

# Philadelphia Documenters

POWERED BY [RESOLVE PHILLY](#)

---

## CPOC Community Town Hall

Documenter name: Sean Ongley

Agency: Citizens Police Oversight Commission

Date: June 17, 2024

[See more about this meeting at Documenters.org](#)

---

## Headlines

What are the key discussions, votes or outcomes from this meeting that you think everybody should know? Highlight up to four—think of these as the one-sentence previews or headlines for the rest of your notes.

- Tonya McClary introduced as the new Executive Director for the Community Police Oversight Committee. Installing an Executive Director is a milestone representing the successful conclusion of the creation of CPOC.
- Various faith-based and activist community members come together in solidarity and celebration of CPOC.

## Observations & Follow-Up Questions

Did you experience any challenges while recording audio for this meeting? What are you left wondering? What observations or learnings are you taking away from this meeting? What do you feel, think or predict?

- The event was ultimately positive, and a celebration of successfully reforming the previous police oversight body known as the Police Review Board, with the crucial step of installing a permanent Executive Director.
- The public Q&A period appeared to be truncated out of a stated concern for time constraints. A few written questions that were not read remained in the hands of Reverend Tyler. However, McClary and most of the presenters that evening remained on site and were publicly available through the end of the evening.

When I left the reception room, most of the event attendance had diminished and public officials were accessible.

- There was no active protest or anti-police sentiment from the speakers or attendees. The speakers featured at the event also made it clear that police are an important part of the municipal system, and that is why they need public oversight.
- Hassan Bennet discussed his personal history as wrongfully prosecuted and imprisoned due to police misconduct in the context of the need for public police oversight. In contrast to standing in opposition to the police force, he stated, “without police, I don’t know what we’re going to do in this situation,” as the City faces a difficult range of public safety problems.
- Within that tone of cooperation and understanding, Ryan Harris stated that “We’re not making the police the enemy.”
- McClary introduced herself, touching on her long career in criminal law and police reform. Her life began in Washington D.C., she served as a public defender, and developed a career in police oversight programs in New Orleans, Dallas, and continues in Philadelphia. She discussed some of the successful measures she has encouraged in police forces including deescalation.
- Given that the event had been billed as a public Q&A with a run time around two hours, it seemed that the event had been unnecessarily truncated with approximately one hour and ten minutes of content in the audio recording. I would have preferred additional time to hear public questions, or at least enough time to run through the questions provided on the cards.
- Given the number of community members dedicated to improved conditions in neighborhoods, and improved relations with the police department, as a resident of Philadelphia I am heartened and hopeful that police will welcome this committee as a necessary civic function.

---

## Documenter In-person Notes

On Monday, June 17, 2024, a public town hall hosted by the [Citizens Police Oversight Commission \(CPOC\)](#) was scheduled for 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. in the Mayor’s Reception Room. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce Tonya McClary, the new CPOC Executive Director. It was promoted as “A Night for Oversight” with a public Q&A period, with free [RSVP registration on Eventbrite](#), although it was not clear if that was required to attend.

A single security checkpoint with identification and sign-in requirements at the central North entrance of City Hall preceded the journey up to the reception room. Elevator access was provided to the second floor, however, there was no clear signage as to the location of the event.

At 6 p.m., the reception hall was largely occupied by personnel involved with the event. It was fully catered, with hot and cold appetizers, plus desert and beverages.

Around half passed the hour, the emcee of the evening, CPOC Director of Outreach Taleah Grimmage, announced from the amplified podium that the Q&A would begin. Attendance in the room grew to at least 60 people, not including the scheduled speakers, and more were trickling in until approximately 80 were in attendance.

Shortly after the announcement, I began my recording device (a Zoom H4 mobile recorder) with a stereo microphone configured at 45 degree angles in line of sight to the speaker system in the room, and approximately eight feet from the podium.

---

## Timestamps

[00:00:01]: Audio recording begins shortly after 6:30 p.m.

[00:02:30]: CPOC Director of Outreach Taleah Grimmage takes the podium for opening remarks, announcing special guests in attendance preceding a series of guest presentations.

[00:06:24]: CPOC Commissioner Hassan Bennet speech.

[00:17:10]: [Public Defender Keir Bradford-Grey](#) speech.

[00:21:25]: [POWER](#) Co-Chair Gayle Lex, speech.

[00:26:15]: A series of brief speeches led by [As I Plant This Seed](#) Executive Director Ryan Harris.

[00:41:51]: Grimmage introduces featured guests.

[00:44:05]: Reverend Mark Kelly Tyler interview with with new CPOC Executive Director [Tonya McClary](#).

[00:59:30]: Public question period.

[01:07:22]: Q&A period ends. Bennet introduces a final guest speaker, Commissioner Melanie DuBouse provides closing remarks.

[01:13:41]: End of recording.

---

**Note to reader:** Unless quotation marks are used, all text is paraphrased. If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at [documenters@resolvephilly.org](mailto:documenters@resolvephilly.org) with "Correction Request" in the subject line. Learn more about Documenters on our [website](#).