community centers. These places are usually open for community events. We could also encourage churches to set up spaces for people who may not have access or want to participate but otherwise couldn't. This way, we can have smaller groups of people at various locations, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to join in.

C: Ricks: I agree with Elizabeth, Sonya, and April. I think Elizabeth's idea is really great. I support a hybrid format because of the threats that were made, indicating they would shut down the meeting.

C: Taylor: I'm considering the streaming component for multiple locations. We would need to hire additional IT support to manage this effectively. Live streaming at every location requires significant manpower. If our in-house IT support, Gus and Kelly, are unavailable, we would need to hire external IT resources and coordinate with multiple venues for availability. This involves extensive planning and logistics.

C: Kangethe: Thank you, everyone, for your feedback. For clarity, we are mandated to hold a public meeting annually. This year's meeting will take place on October 23, 2024. The purpose of the meeting is to gather public feedback, so it won't necessarily be a Q&A session. We don't need to have a mechanism to respond to questions immediately, but we do need a way to collect feedback, as that is the main goal of the meeting.

I appreciate the suggestion of holding smaller meetings, but logistically, that could be challenging. **Chair Kangethe, opened the floor for a few more questions on this topic.**

Q: Johnson: Did we capture how many people attended last year's meeting online? I think this is a good gauge for deciding whether the meeting needs to be hybrid, fully online, or held at various locations. The number of attendees would help determine the resources required.

A: Taylor: Last year, we created a registration link intended for individual use, but it was shared with the community. Consequently, when people logged in, the same name appeared multiple times, making it difficult to identify actual attendees. Despite requests not to share the link, it was still shared, complicating the process of capturing the exact number of participants.

C: Merchant-Jones: Regarding the October 23, 2024 public community meeting, I'm really concerned about the in-person component. It's been stated that if this meeting goes forward, it will be interrupted by some community

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members who do not want the JHPD in this area. It's not about being afraid or not being afraid; nobody wants to go somewhere with a potential for harm or property destruction. I would suggest against an in-person meeting because it has the potential to be shut down, which would defeat the purpose of hosting a public meeting.

Kangethe addressed the board, requesting they vote on the meeting format. Some members prefer an all-online format instead of the previously decided hybrid format. To change this, we need board action. Is there a motion to change the format to all online?

"Weron, moved to make the October 23, 2024 annual public community meeting an all-online, virtual option. "The motion was made. Bratcher, second the motion. The motion was defeated. The meeting will proceed with the hybrid format.

Administration Updates

Kangethe recognized Dr. Bard to give administration updates and shared that a series of questions were posed to the board in preparation for the President's meeting, but many of those questions were operational in nature. Dr. Bard was thanked for coming in and agreeing to answer questions for board members. The meeting was then turned over to Dr. Bard.

Dr. Bard greeted the board and stated that he would address a couple of things. He offered the possibility of a refresher, similar to last week's meeting with President Daniels. He mentioned that at least one board member felt this wasn't accountability. Earlier in the lifespan of the Accountability Board, the past president of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement explained what accountability and civilian oversight are. Dr. Bard thought the board might benefit from having that individual or another expert provide guidance again.

Dr. Bard also announced the hiring of a new deputy chief, Rachel Jefferson, who joined after 26 years in office, most recently as a deputy chief in the city of Booth. She started in September 2024, and a more extensive announcement would follow.

Dr. Bard then addressed questions discussed last week, including those about jurisdictions, patrol rifles, mental health crises, and the number of officers. He explained that the Community Safety Instructor Act authorized the JHPD to operate on three campus areas in Toronto: East Baltimore and Peabody. The campus area is defined as any property owned, leased, operated, or under the control of the university and used for educational purposes within a specific geographical area.

Dr. Bard described the painstaking effort to define these areas with the city so that when a location meets all criteria, it can be dispatched to JHPD. He also discussed the incremental building of the department, starting with one patrol car and eventually growing to 10-12 cars split between the three campuses.

He emphasized the necessity of patrol rifles for immediate defense of life, citing incidents like the North Hollywood shootout and the Columbine shooting, which shifted the paradigm for weaponry availability.

Dr. Bard clarified that the JHPD is restricted from acquiring military equipment and can only use tools available to the public. He also mentioned, the first of its kind, the behavioral health crisis response program, where a licensed clinician paired with an unarmed safety officer responds to mental health crises is available to all Johns Hopkins campuses.

Finally, Dr. Bard addressed jurisdictional questions, explaining that officers would take necessary actions, even if it meant summoning city officers to intercede. The idea is to send a clinician when it's clear that one is needed. We

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have a behavioral health crisis support team, which is a first of its kind. Other universities have consulted with us and several have also started similar behavioral health crisis response teams. We have that resource available. **Chair Kangethe opened the floor for questions or comments.**

Q: Weron: If there is an immediate threat directly adjacent to the highlighted areas, is the JHPD authorized to respond, or is that only as invitation?

A: Dr. Bard: The way I'll choose to answer that question is that jurisdictional questions arise all the time, even with well-established municipal jurisdictions, whether it's a city or county. These questions tend to be resolved through support, often by looking at factors like the reasonableness of the officer's actions, whether there was a compelling societal interest in the officer taking that action, and legislative intent.

As a practical answer, you would expect that an officer would take whatever action was necessary, even if it meant summoning a city of Baltimore officer to intercede.

Q: Kangethe: Can you speak to the recruitment and hiring practices? As we know, Johns Hopkins will be competing in the same pool of applicants as various other law enforcement entities in Baltimore and the surrounding areas. Can you elaborate on the recruitment and hiring practices of the JHPD?

A: Dr. Bard: The recruitment and hiring practices are highly regulated by the state, so we follow a rigid format that includes an extensive background check. We don't just look at a snapshot of an individual at one point in time; we review their complete history. This allows us to be more selective than other entities.

For lateral police officer applicants, who already have a history in policing, we are obligated by the Police Reform Act to thoroughly review all their disciplinary and internal affairs files. We physically review these records to ensure transparency and honesty about their career history. Minor infractions, like being late for court 20 years ago, might not disqualify them from serving the Johns Hopkins community, but honesty about such incidents is crucial.

New law enforcement applicants undergo the same extensive background check. We look beyond a single snapshot of the individual, allowing us to be more selective than the average entity or municipality. I personally meet with each candidate to ensure they can lead with compassion and common sense, and use authority appropriately. If I feel a candidate doesn't meet these standards during the interview, they won't be part of the Johns Hopkins community.

Our process is highly structured and goes beyond what is required. There are certain HR processes that set us apart and make our standards even higher than those of other agencies.

Chair Kangethe thanked, Dr. Bard, for coming in and his willingness to answer questions. **A motion to adjourn the meeting was moved and passed unanimously by the Board.**

Upcoming Meeting Updates

JH Accountability Board Planning Session Wednesday, October 16, 2024

Governance Committee Meeting Tuesday, November 12, 2024

Annual Public Meeting (Virtual Only) Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Data and Governance Committee Meeting Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Closing

Kangethe closed the meeting at 7:29 p.m.