

December 4, 2025

Evandro C. Carvalho, Executive Director  
Office of Police Accountability and Transparency (OPAT)  
2201 Washington Street  
Boston, MA 02119

Dear Executive Director Carvalho and Members of the Civilian Review Board:

Thank you for your letter outlining the Board's recent determinations and concerns regarding employee cooperation and the timeliness of departmental responses. The Boston Police Department appreciates the work that OPAT and the Civilian Review Board perform, and we remain committed to a strong, transparent partnership that reinforces community trust in policing.

I understand the concerns raised about instances where officers or civilian employees declined to participate in OPAT-initiated interviews. While the Department supports meaningful civilian oversight, we must also comply with state law, collective bargaining agreements, and Department Rules and Procedures governing the conduct of administrative investigations. These laws protect the rights of all employees and prevent unilateral changes to long-standing investigatory procedures.

The Board's letter also raises questions about how disciplinary decisions are made. Massachusetts General Laws, Civil Service rules and guidance, and collective bargaining agreements take precedence over municipal ordinances and govern the Department's ability to sustain allegations or issue disciplinary action. Under this framework, the Department cannot sustain an allegation or impose discipline solely on the basis of OPAT or CRB findings without an Internal Affairs investigation. Even in instances where I agree with OPAT's findings and conclusions, the Police Department must conduct its own investigation before a finding can be sustained or discipline imposed. These safeguards ensure that the investigation and any resulting discipline are legally sound and can withstand external review.

With this procedural framework in mind, moving forward OPAT will need to share with the Department the evidence and materials relied upon in reaching its findings. Transparent exchange of information is essential to ensuring accuracy, fairness, and consistency across our review processes. When OPAT's evidentiary record is shared in full, it allows the Department to meet its legal obligations, ensures that disciplinary decisions are based on a complete factual record, and bolsters confidence in the overall oversight system which is a goal both agencies

share.

I also acknowledge OPAT's concerns regarding delays in departmental responses. The Department has taken several steps to reduce backlogs and improve coordination. Moving forward, OPAT will receive written notice in every case explaining whether a CRB recommendation is adopted, modified, or not implemented, along with a clear explanation for the decision.

Regarding the CRB cases reviewed at the September 11, 2025, meeting, and shared with the Department on October 2, 2025, the Department offers the following responses:

In Case #174, the matter has been referred to Internal Affairs to ensure that any sustained finding and resulting discipline are based on a complete, legally compliant investigative record.

In Case #243, the Department agrees with the CRB's Unfounded finding after reviewing the 911 recordings and dispatch materials.

In Case #259, after reviewing the evidence, the Department agrees the allegations are not supported by sufficient evidence.

In Case #272, the Department acknowledges the CRB's Not Sustained findings and is actively reviewing the additional observations concerning training and body-worn camera compliance. The CRB questioned whether the officers' de-escalation and control techniques reflected current training expectations, and whether body-worn cameras were activated in accordance with Department policy.

The Bureau of Professional Standards and the Academy Division have been directed to evaluate the CRB's observations and determine whether refresher training, procedural updates, or targeted roll-call reminders are warranted. The Department appreciates these observations and will incorporate any necessary improvements into our ongoing training and compliance efforts.

I should note that I recently moved the Academy Division under the Bureau of Professional Standards to strengthen the connection between training, accountability, and policy implementation. I want to ensure that issues and trends identified through internal investigations, audits, and OPAT/CRB reviews are promptly integrated into training; and to modernize training priorities so they are directly informed by emerging professional standards and community expectations. This structure promotes a unified approach to professional development, oversight, and performance expectations across the Department.

In Case #272, the Department recognizes the Not Sustained findings and is reviewing the additional observations raised by the CRB concerning training and body-worn camera compliance. Specifically, the CRB questioned whether the officers' use of de-escalation and control techniques aligned with training expectations and whether body-worn cameras were activated consistently with Department policy. The Bureau of Professional Standards and the Academy Division have been asked to review these points to determine if refresher training,

procedural updates, or roll-call reminders are needed.

In Case #332, the Department is awaiting the CRB's final written disposition and will complete the review once the record is received.

In Case #510, the matter has been referred to Internal Affairs to ensure that any sustained finding and resulting discipline are based on a complete, legally compliant investigative record.

To improve coordination, I have instructed Superintendent Richard Dahill, Chief of the Bureau of Professional Standards, to serve as OPAT's liaison. He will ensure that OPAT's document and data requests are fulfilled promptly whenever legally permitted, and will implement a standard response timeline and monthly meetings with OPAT. These measures emphasize our commitment to transparency, due process, and public trust.

The Boston Police Department values its partnership with OPAT and the Civilian Review Board. While balancing oversight responsibilities with legal and contractual requirements, we remain dedicated to open collaboration, better communication, and supporting strong civilian oversight that enhances confidence in policing. Thank you again for your ongoing service and dedication.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Cox  
Police Commissioner  
Boston Police Department