



# City of Seattle

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## Meeting Minutes

February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 | 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**Commissioners Present:** Victor, Brett, Chris, Steven, Manuel, Annabelle, Deaunte, Latosha, Ryan, Byram,

**Commissioners Absent:** Yazı, Jessi, Nate, John

**SOCR Staff:** Molly Brewer, Caedmon

**Meeting Minutes recorded by:** Molly Brewer

**Guests:** Andrew Ashiofu

### Welcome and Introductions

### Public Open Comment

- No comment

### Approve Minutes and Agenda

- January minutes **approved**
- February agenda **approved**

### Follow up on SPD/ SPOG letter

Byram: We talked to Lorena Gonzalez's office today for 45 minutes about the SPD/SPOG letter. This is the most movement and action since the letter was released 2 weeks ago. We met about investigations and subpoenas and zero sum budgeting to reduce SPD's budget, as well as the relationship between our commission and City Council members to ensure that they don't meet us to check a box. CP Gonzalez position is that CC doesn't have broad power to subpoena anybody who works for the City, thus SPD. Their approach is to be forward thinking about policy and create task force commission to root out officers who have affiliations with white supremacist organizations. We also talked about SPOG negotiations. Most recent contract expired Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2020 and new negotiations start now. CC and MO have authority to set parameters for negotiation with SPOG but they don't sit at the negotiating table,

which is instead the labor relations board. Their priority is outreach to community members to get feedback on how the parameters should be shaped. Community Police Commission is holding town halls about the parameters. When the collective bargaining agreement (cba) conflicts with the contract, the CBA takes precedence. This is built into RCW State law that dictates that a City ordinance cannot supersede the CBA. **RCW 41.56 Section 905** This applies to all government employees, not just police unions. There is room for interpretation about how this impacts Seattle's ability to have a CBA with its police union that doesn't undermine accountability.

What does 'setting parameters' mean? – It refers to the areas of a contract they will be able to negotiate.

There is movement in CC to move towards zero based budget accounting – when you build a budget start from 0 and justify every dollar you ask to spend as opposed to starting with an allocation and figuring out how to spend that money.

Steven – Usually the law will prevail over a CBA so CC's interpretation may be different. We should question how they are interpreting the law.

Byram – what I gathered from CP Gonzalez is that SPOG contract uses this language from the State RCW: "Except as provided in RCW 53.18.015, if any provision of this chapter conflicts with any other statute, ordinance, rule or regulation of any public employer, the provisions of this chapter shall control." And we are interpreting this to mean that a CBA automatically supersedes any ordinance relevant to that collective bargaining unit regardless of whether it is outline by State as needing to be negotiated. We need to consult with SOCR and legal department about what their interpretation of this is.

Chris : Incongruencies should be allowed and fought for. There should be a point where we are able to have incongruency in contract negotiation so there is point of contention for state legislators to change RCW.

Annabelle: How does the consent decree factor into this, as it is a Federal decision? Can the City bargain itself to a position that is out of compliance with consent decree?

Byram – The SPOG contract is one of the reasons SPD was found to be out of compliance with the consent decree. The federal dept of justice under Obama administration sued City of Seattle and SPD for unconstitutional and biased policing which is how consent decree came about. Confusing interpretation of RCW. SOCR's legal team should take a look and share their interpretation do we don't keep pushing an immovable point.

We were encouraged by Gonzalez to engage in State legislative action. We got a lot of time with her but not a lot of depth.

Deaunte: I felt like we were getting the same conversation and rhetoric that we get from the MO and CC and Police Chief. The meeting felt like talking to a wall, and it felt hurtful.

Chris: I called out how she didn't recognize that the goal is to eliminate white supremacists, and rather is talking

Steven : When does consent decree expire?

Byram: In past 18 months , judge was overseeing consent decree and started process of lifting the decree and lifting federal oversight but that process was halted and reversed because of specific issues that came up. CPC found breaks in that case saying that decree should stay in place. We are in end stages of consent decree but the City must remedy accountability issues to return to full compliance and resume lifting full oversight. It has been since 2012 or 2014.

Steven: They went 4 years without a contract last time so interested to see if they go into interest arbitration. Want to see if they have a plan for that.

Chris: Gonzalez said: "There was not political will within MO or CC to take on arbitration with SPOG from that stand point the appetite wasn't there before."

### **Recruiting**

- Leo Segovia and Caedmon will assist with interviews in 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> week of March
- Appoint by April 20

### **Committee Reports**

POC Inclusive committee- No report as John is the chair and not present.

Community Engagement and Social media committee- Nate and Yazi are the co-chairs and not present.

- We talked about social media schedule and adding people to social media accounts. Email Nate, Yazi, Jessi or Chris about being added to social media channels.

Commission Operations – We are getting dates for committee members to start a cadence for email newsletters

**SOCR Report** – Nothing to report

### **Announcements, Reminders, & Roll Call**

**Brett** – Should we talk to MO or CC to be involved in arbitration this year and release something official about it?

Annabelle- Not sure if that is the right call for action and identifying the right call is a good next step.

Steven – First step should be to get involved in negotiations because arbitration doesn't happen until after that happens. Interest arbitrator isn't in everyone's best interests because arbiter can give SPOG whatever they want, and instead it is better to get involved in setting parameters that will give us changes we want to see.

Byram- When the City enters CBA with SPOG or other unit, that is us as constituents entering that agreement. We could have a role in reminding the constituents that they have a role at the table and not leave it to a vague institution and the machinations of government. It is us that are meant to be represented at this bargaining table.

Chris – Tactics ideas:

- Labor relations policy committee gives orders to negotiators who are at the table. If we can work to get things on agenda for that LR committee that is a tactic.
- Knowing and understanding each negotiator present there on behalf of the City and how they are interpreting what is being sent to them from the LR committee, and how they follow up on them.

Steven - Jeff Clark is assigned to public safety contracts at Municipal Court. These are civil service workers and are not political people and thus not the best people to talk to. Energy is best spent on people setting parameters , MO and CC , etc.

Chris – Yet, if MO and CC are telling us they are the ones who actually affect this change and that the negotiations are out of our hands, then we may need to actually press the negotiators.

Steven – If CC says that the negotiators are the problem, that is a blatant lie. These negotiators are so far down in the beurocracy there is no truth in the Council saying that they don't have control after they hand the parameters to the negotiators. The negotiators do not make the decisions and are very low down.

Byram – We can do a lot of this work to decide on the next steps during committee meetings. POC inclusive committee may want to be active on this. I want to make sure we are going at this from several strategic angles to make real change. This is not just local conversation but a national conversation.

**(END 7:50 pm )**