2025 Annual Report of the Citizens Public Safety Review and Appeal Board (kalamazoocpsrab.org)

The Citizens Public Safety Review and Appeal Board (CPSRAB) provides an opportunity for the City Manager to receive input from a citizen board prior to decisions made on community complaints regarding Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS) that are appealed after they have been investigated by the Office of Professional Standards. The Board also serves in an advisory role to improve public safety service and policies, works to improve the communication and outreach to citizens and helps build community trust, credibility, and confidence.

As noted in the Policies and Procedures of Operation, the CPSRAB has the responsibility to provide an annual update regarding the number and types of complaints brought before the Board and to assess the complaint process. The Board may also report on other areas such as police/community relations, effectiveness of policies and community climate.

During 2025, 10 citizens served on the CPSRAB and included Chair Susan Stapleton, Vice Chair Jason Allen and members Christopher Caldwell, Wally Ferrara, Ebony Hemphill, Ashley Huber, Barbara Miller, Regina Miller, Teresa Thrash and Larry Tolbert. Ms. Ashley Huber and Ms. Regina Miller joined the board in March and Mr. Tolbert rotated off the board in November due to term limits. Ms. Tamra Sturdivant was appointed to replace Mr. Tolbert and begins her service in 2026. Members Ferrara and Hemphill were both reappointed for an additional 3-year term. Board member biographies can be found at https://www.kalamazoocpsrab.org/about.

The Board continued to work closely with both City Manager Jim Ritsema and Executive Assistant to the City Manager, Patricia Vargas who served as Board Secretary. Each of these individuals retired from their positions near the end of 2025 and the board thanks them for their service to the city and extends best wishes for the future. Ms. Neena Porter, Administrative Support Coordinator for the City Manager's Office now serves as Board Secretary with Mr. James Henderson, Director, Human Resources as Board Liaison. KDPS Assistant Chief Green and Inspector Mason were also available to the Board to address questions.

The Board attended a KDPS training session that included a welcome by Chief Boysen and presentations by Mr. Jeff Williams, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, on the function of the prosecutor's office, relevant legal concepts, and charging/denial of cases and by Sgt. Amil Alwan on current issues with the unhoused community and KDPS' recent initiatives. Inspector Mason also provided a review of KDPS' complaint process and complaint investigations. The

Board appreciates these learning opportunities and the open and honest conversations during these sessions.

In 2025, the Office of Professional Standards investigated 30 complaints that resulted from 55 allegations against officers. Complaints may contain more than one allegation. The number of complaints investigated in 2025 is the lowest in the past 4 years as 48 complaints were received in 2024, 33 in 2023 and 51 in 2022. Of the complaints received in 2025, approximately 40% were exonerated and 33% were unfounded. A finding of exonerated is used when the investigation determines that the alleged act occurred but was justified, lawful and/or proper. A finding of unfounded is used when the investigation discloses that the alleged act(s) did not occur or did not involve department members. The top two types of allegations in the complaints were for profiling/harassment and failure to follow policy or procedure. Detailed information regarding the complaints can be found on the KDPS transparency page at https://www.kalamazoopublicsafety.org/Transparency. After findings on the 2025 complaints were determined by the Chief of Police, 3 were initially appealed, however only two were brought before the board as one was withdrawn.

Also, on the KDPS transparency page, citizens can find information on the calls for service, crime mapping and alerts and the MY90 reports. The MY90 reports chronicle survey results collected after service calls and traffic stops. The monthly reports contain information on the number of surveys completed, the demographics of the respondents and feedback regarding the interaction with the officers. The data in the reports document the very positive interactions that citizens are having with members of KDPS. KDPS is to be congratulated on maintaining the transparency page that provides a timely means of informing citizens of public safety actions.

Additionally, KDPS should also be commended for its social media engagement and broader efforts to collaborate with the community. For instance, over the past year, the department has continued to expand and refine its social media presence, providing the public with more timely updates regarding high-profile cases, greater visibility into community policing initiatives and departmental events, and educational insights into the day-to-day activities of law enforcement through initiatives such as the "Riding with Roddy" series. The impact of these efforts is reflected in the substantial engagement across platforms, including comments, shares, and views of KDPS posts (see the department's official Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/KalamazooPublicSafety/). KDPS has also undertaken intentional efforts to collaborate with the Kalamazoo community in meaningful and sustained ways. The department actively participates in community-focused initiatives such as the Advocates and Leaders for Police and Community Trust (ALPACT) and has instituted its own Quarterly Report events to increase transparency and communication. They have also prioritized relationship-building with a wide range of community organizations and neighborhood groups. According to the department, these partnerships have contributed to more timely case resolutions, strengthened youth prevention initiatives, and increased levels of trust between law enforcement and residents of Kalamazoo.

The Board continued to be active in review of policies and KDPS data and reporting. A subcommittee of members Tolbert and Hemphill reviewed KDPS Policy #339- Fusus Camera Integration and Monitoring Platform and members Caldwell and Allen reviewed KDPS Policy #606 Unmanned Aerial System. The board reviewed the subcommittee reports and provided input to the City Manager and KDPS.

Additionally, members of the Board have been active in outreach in the community, helping to inform citizens about the role of CPSRAB and to gather input regarding effectiveness of or concerns with KDPS. Events attended by Board members include National Night Out, neighborhood association meetings, monthly meetings of the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch of the NAACP, community festivals, annual Bike Rodeo, Shop with a Senior as well as community forums such as the 2nd Judicial Forum hosted by Campaign for Criminal Justice Transparency, screening of the documentary “Separated” hosted by the Lewis Walker Institute at Western Michigan University and events held during Domestic Violence (DV) Awareness Month such as the "Chalk about DV" hosted by the YWCA and "DV and YOU: A Forum for Understanding" hosted by ALPACT. Members have also engaged in learning opportunities by attending the Kalamazoo Regional Citizens Academy, participating in numerous ride-alongs with KDPS officers and attending public safety officer candidate interviews.