

POLICE BOARD  
CITY OF CHICAGO

STATEMENT BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

November 6, 2019

Good afternoon, Madam Chairman and members of the City Council. I am Ghian Foreman, President of the Police Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today and discuss Police Board's proposed 2020 budget. I would like to begin by giving an overview of how the Board decides the most serious police disciplinary cases—those in which the Superintendent of Police files charges recommending that an officer be discharged from the Chicago Police Department. These discharge cases make up 90% of the cases filed with the Board.

The Board fosters public trust by serving as an impartial decision maker in cases of alleged police misconduct, performing this duty with openness and transparency. Think of the Police Board like a court. The Board has jurisdiction over cases once charges are filed on behalf of the Superintendent. It is important to remember that the Board itself is not an investigatory body, but decides cases that were investigated by either the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA), the Chicago Police Department's Bureau of Internal Affairs (BIA), or the City's Office of the Inspector General (OIG). As an impartial decision-maker, the role of the Board, like that of a court of law, is to undertake a thorough review of the evidence in each case and render a fair, unbiased decision.

We have distributed, as an addendum, flow charts detailing the police disciplinary process. The first flow chart gives an overview of how allegations of misconduct are received, investigated, and reviewed. The second flow chart shows how the Police Board handles cases that are brought to it.

As we have seen this year, the Police Board is responsible for deciding highly-visible cases stemming from police-involved shootings. How do we ensure that the Board is accountable and that its handling of disciplinary cases is fair? By making transparency a top priority throughout the disciplinary process. All of the Board's disciplinary hearings, like trials in court, are open to the public. The Board announces its decisions at its public meetings, and then immediately publishes on its website its written Findings and Decision, which include a detailed explanation of the reasons for the Board's action. All members of the public have an opportunity to attend the hearings and read the decisions so that they may make an informed judgment of the Board's work.

Regarding the Board's budget request for 2020, there are increases in two accounts to cover expenses directly related to police disciplinary cases—fees for hearing officers to preside over hearings, and fees for having the hearings transcribed and video recorded.

Thank you very much for your consideration of the Board's budget, and I am happy to respond to any questions you have.